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- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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SBC Cooperative Program,
d signated gifts up in Nov.

Baptist Press
12/01/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program gifts for the month of November were up slightly above a year ago and designated gifts were up nearly 40 percent, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

Cooperative Program gifts were \$10,743,955 for November 1995, compared to \$10,571,736 in November 1994, an increase of \$172,219 or 1.63 percent. For the two months of the SBC fiscal year-to-date, CP gifts stand at \$21,681,338 compared to the same period a year ago of \$22,276,134, a difference of \$594,795 or 2.67 percent.

Designated gifts for the month of November were up 39.83 percent: \$2,506,283 for 1995 compared to \$1,792,440 in 1994, a difference of \$713,843. For the fiscal year-to-date, designated gifts stand at \$4,832,858, compared to the same period a year ago of \$3,758,661, an increase of \$1,074,197 or 28.58 percent.

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The SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget monthly requirement is \$11,802,427. For the fiscal year-to-date, CP gifts are \$1,923,515, or 8.15 percent, below the budget requirement.

The SBC Cooperative Program total includes receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions and fellowships for distribution according to the 1995-96 Program Allocation Budget.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions, world hunger and other special gifts.

State and regional conventions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining funds to the Executive Committee for national and international ministries. The percentage of distribution is at the discretion of each state or regional convention.

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Congress undergirds charities
against class-action litigation By Toby Druin

Baptist Press
12/01/95

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. House and Senate have resoundingly passed legislation to protect the nation's charities.

In back-to-back votes Nov. 28 and 29, the two houses of Congress passed the Charitable Gift Annuity Antitrust Relief Act of 1995 (H.R. 2525) and the Philanthropy Protection Act of 1995 (H.R. 2519) to clarify federal securities and antitrust laws.

The House passed the gift annuity bill by a vote of 427-11 and was unanimous in its support of the philanthropy act. The Senate passed both bills unanimously. President Clinton is expected to sign them into law the week of Dec. 4.

The bills affirm that antitrust and securities laws do not apply to charitable organizations and donations or gifts made to the charities in the form of charitable gift annuities or charitable trusts.

They were introduced in response to a lawsuit brought in U.S. District Court in Wichita Falls demanding that the nation's charities return donations made through charitable gift annuities and charitable trusts and pay triple damages. The suit was certified as a class action in October. Among the defendants were the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist Foundation of Texas.

The niece of a Wichita Falls woman filed the lawsuit, challenging a charitable gift annuity between her great aunt and the Lutheran Foundation. The suit contended that because many charities pay the same rate of return on such annuities as suggested by the American Council on Gift Annuities, they are fixing prices in violation of antitrust laws. She also alleged such donations are forms of investment and should be regulated by securities laws.

Dismissal of the lawsuit will be sought as soon as the bills become law. Gift annuities have been used by the nation's charities and nonprofit organizations, including denominational entities, for more than 100 years. Simply, they offer a vehicle whereby a person can make a gift to a charity, receive credit for it for tax purposes and income from it. At the death of the donor, the residue of the gift goes to the charity.

Tal Roberts, executive vice president of the Baptist Foundation and chair of the American Council on Gift Annuities, praised 'Congress' work in passing the legislation and several representatives and senators who worked on its behalf.

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"I would like to thank everyone who contributed time and energy to this effort, those who contacted their congressmen and senators and the congressmen and senators themselves for what they have done," said Roberts, "especially our own Texas Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison who first introduced legislation on behalf of the charitable community last June which eventually led to this momentous day, to Rep. Jack Fields of Humble who helped to shepherd the bills through the House and also to Rep. Chet Edwards for the key role he had in securing support for the bills.

"Also a great deal of gratitude is owed to Terry Simmons, vice president and general counsel of the Baptist Foundation of Texas and a leader of Charitable Accord, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing legislative issues facing America's charities, who has worked tirelessly in this effort and to whom much of the credit for its success is due."

The antitrust relief act (H.R. 2525) was introduced by Rep. Henry Hyde, R.-Ill., and Fields introduced the Philanthropy Protection Act (H.R. 2519). Companion bills were introduced in the Senate by Sen. Hutchison and Sen. Christopher Dodd D.-Conn.

Hyde said "passage of these measures will provide the tools necessary to terminate the current litigation and make it possible for charitable organizations to once again freely offer gift annuities."

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Church pension measure
dropped from budget bill

Baptist Press
12/01/95

DALLAS (BP)--The proposed Church Retirement Benefits Simplification Act of 1995 passed the U.S. Senate, but was dropped from a budget reconciliation bill in conference committee.

Now the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and other members of the Church Alliance, encompassing the 29 benefits boards of 29 religious groups, are scrambling to try to get the measure attached to another bill.

One of the reasons for urgency is a new Internal Revenue Service audit guideline that declares a minister's housing allowance in retirement "net income" subject to self-employment (SECA) tax.

"It is imperative that this bill be enacted in this calendar year," said Thomas E. Miller Jr., senior vice president for public relations at the SBC Annuity Board. "The proposed act, which has negligible revenue implications for the federal budget, is extremely important to clarify the law on church pensions."

Annuity Board President Paul W. Powell sent a letter to affected pastors and denominational executives Nov. 22 asking them to write President Clinton, Senate majority leader Bob Dole, House speaker Newt Gingrich and other congressional leaders urging them to attach the bill to some piece of appropriate legislation. The Senate bill is S. 881, and a companion House bill is H.R. 528.

While the audit guideline is considered a critical issue, the multi-denominational Church Alliance also is seeking simplification of rules applicable to church pension plans and clarification of the right of chaplains to continue participation in church plans.

Powell alerted Southern Baptists to the new IRS audit guideline in August after publication of the MSSP Audit Guide for Ministers' Returns. In that publication, the IRS instructs tax examiners to claim a 15.3 percent self-employment (SECA) tax on that portion of a retired minister's benefit that is declared a minister's housing allowance. "That guideline," Miller said, "is not in keeping with IRS Publication 517, and we are certain Congress never intended for the tax to apply to the housing allowance as a part of a retirement benefit."

Miller noted ordained ministers must pay self-employment tax on both taxable income and a housing allowance or value of a parsonage while they are employed. "But to apply the SECA tax to a housing allowance in retirement would defeat the purpose of Congress in permitting the allowance in the first place," he said.

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Representatives of church pension boards were meeting in Nashville, Tenn., Nov. 29-Dec. 1 in a scheduled annual meeting, but officers have been standing by to fly to Washington for a meeting with congressional leaders if arrangements can be made.

Miller said letters, calls and telegrams are needed to the top congressional leaders, including Sens. Dole, Trent Lott and William Roth and Congressmen Gingrich, Dick Armey and Bill Archer. "I don't think there could be too many contacts," Miller said. "We need to get their attention, and get it now."

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Further information may be obtained from Thomas E. Miller at the Annuity Board, (214) 720-4691.

**FMB missionary distressed
at publicity over firing**

By Mark Kelly

**Baptist Press
12/01/95**

SINGAPORE (BP)--A Southern Baptist missionary in Singapore has expressed dismay that his termination by the Foreign Mission Board has been thrust into the spotlight of public media by a journalist-turned-preacher with a charismatic agenda.

Charles C. Carroll and his wife, Sharon, were fired, effective Dec. 31, for teaching and advocating the practice of "falling," or being "slain in the spirit," according to the letter of termination they received from Clyde Meador, director of Foreign Mission Board work in southern Asia.

Carroll, who has served 13 years as an FMB church planter in Singapore, refused to discuss with Baptist Press the details of his Nov. 24 firing or his appeal to the board's trustees. That appeal was the subject of Nov. 30 news articles by the Fort Worth (Texas) Star-Telegram and Associated Baptist Press.

Wallace Henley, pastor of a charismatic Southern Baptist congregation in Houston, faxed a press release on the Carrolls' firing dated Nov. 29 to the Fort Worth newspaper and five other media outlets.

"I don't want to run an appeal process through the media" said Carroll, whose parents were Southern Baptist missionaries in Argentina and Jamaica. "We love the Foreign Mission Board and the cause of missions, and I'm not happy to play this thing out in the media."

Carroll, 41, serves as senior pastor of Community of Praise Baptist Church, a five-year-old congregation of about 400 members in Singapore, an island republic in southeast Asia at the southern end of the Malay Peninsula.

Henley, a former religion editor for The Birmingham (Ala.) News and former Nixon White House aide during the Watergate era, told Baptist Press he wrote and distributed the press release that was used as the basis for the published stories. Henley led a 1994 conference in Carroll's Singapore church in which many people were "slain in the spirit," an event that previously had occurred in the church only on occasion.

None of the original six releases was sent to ABP, Henley said. The only Southern Baptist entity that received it was the Baptist Standard, weekly newsjournal for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Standard editor-elect Toby Druin said he supplied his copy of the release to ABP, a news service heavily funded by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an organization of Southern Baptists opposed to the current conservative direction of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Henley, pastor of The Encourager Church in Houston, said he sent the press release to warn Southern Baptists that their "restrictive views" on the work of the Holy Spirit are causing them to "miss out on a great global harvest."

