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Graham lauds Mohler as part  
of 'new generation' of leaders

By Marv Knox

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- World-renowned evangelist Billy Graham handed the mantle of Christian leadership to a new generation during inaugural festivities for Al Mohler, the ninth president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Graham spoke to about 8,900 members of the seminary community and its supporters in Louisville's Freedom Hall Oct. 14, the evening before Mohler's inauguration.

Graham, whose international ministry has spanned more than four decades, contrasted the ages of the two Baptist leaders. Graham will be 75 next month, and Mohler turns 34 Oct. 19.

The evangelist quoted the prophet Joel: "Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

Speaking of Mohler, Graham said: "You have elected a young man here with a tremendous vision, not only for the future of this theological seminary but for the future of evangelism and missions in the Southern Baptist Convention and in the world."

Then Graham called himself "an old man" and said the duty of old men is to support the visionary leadership of a younger generation. "I support him with all my heart and will pray for him daily from now on," he pledged.

"It's not easy for an old generation to hand the torch to a new generation that's coming up, but that's what is happening here tonight," Graham added. "I thank God for the young men and women he has raised up, not only in this seminary, but in other parts of the world."

Looking back on his ministry, first as a college president and then as a global evangelist, Graham warned his young colleague: "There will come hard

times. There will come difficult times. It always happens. ... I learned very early it's not always easy."

But, pleading for mercy, Graham told the seminary audience: "One of the things that will be difficult for Dr. Mohler will be the great expectancy there is of him at this moment, and he will have to make hard decisions. ... Yet I believe God has raised him up for such an hour as this."

Praising Mohler's predecessors Duke McCall and Roy Honeycutt, both of whom sat in the audience, Graham described the "thrill and joy" he felt when he came to the seminary to preach. Its students were ministers who are "going to the ends of the earth," he noted, adding, "Wherever you go throughout the world, you see Southern graduates. ..."

"This seminary is looked on as the leading educational institution perhaps in the world for Baptists. You have a tremendous responsibility."

Graham expressed confidence in Mohler's insight into the future, stressing, "He has laid out a tremendous vision of what can be done through the largest Protestant denomination in this country that has made an impact throughout the entire world."

Mohler described part of that vision during the ceremony, when he announced the creation of the seminary's Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth.

The Billy Graham School, which will be the seminary's fifth graduate school, reflects the seminary's commitment "to the task of training, educating and preparing God-called ministers of the gospel for service in the churches and throughout the world," Mohler said.

Such a corps of ministers is needed badly, Graham said.

"The greatest need we have at this hour is a spiritual awakening which will restore individual and collective morals and integrity throughout the nation," he insisted.

Beyond that, Graham recited a litany of global woes that call for Christian witness and ministry. He noted 32 "major little wars" in all, including strife in Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia and Kashmir, as well as spiritual hunger in places such as Korea, Russia, Eastern Europe and China.

On a more personal level, Graham also recounted the individual misery he encounters worldwide -- loneliness and despair, the ravages of crime, the stress of an overabundance of information, a lurid emphasis on sex, the absence of prayer.

But he declared his spiritual optimism: "Yes, our nation can be changed, and it can start with you. Revivals start in the heart of somebody."

"I'm praying for a baptism of love that would sweep this convention, and it could start in Louisville at this seminary," he said. "... We're going to do everything in our power to support Dr. Mohler, and the faculty, and the staff and trustees of this great seminary. You certainly have my love and my prayers."

Gov. Brereton Jones welcomed Graham to Louisville and to Kentucky. Expressing his confidence in Graham and Mohler, Jones said both leaders can provide the kind of spiritual leadership needed by Kentucky, all of America and the rest of the world.

That confidence was shared by Mohler's longtime friend, Tim McCoy, pastor of Ingleside Baptist Church in Macon, Ga.

McCoy said Mohler is fully prepared for the task, epitomizes integrity and is seasoned by distinctive denominational service. As editor of Georgia Baptists' Christian Index newspaper, "Al set a standard of excellence that has rarely been equaled and never surpassed," he added.

