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**Rankin: Bold Mission Thrust  
moving on God's timetable**

**By Louis Moore**

**Baptist Press  
12/12/96**

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Bold Mission Thrust is gaining momentum and is well on its way to being fulfilled in God's time frame, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin told the agency's trustees during their Dec. 8-11 meeting in Jackson, Miss.

And trustees called on the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee to rework the SBC Cooperative Program allocation formula "as a tangible demonstration" of its "heightened focus on missions."

While their resolution did not spell out how Cooperative Program receipts ought to be divided, it clearly signaled a desire for an increase in foreign missions funding. Currently, the board receives 50 percent of all funds that arrive undesignated at the Executive Committee from states, churches or individuals. States withhold anywhere from 55 percent to 84 percent of the funds for use in their area before sending on any money to SBC causes.

Rankin's comments challenged critics who claim Bold Mission Thrust is a failure because several numerical goals established more than 20 years ago have not been achieved.

"Those who, with pessimism, announce the failure of Bold Mission Thrust from a statistical analysis are absorbed with human programs and plans and are out of touch with a sovereign God who is moving in providence and power 'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations,'" Rankin said. "They are locked into a narrow denominational view that has traditionally 'commended ourselves by ourselves and measured ourselves by ourselves' rather than seeing divine activity through a filter of faith.

"God does not work in 2 percent or 5 percent annual increments, but he unleashes his power and fulfills his purpose in a 'kairos' of time," Rankin said. "The spiritual results of Bold Mission Thrust are not something that can be planned and programmed in man's time frame. We can only come to him with prepared and submissive hearts and focus on the objective of an evangelized world and trusting God to work through what we offer to him."

During their meeting, trustees also approved a proposal creating a new category for missionary appointment -- an apprenticeship -- that eliminates one of the hurdles some have felt detoured potential missionary candidates from the field.

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The new apprenticeship program allows candidates to go straight to the mission field from seminary without the required two years of full-time work experience in the United States. Proponents of the change have argued that the two-year requirement diverted attention away from the mission field to other forms of ministry in the United States.

Seminary graduates intending to go to the mission field sometimes accept church assignments in the United States to meet the two-year requirement, but then get involved in that work, start families and move away from their original calling to international missions, explained Lloyd Atkinson of the board's office of mission personnel.

Under the new program, missionary apprentices will use their four-year term to meet the requirement for appointment as career missionaries. Trustees also voted to place a maximum age of 45 on those seeking appointment as career missionaries.

The apprenticeship program reinforces a trend missionary appointment personnel have been observing for several years -- that, more and more, the path to career and associate missionary service includes experience overseas either as volunteers, journeymen or International Service Corps personnel. Illustrating that trend, more than half the 51 new missionaries appointed Dec. 8 at Jackson's First Baptist Church had served overseas in one of those three categories.

During their testimonies many of the appointees cited their previous experiences overseas as factors in God calling them to permanent, full-time careers overseas.

The 51 appointments insures the board will again break records for total missionary appointments in one year, Rankin said. He predicted the total count will exceed 580. The board currently has 4,138 missionaries under appointment, plus more than 15,000 volunteers this year.

During the appointment service, Rankin challenged the new missionaries to yield every aspect of their ministry overseas to God's direction.

"If you will continue to yield in submission each day, just as you have in surrender to his call, and count it all joy when you are allowed to suffer and be deprived for the sake of the gospel, you will find the rewards and fulfillment more than you can comprehend," he said. "There is no greater joy than to have the privilege of being that vessel, formed and chosen of God, to bring the water of life to those who may be hearing the gospel for the first time."

Rankin noted the appointment service took place "just a few blocks" from the spot where, as a boy of 10, he made his own profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior during a 1952 Billy Graham crusade. He said even then God was awakening in him a desire to help spread the gospel throughout the world.

"Even now I can distinctly remember thinking, 'I wish everyone in the world could have such an opportunity to know Jesus,'" Rankin said.

During business sessions trustees also approved:

-- a new charter to be presented to the SBC Executive Committee. That charter officially changes the name of the Foreign Mission Board to the International Mission Board. The name change is expected to take effect next June.

-- a recommendation from the board's location study committee that the board's headquarters remain in Richmond, Va., where it has been based since its beginning in 1845. The committee said it would cost \$40 million to \$50 million to relocate the board and such a move would divert energies and funds away from international missions at a time when God is opening new fields and providing new opportunities worldwide.