He claimed demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit in the Singapore congregation -- such as falling down -- are typical of miraculous signs God is using around the world to draw lost people to himself.

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"It grieves me to think Southern Baptists are missing out on this awesome thing God is doing, and it frightens me that it writes the word 'Ichabod' above us," Henley said.

Meador's letter of termination to the Carrolls also cites dissension caused by the controversial practice and the Carrolls' insubordination in refusing to stop the practice. Carroll also refused to resign, Meador said. A Foreign Mission Board trustee committee will review the Carrolls' appeal of that decision during their scheduled Dec. 11-13 meeting in Memphis, Tenn.

The issue is not hindering God's spirit but promoting a particular spiritual experience with a questionable biblical basis at the expense of Christian fellowship, said Foreign Mission Board President Jerry A. Rankin.

"God's Spirit is moving in miraculous manifestations of evangelism all over the world through Southern Baptist missionaries," Rankin said. "We rejoice to see the outpouring of God's Spirit in supernatural ways, especially among the unreached peoples of the world.

"You don't have to quench the Spirit to serve with the Foreign Mission Board, but you also don't have to promote a specific experience such as this so that it causes dissension among the churches."

The board provides "great latitude" for missionaries to express their personal spirituality in their own way, Rankin said. The board's stated policy, however, draws the line at a missionary teaching and advocating any one particular experience for others and thus causing confusion and dissension among missionary colleagues and national Baptists.

"Charles Carroll is a great missionary. God has used him in effective ways," said Rankin, who supervised Carroll when he (Rankin) served as director of the board's work in southern Asia prior to election as FMB president in 1993. "I just regret that he's moved into an arena that prevents his continuing to serve with Southern Baptists."

Rankin said the ABP release misstates the board's position on allowing charismatic practices in churches such as the Community of Praise Church in Singapore. That story said the FMB has "condoned" charismatic practices, including speaking in tongues, faith healing and exorcism, at the Community of Praise Church, since the Carrolls founded the congregation in 1990.

Rankin said the FMB has allowed charismatic practices in an individual's personal experience and looks with concern on public expressions and on advocating experiences beyond the bounds of what Southern Baptists would see as solid biblical teachings.

While Rankin said he regrets Henley's decision to put the appeal of Carroll's firing into the public forum of the media, Carroll lamented the possibility that focusing a media spotlight on his firing might distract Southern Baptists during their annual foreign missions emphasis.

Southern Baptist churches are being challenged to give \$100 million in December to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. Reaching that ambitious goal would provide \$10 million for emerging gospel opportunities in countries once dominated by the Soviet Union.

"Satan doesn't play fair, and we take him very seriously," Carroll said. "This is such a season of harvest and joy, and a controversy like this could be such a distraction.

"The issue is a lot bigger than Charles Carroll. I'm expendable. The last thing I want is for us to get sidetracked," Carroll said. "Reaching the lost world is the issue. I want to get on with that, and I know the Foreign Mission Board does, too."

**Supreme Court upholds zero
by teacher on 'Life of Christ' By Tom Strode**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has allowed to stand an appeals court ruling upholding a Tennessee junior high teacher's refusal to accept a research paper on the life of Jesus.

The decision, a Southern Baptist church-state specialist stated, is a misinterpretation of the First Amendment and demonstrates why a constitutional amendment to protect religious expression is needed.

In *Settle v. Dickson County School Board*, a teacher refused to grant permission for a paper titled, "The Life of Jesus Christ," and gave a grade of zero to Brittney Settle. Subjects approved by the teacher included spiritualism, reincarnation and magic religions.

The teacher in the central Tennessee county gave several reasons for rejecting the paper, including saying "the law says we are not to deal with religious issues in the classroom."

The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals held all of the teacher's reasons fell "within the broad leeway of teachers to determine the nature of the curriculum and the grades to be awarded to students, even the reasons that may be mistaken."

The Supreme Court announced Nov. 27 it would not grant a review of the appeals court's opinion.

"Miss Settle gets high marks from us for opposing religious discrimination," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Christian Life Commission. "A failing grade should go to the court system which failed to protect her from religious discrimination."

"Laywers and judges failed to interpret the First Amendment in a manner to protect her right to free expression about religious ideas and historical subject matter."

"The life of Christ is history," he said.

"A constitutional amendment is necessary to prohibit discrimination against religious expression by private citizens."

Whitehead urged Southern Baptists to support House Joint Resolution 121, a proposal introduced Nov. 15 by Rep. Henry Hyde, R.-Ill., and designed to protect religious expression.

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**2nd religious equality amendment
offered, has different backers By Tom Strode**

**Baptist Press
12/01/95**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The second religious equality amendment to be introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in two weeks did not meet with the endorsement of the same religious liberty and pro-family organizations.

Rep. Ernest Istook, R.-Okla., introduced his proposal Nov. 28. The text of House Joint Resolution 127 says:

"To secure the people's right to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience: Nothing in this Constitution shall prohibit acknowledgments of the religious heritage, beliefs, or traditions of the people, or prohibit student-sponsored prayer in public schools. Neither the United States nor any Stat shall compose any official prayer or compel joining in prayer, or discriminate against religious expression or belief."

On Nov. 15, Rep. Henry Hyde, R.-Ill., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, introduced H.J. Res. 121, which says:

"Neither the United States nor any State shall deny benefits to or otherwise discriminate against any private person or group on account of religious expression, belief, or identity; nor shall the prohibition on laws respecting an establishment of religion be construed to require such discrimination."

Hyde hop s to hav a hearing on H.J. Res. 121 in December, a committee spok person said.

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The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, Focus on the Family, the Christian Legal Society, the Family Research Council, the National Association of Evangelicals and the Traditional Values Coalition have endorsed Hyde's proposal.

The Istook proposal's supporters include the American Center for Law and Justice, Concerned Women for America and Free Congress Foundation, according to a spokesperson in his office.

"Church-state lawyers from America's largest pro-family organizations and the leading conservative church-state scholars in America have worked for over a year to find the best language for a constitutional amendment and have formed a consensus behind H.J. Res. 121," said Michael Whitehead, the Christian Life Commission's general counsel. "We are convinced that the Hyde amendment is the best approach."

"We deeply appreciate Mr. Istook's work and commitment to the principle of religious freedom, but we are disappointed by his failure to support H.J. Res. 121. Perhaps when H.J. Res. 121 is supported by the House Judiciary Committee, all pro-family groups will rally their support behind this measure."

Americans United for Separation of Church and State criticized Istook's amendment, calling it a more blunt version of Hyde's proposal.

Istook's proposal "would allow a radical intrusion into Americans' freedom of conscience, especially the rights of public school children," AU Executive Director Barry Lynn said in a written statement. "If either of these dueling amendments prevails, church-state separation will be mortally wounded."

At its annual meeting in June, the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution endorsing a constitutional amendment protecting prayer and other forms of religious exercise by private individuals, including students, and prohibiting discrimination against such expression in public.

At least two Baptist state conventions meeting in early November passed resolutions opposing a religious equality amendment. Messengers to both the Texas and Virginia conventions expressed their concerns before either version was introduced.

The introduction of Hyde's amendment followed about 12 months of discussion on the issue after the Republicans took control of Congress in the 1994 elections and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, R.-Ga., promised a vote on such an amendment by July 4 of this year.

Religious liberty organizations and members of Congress struggled to find agreeable language. They also debated whether an amendment was needed or a statute was satisfactory. A series of hearings on the need for such an amendment was held in both the House and Senate.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R.-Utah, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said in late October he still did not know if he supported an amendment.

In order for an amendment to become part of the Constitution, two-thirds of each house of Congress must vote for it. The amendment then has seven years in which to be ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states.

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Church provides Thanksgiving
to seminary internationals

By Brian Smith

Baptist Press
12/01/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Thanksgiving is a uniquely American time encompassing family, turkey, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie. But what if part of the setting is missing? What if there's no turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce or pumpkin pie?

What if another part of the setting is missing -- you're not an American?

To help remedy the situation, First Baptist Church of Colleyville, Texas, has been teaming up with Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's international student services office for the past 10 years to help international students experience a slice of traditional autumn Americana.

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This year, 55 dinners complete with turkey, dressing, rolls, cranberry sauce and dessert were delivered to the seminary's international community Nov. 21. Each dinner is enough to feed approximately eight people.

"This is great; we appreciate it," said Leo Yung, a first-semester student from Hong Kong.

"That's a great ministry," agreed Winnie Nkhoma, a counseling student from Malawi. "They make us feel welcome."

Romanian student Adrian Giorgiov had never seen a Thanksgiving dinner before.

"Wow, what's this?" he asked, holding up a round tray filled with an orange-brown substance. When told it was pumpkin pie, he said, "Oh, interesting."

Jeanne Burns, director of the international student services office at the Fort Worth, Texas, campus, said the meals are an example of a ministry of personal involvement.

"This is something they do on a regular basis as an active ministry of love; it's just wonderful," she said.

Karen Chapman, chair of the benevolence committee at the Colleyville church, said the congregation has always had a heart for seminary students.

"They have a heart for giving dinners to international students, because not only does it help them here at Thanksgiving, but whenever they do go back home they spread the word that there are people that care and are willing to help out," she said. "That's what it's about; it's about sharing."