Mohler's young age should not be a hindrance to his leadership, McCoy said, because Jesus was only 33 when he was crucified for the sins of the world.

McCoy also placed Mohler as being in league with the seminary's founders, listing James P. Boyce, John A. Broadus, Basil Manly Jr., and substituting Mohler's name for William Williams.

"Al Mohler will bring to Southern Seminary the kind of life and vitality that we need for the coming millennium. He is superbly suited to keep faith with the founders and to preserve the very best of the priceless inheritance he has received as a sacred trust."

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Mohler defines Southern's vision  
with churches, theology at center

By Marv Knox

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- Al Mohler marked his inauguration as ninth president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary by putting the school's "vision and commitments on the line and on record."

During his Oct. 15 inaugural address, "For Such a Time as This," on the seminary's Louisville, Ky., campus, Mohler described six such commitments.

Southern Seminary, he said, must:

-- "Reaffirm our central purpose to train, educate and prepare ministers of the gospel for the churches."

Such a focus involves both faithfulness to the churches and unwavering support for the high calling to ministry, he said.

-- "Re-establish for our generation the centrality of theological conviction at the heart of the church and of the seminary enterprise."

Calling theological conviction "the central stackpole of the seminary's identity, life and work," Mohler said Southern Baptists must "learn again what it means to acknowledge theology -- the knowledge of God ... and his revealed truth -- as the central issue in our identity as a people of God."

-- "Reset the congregation as our primary public and focus."

"Our focus must be on preparing real ministers for real churches, and that means that we must be diligent stewards of the trust and of the respect of those congregations," he said. "We have no right or reason to exist apart from this sacred trust."

-- "Renew a vision for evangelical scholarship in the service of the church."

An important part of that vision is realization that the seminary is "precommitted" to the truths of Scripture, the churches it serves and its confessional statement, he illustrated.

-- "Restate her denominational identity and dedicate herself to a new era of denominational partnership."

Mohler articulated the "public pledge" of the seminary, to "be aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention in partnership, identity and in purpose."

-- "Reawaken in our generation and in the generations to follow a resurgence of missionary vision, evangelical fervor and concern for growing churches."

"This institution must hold high the banner of the cross and raise up successive armies of ministers of the gospel, trained and ready to respond to the missionary call, ready to lead churches to grow and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, ready to pioneer new means of sharing the ageless message of redemption through Jesus Christ, our sole, sufficient Savior," he stressed.

Mohler will receive the "prayers, good will and responsible cooperation"

of the faculty, according to a unanimous resolution read by Diana Garland, dean of the Carver School of Social Work.

Students also pledged their prayers and commitment to work with Mohler, announced Tommy Fitzgerald, president of the Student Government Association.

Representatives of the Southern Baptist Convention, trustees, alumni, churches and the "world of theological education" also presented charges to the new president.

They each pledged their support. They also urged him to be faithful in his spiritual life, supportive of his family, loyal to the denomination and its congregations, to produce able graduates and to remember the seminary is both a theological and educational institution with a spiritual vocation.

Mohler began his presidency Aug. 1, succeeding Roy Honeycutt, who retired.

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New Graham school called  
'quantum leap' for Southern

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- The Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth will become the fifth academic division of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Plans for the new school were unveiled during inaugural ceremonies for President Al Mohler Oct. 14, at which evangelist Billy Graham was the keynote speaker. Seminary trustees had approved the new school in a closed-door meeting two days earlier.

Faye Stone of Springfield, Mo., has given \$2.7 million to endow the new school, Mohler said. The money comes from the estate of Stone's late husband, Judge A. P. Stone.

A dean of the new school has not been named, but the school could be functioning as early as next fall, said Pat Cole, seminary director of news and information.

Southern already has four schools -- or academic divisions -- within its program of study for master's- and doctor's degrees. They are the schools of theology, church music, Christian education and church social work.