-- authorized the agency to enter Iceland and Greenland as new mission fields. The board will now seek missionary personnel for those countries.

-- honored longtime board employee Thurmon Bryant, who is retiring after four years as vice president of the office of mission personnel. Bryant was appointed as a missionary to Brazil in 1958, becoming area director for eastern South America in 1978 and serving until 1987. He served as associate vice president in the office of mission personnel from 1987 until becoming vice president in 1993.

After he retires Jan. 31, Bryant will move to Fort Worth, Texas, where he will serve as liaison between Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Foreign Mission Board. Southwestern for many years has provided more international missionary candidates than any other seminary or school. No successor to Bryant has been named.

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**HMB's Larry Lewis honored;  
Ernest Kelley is successor**

**By Martin King**

**Baptist Press  
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ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)--The Home Mission Board paid tribute to retiring President Larry L. Lewis and elected Ernest J. Kelley as his successor.

Meeting Dec. 9-11 at the board's suburban Atlanta headquarters, HMB directors named Kelley, who currently serves as executive vice president of the mission agency, as interim president until the board is dissolved as a part of the Southern Baptist Convention's reorganization. The work of the Home Mission Board has been assigned to the new North American Mission Board (NAMB) which will be created when its trustees organize in June. Kelley begins his term Jan. 1, 1997, when Lewis completes nearly 10 years in that position.

Kelley told Baptist Press the next six months will be vital to the work of the new agency. "I will rely the prayers of Southern Baptists and pledge my reliance on the direction of the Holy Spirit as we begin this six-month period of transition," Kelley said. "I believe it will be a difficult but productive time as we see his leadership."

Kelley, a native of Sewanee, Tenn., has served at the Home Mission Board 19 years, was a member of the Georgia Baptist Convention staff 12 years and was pastor of churches in Georgia, Oklahoma and Tennessee. He holds a D.Min. from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in California, having earlier earned degrees from Cumberland University in Tennessee and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas. He and his wife, Eleanor, have two grown daughters.

Lewis, in his final report to the board, said the agency's progress toward Bold Mission Thrust goals, a convention-wide, end-of-the-millennium strategy, has been significant.

"While other mainline Protestant denominations have declined during Bold Mission Thrust, Southern Baptist membership grew 19 percent. ... The number of SBC churches grew 13 percent, not including 5,000 church-type missions. ... And the number of home missionaries grew 73 percent," Lewis said. While goals for the number of Southern Baptist mission volunteers have already been exceeded, the number of SBC-endorsed chaplains and the number of churches involved in ministry are "on target," Lewis said.

Although expressing disappointment that evangelism goals have not been met, Lewis said he is confident they will be reached by the end of the year 2000. "I still have faith that with the major emphasis on evangelism through Celebrate Jesus 2000, and the obvious moving of God in America, we will reach the goal of winning and baptizing one-half-million people per year."

Lewis told directors that assuring doctrinal integrity at the Home Mission Board also had been a major objective. "Since my presidency began, no one has been employed to an elected professional position, nor has anyone been approved as a missionary who did not affirm the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the reality of the miracles, the validity of the biblical narratives or the divinity of Jesus."

Pledging full support to the new North American Mission Board, Lewis encouraged its leadership to keep church starting and ministry as high priorities, and advised the SBC Executive Committee to provide the agency with sufficient resources.

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"I trust the savings produced by the restructuring will indeed go to home missions. ... I join my colleague, Jim Williams (outgoing Brotherhood president), in asking our leaders to fund the North American Mission Board at a rate of at least 25 percent of the Cooperative Program budget. Each year, the Home Mission Board turns down nearly 75 percent of the mission projects we negotiate with our mission partners simply because we do not have the funds," Lewis said. "I do not believe Southern Baptists want the money saved through the consolidation diverted to causes other than home missions."

The board passed a resolution of appreciation for Lewis' and named in his honor the lake which was built as a part of the new national office building in Alpharetta, Ga. He also was presented with a new automobile during an evening retirement dinner attended by board members, SBC leadership from across the country, staff, family and friends. He will begin serving the first of the year with Mission America coordinating the work of more than 100 evangelical denominations in a three-year national prayer and evangelism effort.

In other business, the board elected June Tate, of Huntington Beach, Calif., to fill an unexpired term as second vice president. The office was vacated when John Avant, of Brownwood, Texas, accepted a pastorate in Georgia and was no longer eligible to serve on the board.