Burns said when Colleyville pastor Terry Washburn, a Southwestern graduate, spoke in chapel earlier this semester, several internationals expressed how much it meant to them.

"From about the middle of October, they keep asking, 'When are the turkeys coming?' They get so excited and they're ready," Burns said.

Giorgiov said he was looking forward to his meal, including the pumpkin pie.

"This is a very good thing they do," he said. "Especially for students who are international and are far away from their home and family, this is kind of a replacement for home and family."

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(BP) photos available on SBCNet and from Southwestern's office of public relations.

Affliction yields God glory,
says FBC, Fort Worth, pastor

By Dwayne Hastings

Baptist Press
12/01/95

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Everything that happens in life is for a reason, whether it's good or bad, said Billy Ramsey Nov. 29 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"All of us are in process, a development process," said Ramsey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas. "There is a divine design at work in our lives -- God is working on us."

In every situation, Ramsey said, there is a dual dynamic where God is testing and Satan is tempting.

Defining testing as the means by which God evaluates man's readiness for promotion, Ramsey reminded the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary chapel audience of Luke's scriptural account of Satan asking to sift Simon Peter as one does wheat.

"Christ allowed it, promising to pray for Peter in hopes that when he was turned around, he would strengthen the brethren," Ramsey said.

Yet on the other side of every situation, the devil tempts, Ramsey noted, explaining, "Temptation is a solicitation to do something that goes contrary to God's Word or will for our life."

It is a process not unlike that seen in nature among eagles and their offspring, Ramsey said, citing Deuteronomy 32:11-12.

"In this particular passage, the Holy Spirit is revealing to Moses the process which God will sometimes use upon his children -- the same way the eagle cares for her young and trains the young birds to fly," Ramsey said.

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"The eagle finds the safest place in the cleft of the rocky cliff to build her nest," he said, using thistles and thorns to build a framework for her nest.

"She builds that foundation because there are many predators that would try to destroy her young," Ramsey said, noting the eagle lines the nest with fur, feathers and wool to provide a comfortable home for her offspring.

Everything those eaglets need for their growth and security is wonderfully provided, Ramsey noted, until the day when the young birds must leave the nest.

"She begins to pull out of that nest the fur and the wool and the feathers, causing the sharp objects, with which she had built the foundation of the nest, to start coming through," he said.

The mother bird is creating discontent in the lives of those little birds, Ramsey said, literally stirring up the nest.

"Those little eagles were not born for the nest; they were born to fly," he said, explaining it was not cruelty that drove the mother eagle to act.

Anyone who seeks to walk with the Lord, likewise, knows what it is like to have a nest stirred, Ramsey said. "You know what it is like when God begins to disturb your comfort zone -- in effect, you are having your nest stirred."

Believers are either in trouble, getting out of trouble or we're about to get back into trouble -- all the time, Ramsey said. "It's a divine process to make Jesus evident in our life.

"Every time we go through a difficult time in life where God is trying to stretch us, you don't have to look very far to see him and feel his presence in the midst of that process," Ramsey said, noting once the mother eagle has stirred the nest, she stands over her chicks, fluttering her wings above them to draw their attention off their adversity and onto her majesty.

And as that mother bird pushes her children off the edge of the nest, she swoops gracefully below them as they plummet in a freefall toward the rocks below. She carries them skyward time after time until they realize they have within them a God-given ability to soar, he said.

The Bible says the mother eagle literally "beareth" them on her wings, he continued, just as God provides for his own.

"There is nothing in this world like being pushed out of the nest," Ramsey said, adding not everyone cares if you know how to fly.

"Yet it is for our good; it is for his glory," he said. If it takes affliction in order for believers' lives to bring him glory, then it is surely worth it, he said.

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Swanberg: Wisdom entails
'more than just brains'

By Dena Dyer

Baptist Press
12/01/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Does your education exceed your intelligence? Dennis Swanberg, special assistant to the president at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, posed the question to a chapel audience Nov. 17.

"We think our education makes us intelligent, but preparing for ministry involves not only academics -- practical knowledge -- but also spiritual knowledge," Swanberg said. "We need more than just brains; we need a heart."

Speaking from 1 Corinthians 3:18-4:5, Swanberg noted the apostle Paul's admonition that those wanting to be truly wise, truly intelligent and truly on the cutting edge need to trust in the foolishness of God's wisdom.

"In God's divine wisdom, he breaks into our experience," Swanberg said. "Human wisdom is that which we know, but divine wisdom is when God gives us his word and speaks to us in ways beyond our understanding."

Swanberg, noted for his comical impersonations, then launched into a series of characterizations in which Moses spoke with Jimmy Stewart's voice; Pharoah sounded like Paul Lynde; Noah spoke like John Wayne; and Zaccheus had the voice of Ross Perot.

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"That may be foolishness, but so was the idea of Moses being a great leader and leading the Israelites across the Red Sea," he said once the audience had roared in approval.

Swanberg noted God's mystery will always be enlightened by the cross.

"Saul of Tarsus thought he had it all, but not until he came in contact with the cross did he become wise. And everyone else thought it was foolishness."

Swanberg then gave five ways to ensure a Christian's education does not exceed his or her intelligence:

-- Lower yourself to learn. "God says, 'low I am with you always.' So get on down there," Swanberg quipped. "Humble yourself to become wise."

-- Beware of who you put on the pedestal of your life. "We get caught up in having heroes, but we need to recognize that only one person deserves to be on your pedestal, and that's Jesus."

-- Get deep with Jesus. "It is required, says Paul, that those who have been given a trust must be faithful with it," Swanberg noted. "We get so caught up in the fruit we are bearing. Our priority must be faithfulness, and then the byproduct will be fruitfulness."

-- Don't believe everything you hear, especially about yourself. "Don't worry about other people's opinions about you, good or bad. We don't always put as much stock in what God thinks about us as what other people think."

-- Press on toward the high calling of God. "Paul said that the one who examines us is the Lord. Don't try to be the judge, jury and executioner in your life or the lives of others."

"Our wisdom is always in the light of the cross," Swanberg concluded. "Our different abilities and gifts must reach out to the world, beginning at the cross. Although we will fail, the cross of Christ never will."

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(BP) photos available on SBCNet and from Southwestern's office of public relations.

God is at work in West Africa,
missionaries tell seminarians

By Dena Dyer

Baptist Press
12/01/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"We are here today to tell you that God is at work in West Africa," Larry Driggers informed a Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary chapel audience Nov. 15. Driggers and his wife, Lucy, missionaries-in-residence at the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary, serve as associate area directors for West Africa.

-- In the Niger Republic, God is at work:

"Jima worked and lived in a hut next door to the Baptist Center," Lucy reported. Jima performed magic, sold potions and practiced Satanic spells.

"A missionary named Sally shared with Jima about Christ," Lucy recounted. Jima told Sally her heart had been hurting, and she knew the things she was doing were wrong.

One morning, Sally shared Christ with Jima once again, and Jima was ready for her life to change. She began to repent of her sins and accepted Christ. She soon burned the objects she had used in her witchcraft.

"She had a new life in Christ," Larry said, "but her livelihood was gone. She no longer had a way to make a living."

So the Christians in town took part of their offering and set her up to sell petroleum. "God provided a new life and a new livelihood for Jima," Larry said.

-- In Liberia, God is at work:

A young girl named Esther attended a Girls in Action retreat in which the theme was "Share His Love."

In noting four ways she could share Christ, Esther said she could share her food, she could share her house, she could share her shoes and she could pray for the missionaries in Liberia.

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"Those wer significant things because Esther's mother worked two to three jobs and had 12 children," Lucy noted. She related that often there was not enough food for the family, th roof on their home was badly damaged, and Esther and her two closest sisters took turn wearing one pair of good shoes on Sundays when they went to church.

"Esther was willing to share what little she had with others who had less," Larry said.

When asked why she had listed "pray for missionaries," Esther replied, "I can't share my food or house or shoes with you, because you have all of that. But I will pray for you that you will love Liberia so much that you'll never want to leave."

Lucy noted civil war forced missionaries out of Liberia, although nine have since returned to Monrovia. But in their absence, "If Esther is still alive, she is praying for the missionaries to come back to her homeland."

-- In Mali, God is at work:

Missionary Jeanette Smith felt impressed to compile a hymnal using the national language, but she was not a trained musician.

"God, are you sure you want me to do this?" she asked.

She then translated a song about the joys of heaven and taught it to some of the children in her village.

"God, if you want me to pursue this project, use the song for your glory," she prayed.

A young girl named Getta loved the translated song and sang it over and over. One day, Getta contracted yellow fever and died.

At a women's Bible study Jeanette was leading a few days after Getta's death, Getta's mother asked Jeanette to sing the song to them. Then the women began to sing it over and over.

"They wept and sang, sang and wept," Larry said. "It was their way of dealing with the pain and grief of losing Getta."

So Jeanette began to translate more songs, and she ended up with a hymnal containing more than 40 songs and choruses.

"God gave her the ability to do it," Lucy said. "When God calls us to do something, he enables us to do that task."