Adding the school of missions, evangelism and church growth "is a quantum leap for Southern Seminary and the Southern Baptist Convention," Mohler declared. "This school will revolutionize programs of study, research and application in all fields related to evangelism and missions.

"This is the first such school at any of the six Southern Baptist seminaries, and the first school in America which Mr. Graham has allowed to bear his name," Mohler added.

Preliminary plans call for the school to have eight to 10 full-time professors and four departments. Existing programs in missions and evangelism will become separate departments in the new school, in addition to new departments of church growth and church, world and society.

The school will offer the master of divinity degree, master of theology degree, doctor of ministry degree and doctor of philosophy degree. A doctor of missiology degree will be added in the future, Mohler said. Students currently may earn the master of divinity, master of theology, doctor of ministry and doctor of philosophy degrees within the school of theology.

Southern already has an endowed chair of evangelism named for Graham, as well as the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism, which hosts conferences and provides other support for evangelistic ministries.

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## Conference 'builds bridges' between fundamentalists, Southern Baptists

By Bob Allen

ROCKVILLE, Md. (ABP) -- A Bible conference organized to "build bridges" between independent fundamentalist Baptists and "Bible-believing" Southern Baptists was hailed as a historic first step by organizers.

The conference, held Oct. 12-13 in Rockville, Md., featured Jerry Falwell, best-known pastor among the 3,000-church Baptist Bible Fellowship, and two pastors who served as president of the 15 million-member Southern Baptist Convention -- current president Ed Young of Houston and 1989-90 president Jerry Vines of Jacksonville, Fla.

"Frankly, I never thought I would be cooperating in a Bible conference with these (independent) brothers," said Bob Crowley, pastor of the host congregation, Montrose Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist church in Rockville, Md. "This may be the beginning of a lot of cooperation, and a lot of bridges will be built."

No one was predicting a merger of the Baptist Bible Fellowship and the new, more conservative Southern Baptist Convention. But several speakers said there is a new openness toward the SBC among independent Baptists, which may bring some independent churches into the SBC fold.

The Baptist Bible Fellowship, based in Springfield, Mo., is the largest and generally considered most moderate of the groups to splinter from the SBC under the influence of fundamentalist Texas pastor J. Frank Norris beginning in the 1920s. The BBF sponsors a newspaper, college and mission agency, but its leaders insist it is not a denomination in the formal sense.

Traditionally, the group has railed against purported "liberalism" in SBC schools and objected to the denomination's Cooperative Program method of uniform budget support, which they say removes the local church from direct control of mission programs.

Now, some observers believe, reforms initiated in the SBC's "conservative resurgence" since 1979 are causing some of the more progressive independents -- particularly those who feel the BBF's loose structure produces too few missionary candidates -- to cast a second look toward the SBC.

Their interest is timely for the SBC, which continues to recruit large numbers of new missionaries but has experienced three straight years of decline in Cooperative Program support.

Neither Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, nor Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, commented directly on the issue of independent/Southern Baptist relations. Last year Young named Vines to chair a task force assigned to "reach out to like-minded local churches" to get them to join the Southern Baptist cause.

Falwell, pastor of the 22,000-member Thomas Road Baptist Church and chancellor of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., has attended SBC meetings regularly in recent years as either a guest speaker or observer.

Over the years, some have speculated that Falwell might be coaxed into joining the SBC. He played down those expectations.

"I'm an independent Baptist," he said. "That's my personality. I couldn't stay in anything long. They'd throw me out if I didn't quit. And it's mainly because I'm a street fighter."

"But at the same time ... I'm a friend of all who are friends of Christ," he continued. "And I praise the Lord for the miracle -- and there's no other way to describe it -- of what's occurred in the Southern Baptist Convention, and what's happening among the independents all over this

country."

Falwell praised host pastor Bob Crowley for his role in SBC life, particularly in leading the transformation of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary into a bastion of conservatism.