Directors also approved 22 new home missionaries, 27 chaplains and a six-month budget of \$47.6 million which will serve the agency until its work is transferred to the North American Mission Board.

The directors also held a lengthy discussion regarding foreclosures on delinquent church loans. However, after understanding the current procedures and policies assuring adequate counseling and assistance to churches which are delinquent, a motion to change the procedure was withdrawn.

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(BP) photo (mug) of Ernest Kelley to be available in SBCNet's BP Photos Library or from the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press, (770) 410-6535.

**Schools' association elects board,  
assumes Education Commission work**

**By Tim Fields**

**Baptist Press  
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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--In their mid-year meeting, members of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools (ASBCS) elected a 15-member board of directors to develop policies and oversee activities as the organization assumes some of the functions of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, which closes its doors Dec. 31.

The association, made up of 68 Southern Baptist-related seminaries, colleges, Bible colleges and high school academies, has operated in concert with the Education Commission, which, after 80 years of operation, is the first of six agencies to be dissolved or merged under the convention's "Covenant for a New Century" reorganization plan.

In an agreement worked out between members of the Education Commission and the Southern Baptist Convention's Implementation Task Force and ratified by the SBC Executive Committee in September, the commission is closing six months ahead of schedule and all employees and programs terminated in exchange for a \$150,000 grant to be paid to the association over a two-year period. The agreement will net the convention approximately \$200,000 in unused funds from the Education Commission's nine-month 1996-97 budget of 400,000, approved at the SBC annual meeting in June, and from commission reserves.

Ben Elrod, ASBCS chairman and president of Ouachita University in Arkansas, told association members Steve Carleton, executive director of ASBCS and also executive director of the Education Commission, had agreed to continue to serve as executive director of ASBCS through June 1997, when the association plans to elect a permanent director.

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Carleton told members that due to budget restraints he probably will be the only full-time employee until June 1997 and additional services would be secured on a contract basis. Carleton told Baptist Press the ASBCS board is expected to name a search committee before June and he would then place his name in consideration for the permanent post.

Carleton reported to members 51 of the 68 Southern Baptist schools already had paid their association dues for 1996-97. The dues were increased approximately 500 percent during a called meeting of the association last September in Mobile, Ala.

"I am extremely pleased that these schools have stepped up to the plate to begin paying their own way as an association," Carleton said. "To date we have collected \$99,000 in dues. With the Southern Baptist Convention's grant of \$100,000 for 1997, the association's reserves of \$25,000 and some funds that the Texas and Georgia state Baptist conventions have indicated they will provide, the association will have an operating budget of approximately \$230,000 for 1997," Carleton said.

"These funds will help us assume some of the programs formerly assigned to the Education Commission. I'm confident the remainder of the schools will pay their dues shortly and join us in this important venture," he said.

"Our greatest challenge is to find additional funding during the next two years to replace the grant from the SBC," Carleton said.

During his report to association members, Carleton said the SBC Executive Committee will allow association offices to be located in the Southern Baptist Convention building in Nashville, Tenn., through Jan. 31, and the Tennessee Baptist Convention has given approval for the association to be located at its offices in Brentwood in space available by April 1, 1997.

"Although it is unclear where the association will be housed during February and March, the Tennessee Baptist Convention will begin receiving mail for us Jan. 1, 1997," Carleton said. Correspondence can be addressed to the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools, Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37027. The phone number for the Association, beginning Jan. 1, will be (615) 391-9938.

Carleton told association members the ASBCS has been granted publishing rights to The Southern Baptist Educator, which has been published by the Education Commission the past 61 years. ASBCS will decrease the frequency of the magazine from 10 times a year to quarterly. Carleton said ASBCS had contracted with Tim Fields, assistant director of the Education Commission and current managing editor, to edit and publish the magazine through June 1997.

Carleton said other programs expected to be provided by the association include an employee referral service similar to the placement registry maintained by the Education Commission, promotion of workshops and seminars and electronic communication such as an Internet web site for communication among schools and promotion of the institutions to the public.

During the meeting, ASBCS members heard a report from a student insurance program endorsed by the association which could net ASBCS as much as \$20,000 in revenues during the 1997-98 budget year.

In other business, ASBCS members heard reports from Dan Grant, executive director for the Consortium for Global Education (CGE), formerly Cooperative Services International Education Consortium. CGE is a consortium of 47 Southern Baptist-related colleges and universities committed to international education and sharing. CGE currently has 300 separate educational programs in 80 countries. Grant reported that CGE members agreed to work toward integrating the goals of the organization with those of ASBCS and toward eventually being housed in the same offices and sharing employees.