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EDITORS' NOTE: Christmastime 1945 -- 50 years ago -- was the first holiday season of the post-war era, a time of hope and of continued mourning. The following 12-story package, "Christmas in '45," offers a glimpse of Southern Baptist life in the context of World War II and the emerging peacetime.

CHRISTMAS IN '45

Baptists felt hope, sorrow,

compassion at Christmas '45

By Karen L. Willoughby

Baptist Press

12/01/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Christmastime 1945: World War II was over and there was a semblance of peace around the world, but at great cost; tears of joy pooled with those of sadness.

In Southern Baptist life, the nation's anguish was reflected in Christmastime sermons and Christmas editorials in state Baptist papers.

"With the end of armed conflict our nation will enjoy its first peaceful Christmas since 1940," preached Herschel H. Hobbs, then-pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., on Dec. 21, 1945, according to records kept in the church archives.

"For the first time in five years many of our friends will be with us at this season. Our joy over this is tempered with the thoughts of those who are still far away. We are sobered in our spirits when we remember those who have gone to be with the Lord," said Hobbs, who later became a key figure in Baptist life. He died Nov. 28 of this year.

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History: More than 100 million men and women served in armed forces during the war that spanned six years and one day; the death toll in Europe and the Pacific included 16 million dead male and female soldiers -- and 20 million dead civilians.

World War II began Sept. 1, 1939, when Germany invaded Poland. Germany and Italy declared war on the United States Dec. 11, 1941, four days after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor.

The European war ended May 8, 1945, after receiving the last of the signatures for Germany's unconditional surrender. The Pacific war lingered on. Hiroshima was bombed Aug. 6; Nagasaki, Aug. 9. But not until Aug. 14 did Japan accept a call for unconditional surrender -- and its signatures were not received until Sept. 2, 1945.

Christmas came three months later, and the editorials of the state Baptist papers reflected the nation's mixed emotions.

"In all honesty, all is not well on earth on this Christmas Day," wrote J.M. Burnett, editor of The Baptist Courier in South Carolina. "The war has been won but peace has not come. ... But let not that cast the shadow of gloom over this Christmas Season."

L.L. Carpenter, editor of the Biblical Recorder of North Carolina, quoted G. Bromley Oxnam of the Christian Herald: "Peace has come. Good will has not. But peace without good will is transient truce."

Carpenter also printed the Christmas message of W.R. Cullom, professor emeritus of Bible at Wake Forest College:

"In writing my word for the Christmas season this year four classes of people are in my mind: (1) Those who are under the necessity of facing an empty chair and long for 'the sound of a voice that is still'; (2) those who are deeply burdened on account of the vast amount of suffering, sorrow, hunger, sickness and distress that is literally spread abroad over the whole earth; (3) those who are facing the future with misgivings, with anxiety, with apprehension, with dread, with fear; (4) those who are deeply concerned as to what God's will and purpose are for them personally and individually as they face the unparalleled challenge of the task of rebuilding a shattered world."

A.L. Goodrich of The Baptist Record of Mississippi pointed his readers to the needs of others:

"The best and only way to show our love for Him whose birthday we celebrate is by the following words of the Scripture: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.'"

"The more love we have in our hearts for Christ, the more will we find the desire to express our love to those around us," Goodrich continued. "And He who can fill our hearts with love will also show us a way of expressing that love."

In Tennessee, Baptist and Reflector editor O.W. Taylor wrote about "A Star Out Of Jacob" without reference to the war, but included a by-request op-ed piece from his soldier son, Wilburn, on the subject of "How It Feels To Be Home For Christmas." The editor's younger son, Charles, was killed during the 1944 Normandy invasion.

The Baptist and Reflector also included "Christmas Prayer 1945" in poetic form by Margaret Lewis, which begins with "O God, we thank thee on this day for peace and plead thy mercy to atone war's wrong."

Albert McClellan, editor of Oklahoma's Baptist Messenger, put two mentions of the atomic bomb on paper's Dec. 20 editorial page.

In an article headlined, "Here Is That Bomb Again!" McClellan opined, "Given intelligence, initiative, resources and the atomic bomb any nation, however small, can have the world almost at its feet in a few hours."

"This renders obsolete a large marshalled army ..."

"If we must war the real military defense of America will be, more men in college, not more men in khaki."

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On a lighter note, under the headline "Claim," McClellan wrote, "We do not say that the Baptist Messenger is Atomic but we do say it is A tonic to any church daring to put it in its budget."

In Georgia, editor O.P. Gilbert of The Christian Index wrote in "The Spirit of Christmas" of wars dating back to biblical times.

"The purpose of this little editorial," Gilbert wrote, "is to suggest that we suspend our indifferences and selfishness and fears and hates, and recognize that we are spiritually kin to all men; that we feed the hungry, house the homeless, comfort the heart-broken and defend the weak. For in so doing we shall keep the spirit of Christmas the year around."

Virginia's Religious Herald editor, Reuben E. Alley, wove several emotions into his "Christmas in Peacetime" editorial.

Love: "For four years the young men of our nation celebrated Christmas in barracks, in trenches, and on ships at sea," Alley wrote. "We who remained at home found a measure of satisfaction in searching for candy, cookies and a few articles that would fit into the small regulation Christmas boxes for shipment to our boys far away."

Anger: "This year we celebrate the first Christmas of peace; yet it is not peace. Certainly it is not the peace which we envisaged and for which our sons fought"

Guilt: "American citizens need to come to their senses before it is too late. We cannot celebrate Christmas in its true meaning by having a well-supplied Santa Claus while the rest of the world is hungry. A rededication might properly begin in our churches which have become quite wealthy during the war. . . . It would be a Christian act and an expression of genuine good will if at this Christmas season every Baptist church in the Southern Convention would set apart and give one-third of its reserve fund for the rehabilitation of churches in Europe and Asia."

L.L. Gwaltney, editor of The Alabama Baptist, wrapped his Christmas greetings in a succinct box on the editor's page.

"Surely as the happy season approaches the people of this state and nation have much for which they may devoutly thank God and that despite the uncertain and perplexing times in which we live," Gwaltney wrote. "In contrast with what has happened in nearly all other parts of the world the lot of the American people is happy indeed."

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Research assistance for this article was provided by the Southern Baptist Historical Commission.

EDITORS' NOTE: O.W. Taylor, editor of Tennessee's Baptist and Reflector at the end of World War II, asked his surviving son, Wilburn, to write a brief article for the paper's Christmas issue in 1945. Taylor's younger son, Charles, lost his life in combat during the war.

CHRISTMAS IN '45
How it feels to be
home for Christmas

Baptist Press
12/01/95

By Wilburn Taylor

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--It was not quite one year ago that I sat in a tent in Italy on Christmas Eve and penned these lines home: "May it be His will that I spend next Christmas with the two I love best on earth, Mother and Dad."

In 1943 I sat on the side of my bunk in a barracks at Chanute Field, Ill., on Christmas Eve and wrote that "maybe on Christmas, 1944, we can be together -- Mother, Dad, Charles and I."

In June, 1944, that latter wish was put away for evermore; Charles was killed in Normandy while serving with an infantry division

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But it has been God's will that I spend Christmas, 1945, "with the two I love best on earth," and with other loved ones and friends. The Lord has been good to me. He has seen me safely through this awful conflict; He has brought me home, to stay, without a scratch.

Our family knows what war can mean. But, as my Father has said over and over again, "All things work together for good to them that love God." If the loss of my brother is expedient in the pattern of this world, then that is God's will.

We'll see that little fellow's happy face someday -- Mother, Dad and I -- and we'll be able to talk to him again. Worldly cares will be forgotten; we'll be with the Lord, where cares are no more.

Little did we realize on Christmas, 1942, that we would have no more Christmas Days together. The United States was at war and I had enlisted in the army to fight our enemies -- but, still, our family was intact on that day. We were thankful for that.

Then Charles came into the army and, after a few weeks' training, was sent overseas. Word of his death came just before I went to Italy.

Fourteen months later, after service in Italy and the West Indies, it was God's will that I was sent home and given my honorable discharge.

Christmas won't be the same again. Nothing will be the same -- not in this world as we know it. Because Charles is gone: "He can't come home, he has gone on home."

No, Christmas won't be the same. But it will be Christmas, birth date of our Lord, our Redeemer. And we will have so many things for which we are thankful, greatest of which is our Saviour, who came to save those who will put their trust in Him.

If this sinning world could only realize the comfort, the protection, the divine inspiration, the indestructible love that is bestowed on a believer in God, then war would be no more; the Lord would reign supreme, and peace, glorious peace, would be ours for evermore.

As our Lord's birthday nears once again, I want to reaffirm what I wrote from cold, muddy Italy almost one year ago: "... I have more faith in Him than ever before. He is our Redeemer, or Keeper. In Him my every hope lies."