"God used him to bring Southeastern Seminary back in the right direction," Falwell said. "Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest (N.C.) has corrupted the land for so many, many years, putting out preachers to the left of Gorbachev on everything."

Crowley was president of Southeastern's trustees in 1987 when a new fundamental-conservative majority confronted then-president Randall Lolley, who subsequently resigned.

Lolley was replaced eventually by Paige Patterson, an architect of the fundamental-conservative movement, a turnabout which brought Falwell pleasure.

"Of all the people in America to bring in as president of Southeastern, they brought in Dr. Paige Patterson," Falwell crowed. "Paige is to the right of me. I mean he is way out there."

Under Patterson's leadership, the school has quickly emerged as a staunchly conservative seminary, even by fundamentalist standards, Falwell said.

"I never thought I would live to see the day when Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary would be competing with Southeastern for the same students," Falwell said.

Transformations like the one at Southeastern are happening at the SBC's other seminaries, Falwell said. "It's happening at Southern now. It's happening at New Orleans. It's happening everywhere. And what hasn't happened will."

Crowley evaluated the two-day conference as a success. "I believe some bridges have been built," he said. He credited Patterson with initiating the idea for the conference, which grew from a meeting held 18 months ago and attended by Falwell and others, who eventually comprised a steering committee.

Patterson did not attend the October conference and could not be reached for comment.

Tim Lee, a vocational evangelist from Garland, Texas, termed the Rockville meeting a "historic gathering." "I firmly believe God has his hand on this event in an unusual way," he said.

"I don't know if there's ever been another meeting like this with the publicity and support like this ... a coming together of Bible-believing Southern Baptists and Bible-believing independent Baptists."

Lee has been among the leaders of independent Baptists pushing for better relations with the SBC, a stance which has brought him criticism from more hard-line BBF supporters. While independents and Southern Baptists have spent a lot of time "fussing, fighting and feuding," he said, "a world is going to hell."

"We may not dot our i's alike and may not cross out t's alike," Lee said, "but nowhere does the Bible say we must do that."

Ed Young told the Rockville audience he is "a fundamental, independent Southern Baptist." He encouraged a church model that departs from both "hard-nosed fundamentalism," which forces unbelievers to "leap over all our shibboleths," and "a watered-down universalism," without doctrinal requirements.

Dave Rhodenhizer, now pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, an independent congregation in Alexandria, Va., has also held pastorates in Southern Baptist congregations and said he detects "no difference" between the two traditions.

"If they believe the same Word and preach the true word of repentance

and faith, it makes no difference if they are Southern Baptist or independent Baptist," he said.

Among affinities evident at the conference was a low regard for policies of the Clinton administration. Speakers reserved their sharpest barbs for Clinton, and they were met with enthusiastic applause.

"We have never had a White House that endorses wrongdoing, but we have one now," Falwell said.

"Apparently the president wanted 50 perverts in key places, so he wanted Roberta Achtenberg (as assistant secretary of HUD) and he wanted Donna Shalala (as HHS Secretary). ... If I had been president and somebody said 'We've got to have 50 perverts,' I wouldn't know where to look. My soul, who would I check on to get that? But Hillary knew. ... All of these are her old friends.

"The sad part of it is it's the White House saying ... to the kids of America, 'Wrong is right,' 'Gay is OK.'"

Falwell said the national media glosses over the fact that Achtenberg is a lesbian who, with a long-time companion, is "parenting" a child conceived by artificial insemination.

"She ought to be in a cage," Falwell said. "She's got no business being in the United States government. And the tragedy is the national media just brushed over it as if it's OK. It's not OK. It's sexual, moral perversion, and it's wrong, and they are not fit to rule the government."

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-- A photo of Young and Falwell participating in a panel discussion is available from Associated Baptist Press.

Religious leaders urge  
Senate to approve RFRA

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Thirty-nine religious leaders have urged the U.S. Senate to enact the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in an Oct. 18 open letter to that body.

