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Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Wake Forest, North Carolina 27587

P. O. Box 712
Phone (919) 556-3191

ROONEY V. BYARD
Assistant to the President
Home: 536 N. Wingate St.
556-1485

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SEMINARY STUDENT TURNS EMPTY CANS INTO FOOD

By Bob Stainback

Student News Writer

WAKE FOREST, NC - Dennis Testerman is turning empty cans into food and heat for those who are short on both.

Testerman, a third-year Master of Divinity program student here at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, is the founder of P.R.E.A.C.H., which stands for Please Recycle Empty Aluminum Cans Here. The idea is simple: collect the empty soft drink cans on campus, take them in for recycling, collect the money received and channel that money to the poor through agencies dealing with food and fuel problems. In addition to helping the poor, some waste disposal problems are solved.

The idea is simple, but organizing and maintaining it are not. Testerman, from Roanoke, Va., says he has felt called to be involved in this type of activity since he began undergraduate work at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, in Blacksburg. He has a sincere concern for the environment and enjoys being outdoors, where he says he has felt closest to God. In fact, he made his decision

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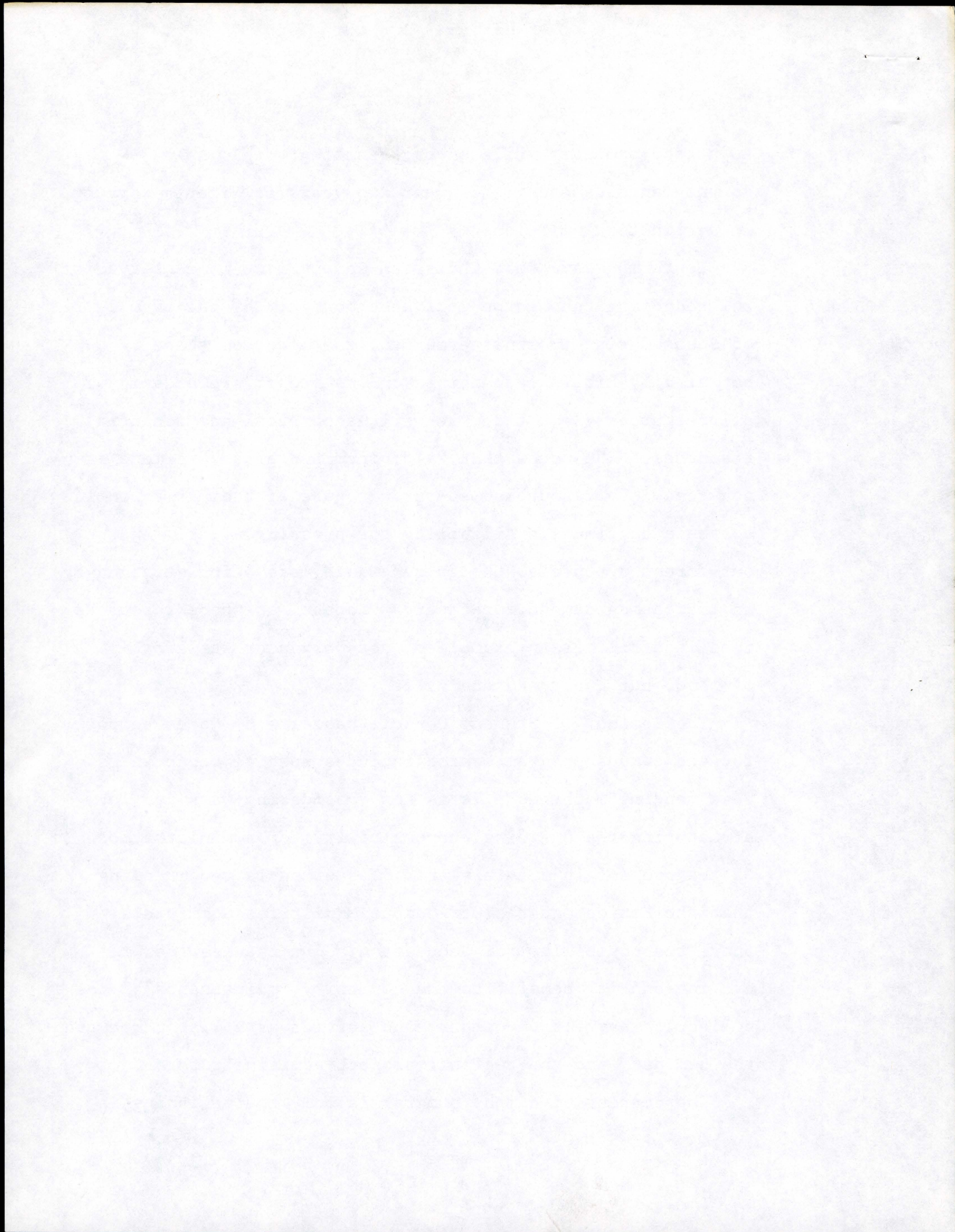
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to attend seminary while on back-packing trip. As a journeyman missionary, he spent two years in Nigeria working in agricultural missions.

Testerman says that Christian involvement in conservation and recycling "should be motivated not only by the example of Jesus Christ in ministering to 'the least of these', but also by Biblical teachings on the proper stewardship of all resources: our time, as well as physical and financial resources." He notes that "Alumminum and glass are made of non-renewable resources, so our wise use of them is essential to their continual availability for pressing needs. And our forest resources, though renewable, are being strained by an increasing demand for paper. Disposal of these resources in a land fill is an example of not only poor stewardship of land, but labor and energy as well."