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CHRISTMAS IN '45

Pastor's poem compared
the 'bomb' & the 'baby'

Baptist Press
12/01/95

ATLANTA (BP)--The following poem was written by Paul S. James, pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church, Atlanta, and published by the Georgia Baptist paper, The Christian Index, on Dec. 20, 1945:

A Bomb Or A Baby
By Dr. Paul S. James

Silently the terrifying weapon is dropped, and
Silently the wondrous Gift is given,
The Bomb comes from the cold mind of man, but
The Baby comes from the warm heart of God,
The invention of the missile brings the sense of hopelessness, but
The birth of a Messiah put the star of hope in the sky.
The Bomb has the power to take life from all men, but
The Baby has the power to give life to all men.
With that instrument all things fall apart, but
In Him all things hold tog ther.
The Bomb releases the power of God concealed from men, but
The Baby is the power of God revealed to men.

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Our materialism is a monster with power to plunge us into Eternity, but
The Saviour is born with power to deliver us for Eternity.
That thing alone can bring complete destruction, but
Jesus Christ alone is our hope of eternal salvation.

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CHRISTMAS IN '45

FMB waged spiritual warfare
amid, after World War II

By Norman Miller

Baptist Press
12/01/95

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--"No plan for permanent peace can be devised which is not based on righteousness and good will in all relationships, human and divine."

As fitting as these words might be to describe recent peace accords forged for Bosnia or the Middle East, they are actually an excerpt from the pages of a 50-year-old issue of The Commission, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board magazine.

In 1945, Americans enjoyed a peaceful Christmas. Russia had repulsed Germany, Hitler had committed suicide, the Japanese had signed surrender papers. "Johnnie" came marching home, and U.S. citizens breathed sighs of relief and prayers of thankfulness.

Japan's formal surrender Sept. 2, "V-J Day," aboard the USS Missouri, officially ended World War II. "Today the guns are silent. A great tragedy has ended. ... The holy mission has been completed," said Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

But a holier mission -- taking the gospel to war-ravaged lands -- lay before Southern Baptists. The "war to end all wars" left carnage in its wake. Hungry in heart and body, multitudes around the world appealed for help with gaunt, outstretched hands.

"Now that we have won the war, we must set ourselves to win the peace," said M. Theron Rankin, the Foreign Mission Board's executive secretary then. The war had proved it could not bring true victory or real peace. In a Commission article, Rankin lamented the physical, emotional and spiritual devastation.

The board was ready with a detailed plan for worldwide "enrichment." It would continue its strong support for evangelism in mission stations the war left untouched, and send missionaries back to rebuild mission ministries the war overran. The primary goal: create and strengthen indigenous Christianity among foreign Baptist churches and help train them to take part in God's plan for world redemption.

"We must go into all the world," said Pat M. Neff, president of the Southern Baptist Convention then. "We must hasten to give the message of life to all who lived in the midst of death."

Southern Baptist support for the new thrust would prove to be unprecedented. In 1947 they would give \$3.9 million in a special offering for relief and rehabilitation and send 76 new missionaries, increasing the personnel force on the field by 14 percent in that one year alone. By 1955 they would have doubled the number of missionaries on foreign fields and quadrupled their giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions from \$949,000 in 1945 to \$3.9 million.

Even during the war, Southern Baptist missionaries forced from southern Europe and East Asia had found ways to continue their ministry. For example, while Germany was bombing Europe, the FMB deployed 23 missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands (then a U.S. territory, not a state). Their efforts produced six churches and a Bible institute.

"The work of missions goes on, war or no war, and nothing shall stop our witness," wrote L. Howard Jenkins, president of the trustee board then. From 1943-45, missionaries were appointed to Colombia, Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil. More than 70 missionaries served in Nigeria. Even during the torturous days of Japanese occupation in China, some missionaries opted to stay and sow seeds of spiritual peace.

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"The present world situation offers to Christianity its greatest opportunity and its most terrific responsibility since the beginning of the Christian era," Jenkins wrote in an October 1945 Commission article.

"To put it on the lowest possible level, our own self preservation demands that we accept this challenge and meet it in a worthy way. ... The Christian enterprise should remember the words of Woodrow Wilson: 'You are here to enrich the world; forget that errand, and you impoverish yourself.'"

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers 11/30/95 by the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline posted in the SBCNet News Room.

EDITORS' NOTE: The following editorial, titled "New and Perilous Paths," appeared in November 1945 in The Commission, magazine of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. The writer was not identified.

CHRISTMAS IN '45

Post-war generation faced
'New and Perilous Paths'

Baptist Press
12/01/95

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--These significant days, following the cessation of the most tragic conflict in the history of mankind, remind us of the words of Joshua as he was preparing to enter the promised land, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore."

1. This is a new way for millions who are hearing for the first time about freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion. The exercise of true democracy, the right of free people in every nation to choose their own forms of government and public officials, is a new privilege, an untraveled highway to multitudes who have been ruled hitherto by dictators. One of the strongest statements made by General MacArthur in Tokyo Bay was his reference to the demonstrations of democracy in the Philippines. World War II has made men of every tribe and tongue acquainted with one another and with the whole world. Many of the old imperialistic concepts are going into discard. Empires which have dominated vast areas of the globe will be forced sooner or later, to revise their colonial programs. The whole world is astir with dreams of freedom. Empires and colonies alike are entering ways which they have never traveled before.

2. More people are starving than ever before. Throughout Europe and the Orient hundreds of millions are hungry and ill-clad. Poverty and hunger will precipitate revolutions among social groups more quickly than any other economic conditions. Unless some way is found, and that quickly, to assuage the pangs of physical suffering throughout the earth, we shall find ourselves treading roads which are mined, every step, with discontent and hatred and strife. If we disregard grave economic malignancies and consequent political and social disorders, sinister forces will arise threatening the peace of the world more than anything save war - and themselves the most frequent causes of war. As Christians we dare not be indifferent to any conditions which affect human welfare. We are our brothers' keepers.

3. We face another peril in these days which we are traveling for the first time. A gigantic aggregation of armed might which, in the early months of the war, imperiled civilization, was met and overcome by the Allies who so organized and co-ordinated their forces as to defeat totalitarian leaders and exalt the democratic way of life. Now, as Christianity puts its hand to the urgent task of social and spiritual reconstruction, we may be asked to adopt the plan of Allied military strategy and combine all spiritual forces in one large army, thus exchanging for normal, healthy, constructive spiritual processes a temporary military strategy devised for the exigencies of war.

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Furthermore, our charter for spiritual conquest is not the product of Allied strategists but is the Word of God, "eternal and unchanging in its significance, but applicable to all circumstances and conditions of life. Nothing should be proposed for our Christian missionary program which is not in full accord with the New Testament. We do well to implement the high ideals of freedom expressed in the San Francisco Charter -- and in the Potsdam Declaration -- insisting that every nation respect and put into practice the four freedoms -- freedom of religion as well as freedom of assembly, of speech, and of the press. The new world order demands, very properly, that every man be accorded freedom in religion and that his religious convictions be respected. We violate the clear teachings of the Word of God, and the expressed and implied demands of the Charter of the United Nations if we seek to abridge, to the slightest degree, the freedom of any man, anywhere, in the realm of the soul.

Baptists, for example, would not, dare not, bring the least pressure to bear on believers anywhere, whatever their denominational affiliation -- or on unbelievers -- to subscribe to what we term our distinctive beliefs. With the Word of God in our hearts and hands, we may by the constraints of love and loyalty seek to persuade others to accept God's Word as we interpret it; but coercion, never! We call any man our brother in Christ if he has been regenerated by the Spirit of God, but we respect and defend his right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience.

This principle applies to our contacts with non-Christian groups. We would not petition any nation in the world to forbid to its citizens or subjects the privilege of worship in their own way, whether Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, Shintoists, Confucianists, or Animists. Our responsibility, God-given, is to bear witness to all people of the earth concerning the uplifted Saviour, the risen, reigning Lord who, alone, is the hope of the world. God has opened doors to us around the globe. Let us enter every land, bearing the message: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none other."

We tread these new paths with courage and confidence. We are citizens of a kingdom which cannot be shaken by the trials of war or the perils of peace. This is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith. Our God who is our strength will help us "to keep our footing on the heights."

Let us go forward in his name. He has promised to be with us all the way.

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CHRISTMAS IN '45

Sunday school writer nudged
Baptists to be peacemakers

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
12/01/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--"Peace on earth" was an especially welcomed message to Southern Baptists gathered in their churches for Bible study just before Christmas 1945.

World War II had only recently come to a close -- Japan having surrendered to Allied forces on Sept. 2 and Germany four months earlier -- but a question in the Dec. 23 Sunday school lesson couldn't have been more appropriate:

"If there is any hope for a permanent peace in the world, can it be found elsewhere than in the message of Christmas?" writer Lucius M. Polhill asked in "Adult Quarterly," the class member book in the Southern Baptist Convention Series, the Baptist Sunday School Board's only curriculum option at the time. Polhill was not identified in the quarterly as either a minister or layman.

Using the account of Christ's birth in Luke 2 as his biblical passage, Polhill titled the lesson, "The Message of Christmas to the World." Since the Bible studies were written months or sometimes more than a year in advance, Polhill likely had not known about the war's end. His Dec. 23 lesson, in fact, was filled with references to and testimonies about the conflict.

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He related the story of a Southern Baptist missionary who had recently returned to the United States after being confined in a Japanese concentration camp. The missionary "told stirring incidents of good will among Christians of hostile nations," Polhill wrote. "In substance, she said where Christ has truly entered and possessed a heart, there have been no outward forces strong enough to mak that Christian hate his brother. Rather, he has found ways in which to help him. There is a peace existing between them, despite all conflicts, which passes the understanding of the world."