RFRA (S. 578) may be considered on the Senate floor as early as Oct. 22. The U.S. House of Representatives unanimously has approved the bill by voice vote.

RFRA would restore a high level of protection the U.S. Supreme Court formerly required government to meet before it could restrict religious practice. The court virtually abandoned that protection in the case of Oregon vs. Smith.

"In that disastrous decision, the court held that requiring government to accommodate religious practice was a 'luxury' the nation could not afford," the letter says. "Since Smith, government officials are no longer required to demonstrate a compelling interest in enforcing laws that conflict with a religious practice.

"It is the recognition of the profound implications of the Smith decision for America's 'first freedom' that has united us, across the entire religious spectrum, to fight for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act."

A coalition of 68 religious and civil-liberties groups representing every point on the political and theological spectrum have united behind the bill, including the Baptist Joint Committee and Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

James Dunn, BJC executive director, said religious leaders "are shocked

and dumbfounded that the most important piece of legislation protecting the free exercise of religion in our lifetime mysteriously has not come to vote on the floor of the United States Senate."

One reason for the delay is a controversy over RFRA's impact on prisons. Some state attorneys general have claimed that RFRA would jeopardize prison security and increase administrative costs.

U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno disagrees, advocating the adoption of RFRA without an amendment exempting prisons. Concurring with Reno in an Oct. 18 letter, eight state attorneys general wrote the Senate opposing a potential amendment exempting prisons from RFRA.

"Based on past experience with RFRA's legal standard," the religious leaders say, "the bill will neither jeopardize prison security nor produce significant increases in costs. Although prisoner litigation is indeed an enormous and growing problem, free exercise of religion claims are made in only a tiny fraction of these cases."

Baptists who signed the letter include: Dan Weiss, general secretary of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.; Bob Ricker, president, Baptist General Conference; Cecil Sherman, executive director, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship; Joan Brown Campbell, general secretary, National Council of Churches; John Binder, executive director, North American Baptist Conference; John Buchanan, senior vice president, People for the American Way; Tyrone Pitts, general secretary, Progressive National Baptist Convention; Leon Lawton, president, Seventh Day Baptist General Conference; and Richard Land, executive director, Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

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-- By Pam Parry

Fellowship launches \$3 million  
global-missions offering

ATLANTA (ABP) -- The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship kicks off the second year of its global-missions offering in late October with hopes for another major victory for its young missions program.

The Fellowship has a goal of \$3 million, a 50 percent increase over the 1992-93 offering.

The 1993-94 offering officially begins during the week of Oct. 25 with a mailing of promotional materials to more than 1,200 churches which forwarded contributions to the Fellowship during the past year. The offering extends from October through April, with the books open through June 30.

At the same time, the Fellowship is introducing its first missions-education resources. A missions study series for children, youth and adults will be available Nov. 10.

The Fellowship was organized in May 1991 by Southern Baptist leaders who felt moderate Baptists had been disenfranchised by the new leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention during the denomination's 12-year swing to the right.

Fellowship leaders said they are elated with the response to the inaugural 1992-93 offering, which closed its books Sept. 30. More than \$1,935,000 was contributed toward a \$2 million goal which Fellowship Coordinator Cecil Sherman had called "a shot in the dark."

"Setting a goal that high was purely a matter of faith," Sherman explained. "We had no history to go on and very little indication of how Baptist individuals and churches would respond. We simply said, 'Here's the

need; now, would you as free and faithful Baptists think and pray together about how you should respond to this need?"

Under the banner of "Keeping the Promises," the offering focused on "making good" on promises Fellowship leaders said had been broken by the SBC's Foreign Mission Board -- particularly the FMB's mission program in Europe.

The offering included restoration of \$345,000 for the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and funds to support Southern Baptist missionaries in Europe who felt they could no longer work under FMB sponsorship.