Grant reported on new educational opportunities for faculty and students in Morocco, Spain, East Africa and China.

Board members elected to ASBCS include nine presidents: Elrod; C. Pat Taylor, Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Mo.; Jairy C. Hunter, Charleston Southern University, Charleston, S.C.; Cordell Maddox, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn.; Howell Todd, Mississippi College, Clinton; Larry McSwain, Shorter College, Rome, Ga.; E. Doug Hodo, Houston Baptist University, Houston; Thomas Corts, Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.; and Bob Agee, Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee. Three chief academic officers elected to the board are: Michael V. Carter, Carson-Newman; Joseph E. Early, Cumberland College, Williamsburg, Ky.; and Don Schmeltekopf, Baylor University, Waco, Texas. Three members of constituent groups elected to the board are: Bill Pinson, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas; Jim Porch, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention; and Dan Grant, president of the Consortium for Global Education.

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**Georgia committees to explore  
issues raised in Godsey book**

**By William Neal**

**Baptist Press  
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ATLANTA (BP)--It has often been noted that when Baptists are at an impasse over a decision or a sense of direction, they will pray about it and then form a committee. That is basically what happened Dec. 10 when the Georgia Baptist Convention's executive committee wrestled with their response to the controversy over Mercer President Kirby Godsey's new book.

Following an extended question-and-answer session with Godsey in which he was asked to clarify his theological views, executive committee members went into executive session (closed to all but committee members) to discuss their response. After all the rhetoric and discussion, it boiled down to passing a resolution that called for appointing a committee "to study the mission of the Georgia Baptist Convention in its relationship to Mercer University and to discern the University's role in the mission and values of the Georgia Baptist Convention."

A second committee will specifically explore theological matters raised in Godsey's book, "When We Talk About God ... Let's Be Honest," which have raised questions in the minds of many readers about some of the theological tenets held by the Mercer University president.

Both the GBC executive committee at its September meeting and the Georgia Baptist Convention in its November meeting approved resolutions that censure the book and called for a response from Mercer trustees.

Mercer trustees met Dec. 5 in Macon to approve a resolution in response to the executive committee's resolution and then came to the Dec. 10 executive committee meeting in Atlanta to respond personally to the committee.

David Hudson, chairman of Mercer trustees' executive committee, noted the issue under discussion was "greater than a book, a trustee or an officer," saying it is important to keep the 163-year relationship that had been forged between Mercer and the Georgia convention "as partners in Christian education." The trustees' resolution had affirmed Godsey while also supporting the commitment to keeping Mercer a Baptist university.

Godsey stated he was "deeply sorry if my confessions of the heart have offended or hurt you," but he was emphatic that his "clear and resolute affirmation is that Jesus Christ is lord of my life, and of all history ... . I have tried in good faith to bear witness to Christ ... . That does not mean that I am always right in my confessions."

Godsey admitted it had been painful at times to hear some of the words that have been hurled at him, and he noted "the only cure for hurt and fear is grace and forgiveness."

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Suggesting all parties move "beyond politics," Godsey said he wanted to build bridges and he hoped to see the university and the convention talking and listening to one another. "I'll take the first step," Godsey said, "in that I'll ask the trustees to invite the executive director of the convention to be a part of our trustee meetings on a regular basis." He went on to say he would love to see Mercer use its resources as an ally of the convention.

Godsey was asked a number of questions about his theology based on statements in the book. Committee members wanted to know what he believed about repentance and salvation. Godsey said he believed the basis of salvation was God's grace and not our repentance, although he did feel that repentance was necessary to receive that grace. He expressed a belief in heaven and hell and noted, "I am called to proclaim the presence of God in the world, but God must ultimately define who he will receive . . . . (A) life outside Christ leads to a life of destruction."

Godsey noted he had great hope that all would respond to God's grace but was not a universalist in the sense of believing that all will be saved without need for personal response. He said he felt many of the statements from his book had been taken out of context.

While Godsey's comments seemed to be favorably received by many committee members, others questioned the clarity of his book on those same issues, feeling there was a disparity between Godsey's words in print and his statements of clarification.

Nelson Price, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, and a member of the executive committee, suggested a committee be appointed to submit theological questions to Godsey for his comments. The executive committee later passed a recommendation calling for such a committee, to be chaired by Price, with six other members appointed by the president of the convention. The committee would submit up to 12 salient questions related to theological concerns raised by the book and have Godsey respond. After he meets with the committee, that information would be distributed in print, presumably through The Christian Index, the convention's newsjournal.