Polhill also told of a chaplain who had returned home from three months of rescuing wounded men from the front lines in Belgium during the fall of 1944. The chaplain said his men would often ask: "How can you be so happy and have such faith in the midst of all this hate, blood and destruction?"

His answer, according to Polhill: "He knew the only source of true joy, and he kept the angels' message at work in his heart and in his living even as he stood in the blood of the slain."

Almost half a million Southern Baptist men were enlisted for active duty in World War II. Sunday school enrollment in SBC churches dropped by more than 200,000 and, like all American businesses, the Sunday School Board was forced to cut back on its offerings.

In Robert A. Baker's "The Story of the Sunday School Board," the late Clifton J. Allen, associate editorial secretary at the time, recalled:

"Staff workers were given leave for military duty. Responsibilities were reassigned when necessary. Paper rationing required reducing the number of pages in various periodicals. One quarter the lesson quarterlies had to be published without covers."

However, Allen said the board did manage to publish special materials to enable churches to minister to persons in the armed services, including the Sunday school lesson quarterly, "On Duty for God and Country."

In his lesson 50 years ago, Polhill noted the message of Christmas joy "has brought and can bring real and eternal joy to poor and rich, bond and free, black and white, Gentile and Jew, German and American alike."

He closed the study with a question for thought and discussion: "What do you intend to do as a peacemaker this Christmas and in the days ahead?"

In a time of ethnic cleansing, political assassinations and blatant human rights violations around the world, it remains a relevant question to ask today.

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(BP) electronic art file of the cover of the 1945 Sunday school quarterly referenced in the above article is posted in the SBC News Room library on SBCNet.

CHRISTMAS IN '45

Veterans-turned-seminarians
had experience, commitment

By Brian Smith

Baptist Press
12/01/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The convocation address for the fall 1945 semester at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary offered a clue to the atmosphere on campus at the close of one of the bloodiest wars ever waged.

"It seems clear that we stand on the threshold of a new period of missionary opportunity," stated then-professor of missions Frank Means. "The post-war world about which the Utopians dreamed has ceased to be ethereal and has become stark reality."

Means' message, "The Prospects for Christian Missions in Today's World," echoed an awareness already held by many students and faculty alike at the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary.

"War is never the ideal solution, and there was a great sense that until the hearts of men are changed by the Lord, why, there's going to be a heap of trouble," recalled J.W. MacGorman, who entered Southwestern that semester as part of the largest enrollment in the seminary's history -- 881. He now is distinguished professor of New Testament, em ritus, at Southwestern.

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Although his number was called early, MacGorman did not see active duty. But he noticed a heightened commitment among his fellow students who had served.

"There were men who had very deep experiences with the Lord in the war that I know nothing about because I had not looked down the barrel of any man's gun," he said. "So I think there was a very intense commitment on the part of many who came out of experiences of war, and (they) resumed life fulfilling their calling here at the seminary."

Boyd Hunt, who began teaching theology at Southwestern in 1944, also recalled the young veterans' level of commitment.

"They didn't just come out of college green; they'd had war experience and they were serious," he noted. "They were here to study and it was a dedicated generation for a while there."

That dedication, however, fell within an effort to put the war years behind and forge into a seemingly bright future, Hunt said.

"Man alive, just almost at once when the war ceased, the post-World War II economy got going and the war was put behind us and the whole thing was expansion and growth."

MacGorman agreed, noting "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" and other war songs were not necessarily the first tunes whistled in the halls.

"The war was a nightmare -- so many killed and almost every family touched by it and just the vast overwhelming relief of the end, I don't think there was any tendency to pull the songs of warfare over into the time of peace."

Means, in his message to the seminary community, concluded by challenging this commitment, relief and optimism.

"America has a definite place in God's plan for world redemption," he said. "God has brought our nation to its eminence of world power to use her, if she will permit herself to be used, in giving 'the gospel of the glorious Christ' to the benighted nations of the world."

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CHRISTMAS IN '45

'The Baptist Hour' provided
beacon of hope during WW II

By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press
12/01/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"The Baptist Hour" radio program gained wide acceptance throughout the nation during the turbulent, dark years of World War II. The program's Christ-centered sermons and music provided a beacon of hope for many war-weary Americans.

Conceived by the Southern Baptist Convention's Radio Committee, which was founded in 1938, the first broadcast of "The Baptist Hour" was Jan. 5, 1941, 11 months before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. By 1945, "The Baptist Hour" was being broadcast live weekly January through June on the ABC Radio Network.

Speakers for the program in 1945 included M.E. Dodd, W.A. Criswell, Louis Newton, Roy Angell, K. Owen White, Duke McCall, Robert G. Lee and Ellis A. Fuller.

As the war began to wind down in June 1945, layman Pat M. Neff, former governor of Texas and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was "The Baptist Hour" speaker and delivered a series of messages on "The Call of a New Era." His sermons dealt with Christian patriots facing an uncertain future.

Earlier, on April 12, 1945, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt died at Warm Springs, Ga. Three days later on "The Baptist Hour," Louis Newton offered a tribute to FDR. The Baptist Hour Choir sang the late president's favorite hymn, "O God Our Help in Ages Past."

In the post-war years, Southern Baptist media work expanded, in keeping with the country's intent on looking toward better times. At the 1946 SBC in Miami, the Radio Committee became a commission, a recognized agency of the SBC. By 1949 "The Baptist Hour" was being broadcast weekly year-round on 120 ABC affiliates.

By the end of 1953 "The Baptist Hour" was carried on 330 radio stations in 28 states. "The Baptist Hour" is now on 390 radio stations across the United States.

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The SBC media thrust began at the convention's annual meeting in Richmond, Va., in 1938 when Samuel F. Lowe, pastor of Inman Park Baptist Church in Atlanta, made a motion that a committee be formed to study the advisability of using radio regularly in broadcasting the Baptist message. Lowe was named chairman of the seven-member committee, which was expanded to 16 members the following year. At the SBC annual meeting in Baltimore in 1940, messengers approved the beginning of "The Baptist Hour."

The Radio Commission was headquartered in Atlanta until 1955. Lowe died Oct. 4, 1952, and his associate, Dupree Jordan, served as acting director until Paul M. Stevens was named director Aug. 26, 1953. At the 1954 SBC annual meeting the name "television" was added to the commission's name and permission was granted to move the agency to Fort Worth, Texas.

There is now a television as well as a radio version of "The Baptist Hour," a weekly program that has reached out to people with the message of Jesus Christ since those dark days of World War II.

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CHRISTMAS IN '45

At war's edge, Baptists

advanced, mourned in Calif. By Karen L. Willoughby

Baptist Press
12/01/95

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--As the westernmost state in the nation at the time, California was particularly affected by World War II. It was the most vulnerable to the possibility of Japanese attack or invasion. Defense and military industries brought economic gain, while Hollywood's war relief efforts brought national attention.

But Southern Baptists were just getting started in the state; that and the limitations of space resulted in a dearth of war news in state Baptist publications. What items were included, however, provide a poignant view of the war's impact on the home front.

History: The first annual session of the California Southern Baptist Convention, in 1941, reported 23 churches with 1,382 members. The first issue of the Southern Baptist Stamina was Nov. 20, 1941; mid-war, the paper would be renamed the California Southern Baptist.

In the paper's second issue, Dec. 18, 1941, no mention was made of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, but there was a note from pastor W.J. Venable: "We had good services at 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7. God is blessing at Patterson and saving the lost. We covenanted to pray for the Baptists in California ... Plans are being made to organize a Baptist church here Dec. 27, 1941 at 7:30 p.m."

Feb. 5, 1942: An article from Dr. E.C. Routh, editor of Oklahoma's Baptist Messenger, was printed, calling attention to the Jan. 13, 1942, meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention's Baptist World Emergency Committee and the "tragic needs of our missionaries in war-stricken lands."

Mention was made in the April 1942 issue of the "young people of the First Southern Baptist Church of Bakersfield (who) put on a program for the soldier boys at Minter Field March 22 and all reported they received a great blessing."

A small ad in the November 1942 paper urged "For Victory Buy United States War Bonds and Stamps."

The following month included a terse reminder of the war: "Now that gas rationing is a reality every Southern Baptist in California can prove his love and loyalty to the Government by helping in every way possible to conserve every war necessity."

And an emotional reminder, in an article headlined "Held Captive by Japanese:"

"First Lieutenant John Woodrow Lackey, 25, son of (state paper editor) R.W. and Mrs. Lackey, reported missing in action since the fall of Corregidor Fortress in the Philippines, was officially reported a Japanese prisoner in a war department message to his parents.

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"Lieutenant Lackey, who is an army pilot, fought with the beleaguered defenders of Bataan and Corregidor until the island fortress fell to the Japanese. His name was included on an exchange list of prisoners filed by the Japanese with the International Red Cross."

The January 1943 issue included an article by Andrew Allen, secretary of the "department of elementary Sunday school work" for the Baptist Sunday School Board:

"The war has brought a wave of marriages," and at the same time, "home ties are being broken due to the transfer of fathers to the armed forces or war industries."