FMB trustees in 1991 voted to withdraw the board's long-standing support for the seminary amidst charges of liberalism among its faculty. Seminary officials, who denounced the charges and defended the seminary's pivotal role in training European Baptist leaders, have credited the Fellowship with saving the school from a potentially lethal financial crisis.

When its 1992-93 mission offering was launched, the Fellowship did not have a single full-time administrator for its mission endeavors and had only eight missionaries under appointment, all in Europe.

In January, however, Keith Parks, who had retired several months earlier as FMB president over philosophical differences with board trustees, joined the Fellowship staff as global missions coordinator. Since then, the Fellowship has appointed another 20 missionaries and added two mission staff members. Parks has said he expects the number of missionaries to approach 40 by next May.

One of the keys to the growing support, Parks said, is that the Fellowship has defined its niche in Christian missions.

"We have articulated a vision for doing missions in a world without borders," he said. "We have determined priorities and set forth a strategy that honors our Baptist distinctives while also focusing on new approaches to addressing unmet needs in world missions."

Half of the 1993-94 offering goal, or \$1.5 million, is committed to missionary support, including salaries and operating budgets. Largest of the other allocations are \$325,000 for Ruschlikon Seminary and another \$300,000 for relief ministries, including on-going hurricane relief and reconstruction in South Florida.

Other allocations:

-- \$200,000 to develop model programs of evangelism and ministry in targeted urban areas in the United States and abroad;

-- \$175,000 for additional support for missions personnel witnessing to the people of "World A" -- that part of the world with little or no Christian witness;

-- \$150,000 to respond to new opportunities for missions in the former Soviet Union, including starting new churches and providing theological training for Baptist leadership;

-- \$75,000 each for missions-education resources for churches and a "rapid response" fund to enable the Fellowship to respond quickly to mission opportunities that emerge from changing world events;

-- \$60,000 for missions media, such as translations, videos, Bibles and other materials;

-- \$50,000 each to support an agricultural missions project in Albania and to begin a \$2 million endowment for scholarships to help missionary parents supplement the escalating costs of college education for their children; and

-- \$40,000 to construct a Habitat for Humanity home for a poor family in Greensboro, N.C., in association with the Fellowship's General Assembly next May. Fellowship volunteers will provide the labor.

The \$3 million offering goal represents 42.6 percent of the Fellowship's projected 1994 global missions budget.

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-- By David Wilkinson, communications coordinator for the Fellowship

Telephone class lets church  
'reach out and touch' homebound

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (ABP) -- Thanks to the vision and persistence of one layman, First Baptist Church of Crockett, Texas, discovered a way to "reach out and touch" homebound senior adults through a telephone Sunday school class.

H. J. Stanley was directing a senior adult Sunday school department in 1990 when he realized that several faithful members probably would never be able to return to church due to failing health.

"We wanted to be able to minister to them in some way," he said. "We looked at doing a tape ministry but decided against it. They could hear preaching all day Sunday on television, but they couldn't hear a Sunday school lesson."

At that point, Stanley remembered having read about a church that operated a telephone Sunday school class. Talking with a friend at the phone company, Stanley learned that the program he envisioned -- a series of speaker phones linked by a conference call -- would not work with the existing local telephone system.

However, within a few months a merger involving the phone company permitted the installation of new equipment and wiring, and on Jan. 13, 1991, the telephone Sunday school class became a reality.

Each Sunday at 8:30 a.m., Stanley goes to First Baptist Church and dials a number to activate the system. Within a couple of minutes, the phone usually begins ringing as homebound members call.

"They are so anxious to hear somebody. They do a lot of socializing until it's time to start the lesson," said Stanley, who retired in 1979 after a long career with Exxon.

"Quite a few join in the class until 9:30, and then at 11 o'clock they'll dial in on the radio to hear our pastor, Ed Hogan, preach," Stanley said. "They tell me, 'We feel like we're part of it all again.'"

Stanley and three other volunteers take one Sunday each month teaching the lesson to the seniors, who range in age from 73 to 93 years old.