The committee that will decide on the theological questions for Godsey is separate from the Mercer Relationship Study Committee called for in the resolution adopted by the executive committee. That committee will be appointed "by the President of the Georgia Baptist Convention, in consultation with the Chairman of the Executive Committee, and the Executive Director of the Convention and the President of the Convention shall serve as chair." That committee is to "clarify the relationship between the Georgia Baptist Convention and Mercer University" and continue "the process of communication which has already begun" in the interest of "healing the crisis."

No specific time limits have been placed on the study committee for making its report and GBC officials said privately they doubted a report would be ready by the March executive committee meeting. Godsey's responses to the theological questions being formulated will be printed in The Christian Index, hopefully early in the year as they become available.

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## **German pilot in WWII finds welcome in Baptist church**

**By Rebecca Day**

**Baptist Press  
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FYFFE, Ala. (BP)--On Nov. 11, Americans across the country paid tribute to veterans who have served our country, with parades and flags flying in city streets and doorposts of homes.

One veteran, though, did not take part in those festivities. Warner Meyers, a member of First Baptist Church, Fyffe, Ala., fought in World War II, but he fought for the opposition.

Now an American citizen, Meyers grew up in Chemnitz, Germany, near the border of what was then Czechoslovakia. On Jan. 30, 1933, when Meyers was only 14 years old, Adolf Hitler became the German Fuhrer.

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Raised a churchgoer by his Lutheran parents, Meyers did not buy into the fascist philosophies of Hitler's Nazi party. "My parents were very religious," he said. "But there were two conflicting sides: my parents who took me to church and the Hitler Youth, who indoctrinated against the church, against religion."

All young people in Germany were required by law to join the Hitler Youth, Meyers explained. The organization was designed to ensure the loyalty of future generations to the Nazi philosophy. The law also dictated that, at age 18, German youth were to join the Nazi party or "remain a second-class citizen."

At 18 Meyers chose the German Air Force, Luftwaffe, rather than the Nazi party. "There were no politics involved," he said. "You had to swear allegiance to Hitler, but then they left you alone. You were never forced to become a Nazi."

When he joined the Luftwaffe, Meyers never thought his country would go to war. "Everything (in Germany) was going so smoothly," he said, "and then in September of 1939, we marched into Poland. At 3 o'clock in the morning, a guard said to me, 'Come on, we're going to fly.'"

As Meyers and his squadron began their flight into the neighboring country, they could see the first ground troops and tanks rolling slowly ahead.

"I can't be sure, but we might have been the first plane that flew into Poland," he said. Meyers and the others with him dropped no bombs that day; their mission was reconnaissance, capturing the mission on film.

They continued reconnaissance as England became involved in the war, helping keep an eye on English troops. They later became involved in actual fighting, but Meyers' fighting days were short-lived. During the Battle of Britain in March 1941, an attempt to bomb an airplane engine factory in Scotland ended when Meyers' plane crashed into the North Sea. Downed in enemy territory, Meyers became a prisoner of war.

"I thought my life was over," he said. Captured by the English Coast Guard, Meyers was imprisoned in Dundee and moved to an interrogation center in London.

What Meyers did not know was that his life was just beginning.

"When I was captured, the first thing I asked for was a dictionary and a newspaper. That's when my re-education began," Meyers said.

As a member of the Luftwaffe, Meyers was defending his homeland. He knew nothing about the Nazi agenda to conquer the world, to eliminate all but the Aryan race. Concentration camps were not a part of what he was fighting to protect.

"People here (in America) don't understand why we didn't know. We only knew what we were told," he said.

For example, Meyers and his squadron were stationed in Belgium from 1940 to 1941 during the Battle of Britain. They were not allowed to read or hear any news from outside sources. The German forces suffered great loss during that conflict, but no soldiers were even allowed to see a casualty list.

At the end of the war, Meyers and other German POWs were forced to watch films of concentration camps. "I just couldn't believe it," he said. "In my opinion, no German could do those things."

As a prisoner, Meyers was moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Because so many British ships were being destroyed, the country barely had enough food to feed its own citizens. Like Meyers, many prisoners of war were shipped to work camps in Canada. He remained there until December 1946, more than a year after the war was over.