The Seminary's Student Council has already voted support for the campus program, which includes special receptacles near vending machines. It is now considering ways for structuring the on-going responsibility for administration of the project in future years. Testerman is recommending that the Ethics and the Off-Campus Ministries Committees share responsibility for "education about the need for recycling and its benefit to the community, maintenance of the collection barrels on campus, and service as a liason between the seminary and the regional project admininstrators."

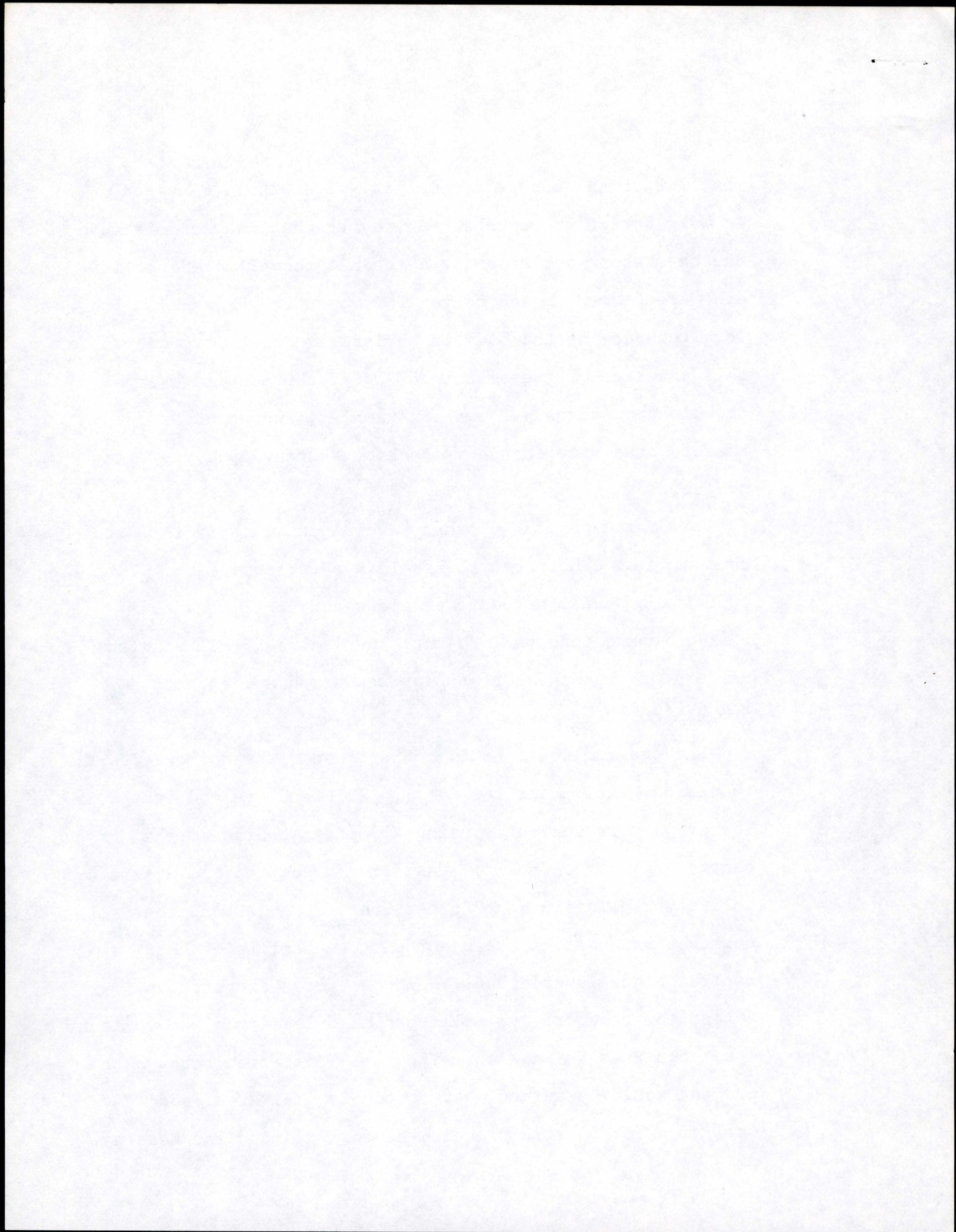
The current on-campus program is only the beginning in



what Testerman sees as a community-wide effort centered in Wake Forest's churches. Believing that many committed church members would participate in a recycling effort if one were accessible and convenient for them, he says, "The local church, as the body of Christ, is an obvious center for this practice of stewardship. Sister churches in every denomination already serve as examples, and stand as ready sources of advice on the methods of setting-up a recycling project."

Testerman points out that several churches in the community have been recycling clothes for some time. In addition to cans, he believes glass and paper could be easily worked into the project. He's already talked with members of the Wake Forest Baptist Church and expects a program to start there in early 1983.

The program would be in cooperation with another effort in nearby Raleigh, called Recycle Raleigh for Food and Fuel. The project is currently using a Baptist church as the central collection point. Testerman hopes to find a similar collection point in Wake Forest, but is requesting that all churches who participate use their own facilities until a central place is selected. He hopes for a cooperative effort to transport the collected materials from the various local churches to Raleigh. The money collected through the project would be turned over to the Capital Area Food Coalition for distribution in the form of food and heating



fuel assistance to needy families.

Testerman, who was reared in a church in the Southern Baptist Convention and who intends to work in a Southern Baptist ministry, is concerned that many Christians whom he knows seem to think of hunger as something "over there", and not as a real problem in all parts of America. He says, "We preach by our lifestyles as well as by our words." Dennis Testerman is doing a lot of preaching both ways these days.

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