Class members are not required to be members of First Baptist, but virtually all who have participated eventually joined the church.

Stanley finds new prospects for the class by checking the "Meals on Wheels" roster at Crockett's Senior Citizen's Center.

He also has talked with the activities director at a local nursing home to explore the possibility of installing a centrally located speaker phone so residents could gather on Sunday morning for the class.

First Baptist has 24 speaker phones which it makes available to the homebound senior adults at no cost to them. Currently, 18 phones are being used.

The "Melody Makers," the church's senior-adult choir, adopted the telephone Sunday school class as a ministry project. Together with a few other concerned church members, the choir underwrites all of the expenses for the class.

"It's a love outreach ministry -- a real service to people who have been faithful to the Lord all these years," Stanley said.

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Ukraine open to gospel,  
Texas Baptists told

DALLAS (ABP) -- Ukrainians have a renewed interest in Jesus Christ, and Christians in the former Soviet republic enjoy unprecedented freedom, according to two Ukrainians visiting the United States.

Svetlana Koptilina and Yuri Zozulya, who came to faith in Christ through the witness of Texas Baptists, recently visited in the Dallas offices of Texas Baptist Men.

In the past two years, Texas Baptist ministries in the Ukraine have included providing hospital equipment; leading evangelistic crusades; launching a student summer missionary program, a televised Bible class and several prison ministries; delivering a water purifier; and providing funds for the purchase of 25,000 Bibles and other Christian educational materials.

"People are really moving toward the Lord, showing an interest in Jesus Christ," said Koptilina.

The young mother of two children is mayor of Schastye, a town of 14,000 people about 12 miles from Lugansk -- a 30-minute drive on the rough Ukrainian roads.

Koptilina, who became a Christian last September, is one of about 25 Baptists meeting each Sunday in a home Bible study in the Ukraine. The Bible study is led by George and Drue Christian of Santa Fe, Texas.

"We are not registered as a church yet, but the papers have been filed, and it is in the process of happening," Koptilina said, explaining that new congregations must seek recognition by the Ukrainian Department on Religious Affairs.

However, both Koptilina and Zozulya emphasized the free climate for religious expression in the Ukraine today.

"In the streets of Kiev, I have seen young people my age doing street evangelism and freely preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ," said Zozulya, a 24-year-old interpreter from a small town near Lugansk.

Brought up in the home of his Jewish stepfather, Zozulya said he never subscribed to the tenets of communism. "All my life, I've been searching for two things -- freedom and truth," he said.

While serving three years as a mechanic in the Soviet navy, Zozulya's search led him into Eastern religions, including an 18-month stint as a follower of Krishna consciousness.

It also led him to his first encounter with Jesus Christ. On board ship one night after a violent storm, Zozulya found unexpected peace reading a magazine article about Jesus.

In 1991, having been out of the navy and unemployed for about six months, Zozulya took his next step toward Christ at a crusade led by an Australian evangelist. Although he responded to the invitation that night, he had no understanding of sin, repentance or God's forgiveness -- just a longing to find the truth.

Several months later, while buying bread at a marketplace in Lugansk, Zozulya happened to see an old friend accompanied by Texas Baptist layman Don English.

English, who lives in Lugansk with his wife and two children, teaches conversational English in several educational institutions, using the Bible

as his textbook.

Zozulya struck up a quick friendship with English and soon was working as his interpreter. One night, while interpreting for English in a witnessing situation that Zozulya now characterizes as "spiritual warfare," the interpreter came to realize the depths of his own sin and his need for a new birth.

"Jesus made himself real to me that night," he said. "The Lord Jesus Christ set me free and showed me that he is the way, the truth and the life."

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-- By Ken Camp

Food alone won't eliminate  
hunger, Bread for World says

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Food alone won't solve the hunger problems in the United States and around the globe, according to the fourth annual report on world hunger released Oct. 14 by Bread for the World Institute.