He never returned to his homeland. The section of Germany in which he lived had fallen under Russia's communist rule. He remained in England as a translator, using the English he had perfected in Canada to assist communication between the English government and German Nazis being detained there.



He also began to petition the Canadian Embassy for permission to return. But it wasn't just because he liked Canada.

"There was romance involved," he admitted, noting he had worked on a farm as a prisoner in Canada. "The neighbor's daughter was rather good-looking."

Emily and Meyers corresponded after he left Canada, and their letters continued until he was allowed to return to Canada in 1950 -- the first German allowed to immigrate to that country after World War II. However, he received permission to go only if he and Emily would marry within four weeks. They did.

From Canada, the couple immigrated to California, where they lived for 32 years. The Meyerses initially came to Fyffe, Ala., to visit friends Bob and Billie Swalwinski, who moved from California back to Billie's home state after retiring. Swalwinski and Meyers were business partners in California. The Meyerses, deciding that Fyffe would be a nice place to live, purchased some land from the Swalwinskis, packed up their lives and moved to Alabama in July.

The Swalwinskis, already members of Fyffe's First Baptist Church, quickly introduced the Meyerses to several of their friends who were also church members. Meyers quickly became friends with pastor Phillip Webb, and the two men spent a lot of time discussing Meyers' faith.

Meyers had accepted Christ in the prisoner of war camp, where he realized God was his only hope.

"Going through prison camps, being shot down ... it was all a great strain," Meyers recalled. "I came to the conclusion that I needed higher help. That is why I turned to God and Jesus."

Webb said he believes it made a great impact on Meyers to be in that environment and still experience the freedom Christ brings. Meyers, who had never been baptized after becoming saved, was baptized at Fyffe in August. He also became very active in church activities, working with the after-school tutoring ministry and an English as a Second Language program.

Despite the fact that several American WWII vets are church members, the Meyerses were welcomed with open arms.

"They're in Sunday school together (Meyers and other vets) but I don't think they've ever discussed the war. It's just 'here's a brother in Christ and we embrace him,'" Webb said.

The Fyffe church is the first Meyers has been active in. "I just never found the right church," he said. But the members of First Baptist "welcomed us with open arms. All of a sudden I said, 'This is it!' And I've never regretted it. I love it!"

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Day is a correspondent for The Alabama Baptist newsjournal.

### **Charges against pastor target church's homeless ministry**

**By Karen L. Willoughby**

**Baptist Press  
12/12/96**

BUENA PARK, Calif. (BP)--In a dispute over his church's ministry to the homeless, pastor Wiley Drake was arraigned Monday, Dec. 9, on 11 misdemeanor criminal charges filed by the city of Buena Park, Calif.

Also charged were First Southern Baptist Church's secretary, Vondel Mumaw, and treasurer, Eugene Chance.

The three each face up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine for each count.

City officials in this Southern California entertainment corridor that links Knott's Berry Farm with Disneyland connect the church's ministry to homeless people with an increase in the area's crime statistics.

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Police say their calls have tripled from a quarter ago; there was a death they labeled as "suspicious" at the church, along with an attempted kidnapping on the property.

"I think the prosecuting attorney decided this is the time to shut us down," Drake said. "It's just one of those things where the city has said, 'We don't want homeless people in our city.' To admit you have homeless is bad for business."

The death was from natural causes, Drake said; the attempted kidnapping was unrelated to the ministry.

During the 10 years Drake has been pastor at the Buena Park church, which now averages about 75 for Sunday morning worship, there has been some kind of ministry to the poor. There used to be one closet to store food staples for those who asked the church for help. Another closet held clothing.

Now, about 500 families look to the church for assistance totaling more than 12 tons of food each month.

"For a long time we were preparing maybe 10 homeless bags a week -- granola bar, fruit cup, vienna sausages -- stuff you can eat on the run," Drake said. "Now we put out 400 of them in a week."

It is not the giving of food that bothers the city, Drake said. It's the fact that homeless people last spring started sleeping on the church's two-acre property.

"They feel safe here," Drake said.

That violates the city's camping law, said city officials who have been working with the church since May to rectify the situation.

First Southern compromised its "no smoking on church property" rule because citizen complaints objected to people who gathered to smoke just off the property, Drake said.

When city fire, safety and health inspectors in June cited several instances of non-compliance with city codes, the church corrected them.

"They made it real clear that the problem wasn't the codes but that we were allowing people to camp on church property," Drake said. "They said if we did not cease and desist they would bring criminal charges against me."