One headline in the same issue proclaimed "Commanding Officer Bans Profanity."

March 1943: "Ontario Church" reported, "More and more of our men are being called to the armed forces."

April 1943: "Shafter Church" reported, "Our church contributed \$50.77 to the Red Cross Another of our members left for the armed forces recently. This makes eight names on the service flag."

An August 1943 headline: "A Chaplain Writes of Guadalcanal," a story picked up from Oklahoma's Baptist Messenger.

A September 1943 headline: "On bombing the Vatican." The editorial's premise: "It has been stated again and again that the President had assured the pope that the Vatican would be protected at all costs to military strategy So far as we are concerned we hope the Vatican and all the Catholic cathedrals will be spared the fate of the beautiful old historical cathedrals of England, but why impair the war effort and endanger the lives of thousands of our boys with such a promise?"

December 1943: A Baptist Book Store ad from Phoenix offered a book titled, "Can We Win the Peace" by D.F. Fleming for \$1, taken from the Norton Lectures at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kentucky.

In a January 1944 editorial by L.L. Gwaltney, editor of the Alabama Baptist, headlined, "Religious Liberty Only Basis For A Just And Durable Peace," was the first mention of a "post war" someday.

The Baptist Book Store ad in the same issue blamed a "paper shortage" for insufficient quantities of Study Course books.

An April 1944 headline: "Good News to churches wishing to Build Houses of Worship" told of Conservation Order L-41, which made it possible for church organizations to spend up to \$1,000 in the erection of a church building, including labor.

A May 1944 article by W.H. Knight of Louisiana told of fox-hole religion:

"... (O)ur military forces are giving serious consideration to the vitalities of religion. ... To many, God has become a living, a vital reality for the first time."

In August 1944, concerning the First Southern Baptist Church at Port Chicago in Concord, the paper reported: "The church suffered a heavy property loss in the recent explosion that claimed hundreds of lives in a nearby shipyard. The church building is almost a total loss. The insurance on the building did not cover loss by explosion."

The same issue noted that with the addition of the Alameda church, the number of cooperating Southern Baptist churches in the state had risen to 72.

A January 1945 article headlined, "Chaplains Needed Now," by Alfred Carpenter, superintendent of "camp work" for the Home Mission Board, stated that from January to July 1945 Southern Baptists were being requested to supply 164 additional chaplains to the Army and 90 to the Navy.

February 1945: Chaplain Thomas R. Reagan was the seventh Southern Baptist chaplain to die in the war. He died of wounds in Germany.

The 1945 centennial meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, scheduled for May 1945 in Atlanta, was canceled by the Executive Committee in order to be "in compliance with the recent ODT (Office of Defense Transportation) ruling concerning the holding of convention meetings."

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June 1945: A.N. Porter, missionary to the Mexicans in Waco, Texas, reported, "We have 66 names on our service roll who are in the armed forces from the families of our church. Of the three Sunday School teachers who are gone, one is in Italy, one in New Guinea and one in the Philippines." No mention was made of Germany's surrender.

July 1945: "Rev. and Mrs. R.W. Lackey were officially notified recently of the tragic death of their son, First Lieutenant John W. Lackey. Many readers of the California Southern Baptist will recall that Lieutenant Lackey was serving with the Army Air Corps and was stationed on Corregidor at the time of its fall. He became a prisoner of the Japanese and remained in various prison camps including San Tomas until our enemies saw that the loss of the Philippines was eminent. It was then that they took 1,775 of their strongest men aboard a ship and set sail for Japan. True to their policy they did not mark the ship as a Prisoners of War ship. Our navy spotted it in the China Sea and proceeded to torpedo it and send it to the bottom of the sea. The result was that only nine men are believed to have escaped death, five of whom escaped by means of a small boat and four are said to have been picked up by the enemy."

The article went on to say that the family had two other sons in the service, one wounded in the Italian Alps on April 4, 1945, and in a hospital in France; the other, a seaman serving "somewhere in the Pacific."

An atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, Aug. 6; another was dropped on Nagasaki three days later; shortly after that, the Japanese surrendered. No mention of this was in the California Southern Baptist, but there was word in the September 1945 issue that Exeter was the 100th Southern Baptist church to be organized in the state.

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CHRISTMAS IN '45

God reshaped his world via
burning bomber, Nazi prison

By Kellie Crowe

Baptist Press

12/01/95

ABINGDON, Va. (BP)--The African sky was a deep, brilliant blue. White snow-capped peaks of Mount Kilimanjaro could be seen from the window of the tiny Royal Dutch plane. Just as the pilot called over the intercom telling the seven passengers to prepare for landing, the twin-engine plane began its decent. It was at this moment when Hiram Clay Kiser peered out his window to see exactly the same situation he had prayed for 45 years prior while a soldier in World War II.

"I was weeping. I am sure the other six men from my church wondered why I was crying," said 71-year-old H.C. Kiser. "I shared with them later how I had already had a revival in my heart and knew God was going to bless our mission trip in Africa. It was a big day in my life."

From behind the dark-rimmed glasses framing a face with wrinkles seeming to tell their own individual stories, Kiser's gentle eyes gleamed with excitement. Not just the excitement of his prayer being answered, but the excitement of a man who knows Jesus Christ and is fulfilled by telling of his blessings. Carefully telling his story so as not to forget a detail, Kiser leaned forward on the kitchen table and continued.

"I saw a little settlement carved out in the wilderness and I saw men and women, boys and girls come out of the little mud, thatched-roof huts. They waved at us up in the plane," Kiser recounted with a tender smile. "It seems like the Lord just spoke to me. I had forgotten the prayer I had prayed 45 years prior, but the Lord hadn't. The Lord said to me, 'Now, you will have the opportunity to go and to witness to these people.'"

It was in the early fall of 1944 when H.C. Kiser first saw the African village of Imbengo aboard the B-17 Flying Fortress. As the children waved from the village, the then-20-year-old Kiser prayed a little prayer, "Lord, if I ever get the opportunity to go back to Africa and witness for you, please give me the opportunity to do so."

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This was the first prayers of many to be uttered -- first as a soldier, then as a prisoner of war in Nazi Germany.

This day marked the beginning of a greater consciousness for a farm boy from rural southwest Virginia. Ten thousand miles away from life as he knew it, Kiser experienced a swift and deeply impressionable transformation in his life. His worldview was broadened far past the barbed-wire fence of his family tobacco farm. His eyes were opened to a people of different skin colors and cultures foreign to his own. His faith was challenged much greater than any sermon he had heard from the pews of Abingdon (Va.) Baptist Church. His Lord became more real than the fading, framed print of Jesus and the Lord's Supper -- his Lord became a God of miracles.

Clutching a German pewter table spoon inscribed with a Nazi swastika on the handle, Kiser told of countless miracles the Lord had performed during his seven months as a prisoner of war. The pewter spoon served as a primitive yet powerful reminder of the cost of freedom. It was with that very spoon Kiser suffered through the trials of Nazi prison camps. At night, while the bombs would fall, he would use the spoon to dig a hole large enough to bury his head so as to endure the tremendous concussion of the exploding bombs.

Kiser's fierce trials began Oct. 12, 1944, aboard the B-17 bomber en route to bomb General Rommel's army in North Africa. It was a mission not even scheduled for his crew, but assigned because of an ailing pilot of another crew.

Kiser said the Lord prepared his heart before going to bed on the eve of Oct. 11. In his Bible, he read the words of 1 Peter 4:12: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trials which try you as though some strange thing happened to you. But rejoice in as much as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings."

"Little did I know when I read that on Oct. 11, that Oct. 12, the next day, I would become a prisoner of war," Kiser said.

That Oct. 12, at 29,000 feet over Bologna, Italy, the Flying Fortress took a direct hit from an anti-aircraft shell exploding under the B-17 bomber. The concussion of the huge shell sent the plane upward, pinning the airmen with tremendous centripetal force. After the plane leveled, the crew opened escape hatches, harnessed parachutes and one by one bailed out of the spiraling bomber. All jumped, except for Kiser. During the hit, Kiser's parachute had opened and spilled out in the plane.

"I got down on my knees and was crawling down through the waist compartment to get my torn parachute back in order so I could get out the door," Kiser said, demonstrating with his hands the way in which he gathered the parachute. "I just wadded up all of the shroud lines and compressed the big canopy of the parachute to make it small enough to get through the door."

"I'll never forget it. I said a little prayer. I said, 'Lord, should I jump out knowing my parachute is inoperable or should I ride this plane down?' It seemed like the Lord just said to me, 'H.C., I'm a God of miracles, and if you will just, by faith, leap out of this burning bomber, I'll show you that I am a God of miracles.' So, with that in mind, I jumped."

Kiser's parachute did not open. Falling rapidly, Kiser prayed for his chute to open, promising to witness for the Lord. Nothing happened.

Again and again, Kiser prayed, "Lord, I'm probably 10,000 miles away from home and my godly parents, grandparents and my pastor. It's just you and I here. I want to live so badly. It looks like this is the time for me to die. Lord, apparently, you can't open this chute."