More than half of all Americans contribute to hunger relief, but hunger in the United States has grown by 50 percent since 1985. About 30 million Americans are hungry -- more than 10 percent of the population -- with 36.9 million living below the poverty line.

People involved in feeding programs, including the religious community, must begin to focus their efforts on the causes of hunger if it is going to be eradicated, the report says.

In 1980 there were a few soup kitchens and food pantries, but now there are more than 150,000 private organizations distributing between \$3 billion and \$4 billion worth of food annually.

Even so, hunger in the United States has grown faster than the feeding movement.

David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World Institute, said: "People need to re-examine their contributions to the anti-hunger movement. Some of the effort devoted to helping hungry people must be channeled toward changing ineffective government policies which help to cause hunger.

"Government policies can affect hungry people on a scale that dwarfs the impact of private assistance," he continued. "By calling loudly and strongly on the government to do its part, private citizens can transform the politics of hunger."

He pointed to the crisis in Somalia as an example of how the U.S. government's failed policies create hunger. The U.S. government gave nearly \$1 billion in military aid to Somalia in the 1980s, propping up Mohammed Siad Barre as a dictator, he said. The United States eventually stopped the aid because of human-rights abuses -- the same abuses that led to U.S. military intervention to feed starving people in that country.

The report argues that "private charity needs to be complemented by stronger government efforts. Government cannot end hunger by itself, but government must do its part.

"Widespread hunger persists in the world, even in a country as wealthy as the United States, mainly for lack of political will."

The feeding movement must become an anti-hunger movement that moves beyond feeding to advocacy and education, the report says.

It targets five institutional networks -- including the religious community -- that could help transform hunger politics.

"Religious inspiration and leadership have been important to many of the

movements of social concern that have reformed the United States in the past," the report says.

Religious communities can teach how social concern flows from a relationship with God and help motivate involvement, it adds.

While the report focuses on transforming politics, particularly in the United States, it reveals disturbing global statistics.

Worldwide 1.3 billion people live in poverty.

Civil conflict and a host of other factors aggravated the vulnerability of millions of Africans. The United Nations estimated that 300,000 to 500,000 people died in Somalia from 1991 to 1993. Another 2 million Somalis were displaced.

The collapse of Communism and the break-up of the multi-ethnic states constrict food supplies, creating hardships for people in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe.

Much of the Middle East is still suffering the affects of the Gulf War, with 5 million displaced people.

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-- By Pam Parry

Longtime American Baptist pastor  
serves as BJC scholar-in-residence

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Kenneth Williams, a longtime American Baptist leader, is serving as scholar-in-residence at the Baptist Joint Committee.

Williams, pastor of Baptist Temple in Rochester, N.Y., for the past nine years, is working with the BJC as part of a three-month sabbatical leave. Joining the staff at the end of September, Williams is helping the religious-liberty agency in the area of denominational relations, as well as other research and writing responsibilities.

James Dunn, BJC executive director, said that Williams will add "a distinctive dimension" to the long-standing BJC scholars-in-residence program.

"He will observe, learn, comment, write and participate in our activities from the perspective of a local church pastor, a loyal leader in the American Baptist Churches and a student of the Baptist heritage of religious liberty."

"I am here because I have a deep concern for the heritage, history and formation of Baptist identity," Williams said. "The BJC is on the cutting edge of the application of distinctive Baptist principles to the public policy issues of our day."

A native of North Carolina, Williams is president of the American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region. In addition to his pastorate, Williams serves as chaplain for the Brighton, N.Y., fire department and the Monroe County critical incident stress-management team.

Previously, he was on staff of First Baptist Church in Waukesha, Wis., and Hyde Park Union Church in Chicago.

He is a graduate of Campbell University, Buies Creek, N.C.; Colgate Rochester Divinity School, Rochester; and McCormick Theological Seminary, with additional graduate study at Emory University in Atlanta.

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-- By Pam Parry

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