In a September meeting, the city offered a compromise: If the church would proceed immediately with plans to construct a homeless shelter, the city would hold off filing criminal charges.

First Southern was given two weeks to hire an architect and structural engineer. The church was to apply and pay \$1,903 for a conditional use permit by Nov. 22.

"The staff at the city indicated they had previously waived some fees for a local Catholic church," Drake said. "But this time the city attorney recommended to the city council that they not waive the fees because of the problem with church and state."

First Southern collected \$1,673 from its members; homeless residents raised the remaining \$286 on Thanksgiving, after Drake told them the ministry would have to shut down without it.

Drake and his pro bono attorney took the permit fee payment to Assistant City Prosecutor Greg Palmer the following Monday, Nov. 30.

"He said, 'You didn't get the money in on time and there has been an increase in crime in the area and we're changing the rules,'" Drake said.

The church was given 24 hours to comply with one of three options: Shut down the ministry, reduce the homeless population from 53 to 25 or hire certified security officers who would work 24 hours a day, with at least two per shift.

"We found even if we had the cash money to hire them that we couldn't get any security guards that quick," Drake said. "And then a Christian security guard firm said, 'Why don't we train some of your people?' We proceeded to train about a dozen people, including me."

State law requires security guards to undergo four hours of training and to pass a test with a score of 100 percent, Drake said.

"Actually, the first shift that was due was manned by volunteers; the next shift we had one volunteer and one homeless person," Drake said. "The police came by every four hours and confirmed each security guard had a card in their possession."

The city filed charges because the security guards were not -- as stipulated -- paid personnel, Drake said.

"We met our end of the deal and they said we didn't," Drake said. "They filed 11 misdemeanor criminal charges, nine of which have to do with code violations in the (present) building, one with an auto in the wrong place and one of the Buena Park camping law."

The church's attorney pleaded neither guilty nor not guilty at the Dec. 9 arraignment. They filed a demur, a motion that it was a complex case. The judge ruled that he would hear the demur Jan. 24.

"We obviously had hoped for a little more," Drake said. "We had hoped they would drop the charges."

"Mr. Palmer based filing the charges on the basis of our (non-paid) security guards," Drake continued. "We had hoped the judge would see that we had complied with the city's request for security guards and deny the charges but apparently he didn't want to override the assistant prosecutor. We had hoped for dismissal or at least a revoking of filing of the charges, but the first goal was to have Christmas with my family and ministry. We'll have that. Our Christmas party is set for the 21st."

God continues to get the glory, Drake said. Because of the local media's frenzied coverage of the city's squabble with the church, a Los Angeles basin anonymous benefactor gave the church \$20,000 the week after Thanksgiving to help in the construction of its homeless shelter.

"We're back to business as usual," Drake said. "Helping people, that's what we do."

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**Official states city's case  
against Wiley Drake, church**

**By Karen L. Willoughby**

**Baptist Press  
12/12/96**

BUENA PARK, Calif. (BP)--City officials here cast a different light on the story of their squabble with pastor Wiley Drake and First Southern Baptist Church's ministry to homeless people.

"The problems out there have just mushroomed," Assistant City Prosecutor Greg Palmer said in a telephone interview. "We have a significant public safety problem because the population has ballooned since the media got hold of the story."

The problem started last spring, when the church that had been ministering to the homeless for at least 10 years began letting people camp on the property.

When police responded to complaints from neighbors, they found violations of city codes, such as a patio enclosed without obtaining a building permit and transformed into a food distribution center. They found household items -- furniture and appliances -- being stored outdoors. They found people living in tents, recreational vehicles and automobiles.

"At a conference Aug. 28, we told Mr. Drake he was violating the law but we would not pursue that if he would build a structure for the homeless," Palmer said. "We set up a time schedule for him that he did not keep."

"While waiting for this, because of the press, the population of the camp ballooned," Palmer continued. "Police were called to the church eight times between June and September. They were called 24 times since then."

And while the calls before September were "nuisance" calls such as urinating in public, the calls since then have been for crimes such as assault and battery, burglary, terrorist activity, attempted kidnapping and assault with a deadly weapon, Palmer said. Two stolen vehicles have been recovered on the property. People have been cited for drinking on the grounds.

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Drake was a victim in the assault with a deadly weapon crime, the prosecutor said. The terrorist and kidnapping crimes involved use of the outside pay telephone the church asked to be installed on the property. The city still is investigating the death of a man on the property; alcohol poisoning is a possibility.