"When I told him he couldn't, he told me he could. The parachute opened with a terrific jerk," Kiser said as he grinned mischievously, adding a flavor of his humor. "I bit my tongue, my boots about flew off, and I said, 'Lord, I thank you for opening my parachute, but you've just about broke my neck in the process.'"

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After Kiser's floating parachute seemed miraculously guided off the German target being bombed by allied planes above, protecting him from German gunfire, Kiser landed safely in a marsh just inside the enemy lines of Bologna, Italy. He was greeted by two Nazi soldiers pressing a bayonet in one of his rib cages and the nose of a machine gun in the other.

"You know, they say you become a man when you reach the age of 21. I was only 20 years old, but the events from the time we left that morning until we bedded down that night changed my whole life," said Kiser, recounting the sight of an Italian man loading his dead family members onto a wagon covered with blood-soaked sheets, the stench of broken sewer lines and the realization of the power of the destruction from a single bomb. "I had never seen the havoc of the bombs until that day as I rode through the streets of Bologna with the German soldiers. You see, we had done that and it broke my heart."

In his seven months as a prisoner of war, the blond-haired, blue-eyed, six-foot-two Kiser, withered away to an 80-pound skeleton of a man. He was spit upon and cursed by German soldiers. He can recount the feel of the saliva-drenched chewing tobacco sliding down his face. Forced to march cross country for miles in the dead of winter, bedding down in barns and under trees, Kiser holds the memory of leaving behind fellow soldiers who had frozen to death during the bitter night, forbidden to even shake the ice off them in the hope they were still alive.

"It got so bad. Men would fight over the size of potatoes," Kiser said. "One night, we were all starving. We couldn't see what we were eating. I just bit down on this thing in my mouth and it burst. It was a little red mouse. I gagged and held it up. I said, 'Look here fellahs, I've got fresh meat.' And, this ole' boy said, 'Aren't you going to eat it?' I said, 'No, I'll die before I eat that.' He told me to drop it over near him. He ate it."

From the dark interrogation cell with only the smell of human waste and the narrow rays of sunlight shining through a three-inch metal pipe used for air, the Lord spoke to Kiser in a way he will never forget. Reflecting on the dark, cold wall were two verses of Scripture from Hebrews scribbled by previous soldiers. "I read these words," said Kiser. "'Jesus will never forsake you,' was written on the wall. And, then on down, it said, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.'"

It was this promise which held Kiser up and spurred him to continue when he felt there was no hope. Alone in the dark, damp and cold cell, Kiser worshiped his Lord. "I got up, raised my hands and told the Lord I wanted to praise him, though it was difficult fearing execution. I began singing, 'Praise God from Whom all blessings flow,' the Doxology. It was the only thing I could think of."

Fifty years later, Kiser is still praising his God from whom all blessings flow. World War II -- its fiery trials and at times triumphant victories of faith -- changed him deep down within his very soul. Never again did he see the world through the innocent eyes of a young farm boy. Never will he forget the faces of the nationals who did not know Jesus as their Lord. Never will he forget the presence of his Lord as he suffered through the torment of prison camp. At a young 20 years of age, Kiser's world had been expanded far beyond the wisdom of his years.

On April 29, 1945, at prison camp Stalag VIIA in Moosburg, Germany, Kiser watched as two American soldiers pulled down the German swastika, throwing it to the side. "Then, this big, beautiful American flag went up," said Kiser, recounting the liberation of his camp. "We just stood there and bawled. I said, 'Lord, how could we ever have doubted you?'"

From a distance, Kiser watched as his world yet continued to change. He looked on as freedom integrated race. "I saw a white soldier from Washington, Ga., reach down and grab the arms of a black soldier, hoisting him up on a perch," Kiser recounted. Together, the black soldier and the white soldier watched as the American flag of freedom rose high above the prison camp. "It was beautiful. It was a great day."

CHRISTMAS IN '45

He stepped forward after death
of wartime ministerial student

By Kellie Crowe

RICHMOND, Va (BP)--It was at the First Baptist Church of Richmond, Va., where Bill Andrews responded to the Lord's call. The Lord did not speak to the 22-year-old Andrews through the morning's sermon, nor was it through a hymn of invitation. Instead, it was at the reality of World War II, the loss of a life and the need to stand in the gap.

"On a given Sunday morning, the pastor was reading a letter from a ministerial student who had served out on the front somewhere," explained the now-74-year-old Andrews. "The pastor told us this young man would not be coming back because he had been killed in the war. Then, he said, 'Surely the Lord would call someone to replace him.'"

"I suppose the Lord had already been dealing with me. I felt very strongly that I should be the one, though I didn't know what was involved," continued Andrews, who was also in the service as a V-12 student of the Navy. "I was willing to serve as a minister. So, I made my decision there at the First Baptist Church."

Andrews responded to the Lord's calling, willing to stand in the gap, unaware he was committing 37 years of his life to serving the Lord on the foreign mission field of Chile -- 37 years he treasures. "The Lord has blessed my wife and me significantly. We have had so many manifestations to the fact that we were obedient to his calling. We felt his presence all the way," said Andrews, looking back over the years.

Following the end of World War II, Andrews married Connie Wildes of Wenham, Mass., the sister of a fellow Navy buddy. He and Connie were then sent to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to relieve the more senior officers stationed there during the war.

"While we were there, I'm sure we didn't know it at the time, but the Lord was preparing us for missionary service," explained Andrews. "This was our first real personal contact with internationals. We became very active in a small group of civil service workers in a Bible study. And, on the weekends, we held Sunday school for the underprivileged children in the area. In fact, that is where I preached my first sermon, at the Pololo Chapel in Honolulu."

Following the service, Andrews pursued the Lord's call at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. It was at Southwestern where Andrews and three other seminary couples would gather together weekly for Bible study and prayer. A missionary from Brazil, Rosa Lee Mills Appleby, also attended the study.

"Though she never talked to us directly about missions, she was always trying to help us see the advantage of seeking the Lord's will wherever he led," said Andrews in explaining how the Lord used Appleby as a tool to point them toward his call.

Looking back over his life, Andrews can see the strong arm of the Lord carefully guiding his path. From World War II and the death of a ministerial student to Pearl Harbor and the depth of a new cultural understanding to Rosa Less Mills Appleby, Andrews is confident in the Lord and his direction.

"When the Lord called us to Chile, it was not an earth-shattering decision, but it was a very firm conviction that the Lord would lead us there and that he would be with us while we served."

Concert marking WW II's end
to be aired by ACTS, FamilyNet By C.C. Risenhoover

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"Christmas Colours," a concert from a 100-year-old church in Berlin, Germany, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, will be televised by ACTS and FamilyNet, the cable and broadcast television services of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

ACTS will carry the program on the Faith and Values Channel Dec. 14 at 11 p.m. FamilyNet will broadcast the program Dec. 14 at 10 p.m., Dec. 17 at 1 p.m. and Dec. 23 at 11 p.m. Designated times are Eastern Standard.

The international Christmas concert, videotaped by Evangeliums-Rundfunk (ERF) and edited by the RTVC for rebroadcast in the United States, will actually be performed Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 in Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church. ERF, a radio and television media ministry in Europe, is affiliated with Trans World Radio.

The original Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church building was bombed during World War II, leaving only a burned-out spire. The spire stands beside a stylish post-war structure that forms one of Berlin's most poignant architectural legacies of the war.

The concert was organized by ERF in cooperation with Berlin City Mission and several other churches and charities.

RTVC producer Rosser McDonald said, "ERF's goal is to use the concert, television broadcast and support of the mission to point people toward the coming of God's Son. The goal of the RTVC, obviously, is to give ACTS and FamilyNet viewers an inspiring, evangelistic program with the focus being the Prince of Peace."

Host for the 60-minute U.S. version of the concert will be Tina C. Kaebitzsch, current producer of "Wendepunkt" (Turning Point), a talk show produced by Berlin's Gemeinde auf dem Weg (Church of the Way).

McDonald will be assisted by Leland Taylor, a Southern Baptist missionary in Germany. Prior to his appointment to the mission field, and while attending Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, Taylor worked with McDonald at the RTVC.

"ERF will tape the actual concert," McDonald said, "but Lee (Taylor) will be our cameraman and shoot the standups with Tina (Kaebitzsch). The concert is scheduled to last two and a half hours or more, so we will take excerpts from it that we deem will be most meaningful to an American audience."

"Tina, who speaks fluent English as well as German, will introduce the music we use and provide an explanation of it. All introductions and narration will be in English. There will be several popular Christmas songs in English. And 'Silent Night' will be sung in many languages simultaneously. Subtitles will give the words of the songs in languages other than English."

The concert features soloists and musicians from Germany, Italy, Sweden, Croatia and England.

"The idea of many parts of Christ's body working together is beautifully demonstrated when individual musicians not only contribute their own pieces, but also join in the performances of others," McDonald said. "The music is as diverse as the national backgrounds of the performers. The instrumentation reflects chamber orchestra orientation with percussion, xylophone, cello, flute, acoustic guitar, accordion and grand piano. There's also a popular band sound with drums, bass, guitar and keyboard."

"The broad repertoires and professionalism of the soloists promise a rich and colorful program."

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