"We have a significant public safety problem in the neighborhood," Palmer said. "It's a problem created by him (Drake) inviting more and more people to stay on the property."

When the city first got involved, fewer than 25 people were camping at the church, the prosecutor said, alleging now there are upwards of 70.

In an attempt to work with the church, Palmer suggested round-the-clock security guards be hired to help protect the neighborhood, but Drake twisted the offer, the prosecutor said.

"He's got hens guarding the henhouse," Palmer said. "These are not trained, experienced, private patrol officers. He took nine people, gave them an open-book test and got them a temporary card."

The law required that he file charges on all the board of directors of the nonprofit corporation, which is the legal entity under which the church operates. That included the church secretary and church treasurer as well as Drake.

"I can't simply file on Wiley alone even though I think he's the one most responsible," Palmer said. "I understand the church took a vote. They're standing behind him. It's a concerted effort."

If the three plead guilty or are found guilty in a jury trial, the prosecutor said he is going to ask for a fine of \$200 and three years probation for each, and that all illegal activities and conditions at the property cease or are abated.

Until the hearing Jan. 24, his hands are tied, Palmer said.

"It's a shanty town over there, tents everywhere, tarpaulins, RVs, vehicles in disrepair," he said. "And the situation is going to continue to deteriorate because Wiley's dug his heels in."

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**Prof: Christmas is good time  
to ponder God's intangible gifts**

**By Debbie Moore**

**Baptist Press  
12/12/96**

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Some of the most important gifts in life are intangible, a professor of social work told students in a Dec. 5 chapel message at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

"As we think about Christmas, remember the gifts from God," said Jeanine Bozeman, and "especially remember God's gift of the ability to grow and develop as a Christian. ... After the gift of God's Son, this is one of the greatest gifts."

Bozeman, a specialist in family therapy, is a much-requested speaker throughout the Southern Baptist Convention for conferences and retreats; she has taught social work at NOBTS since 1985.

"We don't have to remain spiritual babes," she said. "God put within us the gift of the potential for maturity, the potential to become more like Christ."

Years don't get it, she said. "Years alone don't bring about maturity." Instead, God has provided four disciplines that must be exercised in order for one to become a mature Christian, she said, speaking from the third chapter of Philippians.

"First, keep your attitude right," she said. "We are each responsible for our own attitude; our attitude is not necessarily inherited from our parents."

A person's attitude will affect that person in many areas of life, from how he succeeds to how he accepts losses in life, she said. "Our attitude will determine if we will thank God for what we have or if we will curse God for what we've lost."

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The apostle Paul had an attitude of wanting to know Christ, she said, and "Paul wanted his attitude and his deepening knowledge of Christ to make a difference in his day-to-day life. ... Paul wanted to know how to live like Christ lived, to love like Christ loved, to look at people and see the potential that Christ saw in them and to learn to forgive as Christ forgave.

"Second, keep your back to the past," she said. "Past achievements are not enough" to further the spiritual maturing process. At the same time, in order to be able to develop spiritually, "some things we need to forget: disappointments, failures, sins.

"Some things we must forget. It amazes me that human nature wants to remember things God said he has forgotten. But we continue to punish ourselves by remembering the past. ... While we must be aware of the past influences sin had on our lives, we must live in the new life Christ has provided for us and be aware that God is in control of the future.

"Third, keep your eye on the goal," Bozeman said. "For a Christian, that means to be that Christian God created us to be. It's an endless pursuit," she said. "We'll never reach perfection in this life. But remember that Christ is with us every step of the way.

"Fourth, keep your strength at the task," she said. "We must discipline ourselves" in order to grow and develop as a Christian. "It will take perseverance; it will take determination.

"Life is not a leisurely stroll. The apostle Paul said it's a race to be run with enthusiasm, zeal and zest. We need to give life every ounce of energy we have.

"Did you realize that most of us live by developing only 10 percent of our potential?" she said, quoting from research by psychologist Abraham Maslow. "Most of us sleepwalk through life," she said.

"God has given us so many wonderful gifts, but do we use them and thank him for them? It reminds me of the boy who fell out of bed. When his mother asked him what happened, he said, 'I guess I stayed too near to where I got in.'

"Some of us have remained too close to our salvation experience and we've failed to use that wonderful gift God gave us to grow and become more like his Son.

"All relationships have to start somewhere, but they're expected to go somewhere too. Resolve to use God's gift this new year."

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