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-- BAPTIST PRESS

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May 14, 1996

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Jim Henry: Southern Baptists

awakening to 'what God can do'

By Keith Hinson

Baptist Press

5/14/96

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention is making progress toward racial reconciliation and the journey must continue, said Jim Henry, SBC president and pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.

As his second term as president draws to a close in June, Henry said the "response has been good" to passage of the "Resolution on Racial Reconciliation" at the SBC's June 1995 meeting in Atlanta.

In an interview with the Florida Baptist Witness, said the SBC's Inter-Agency Council has discussed having one agency -- probably the Christian Life Commission -- encourage racial inclusion within the denomination.

Such an agency would observe the SBC's inclusion of "minorities and placement in the seminaries and our denominational life," Henry noted.

While the SBC has made strides in the area of racial inclusion and reconciliation, Henry said, "Recent years have sensitized us that we have some miles to go. We're not there yet. I think the difficulty in the Georgia church illustrates that," referring to a recent controversy that erupted after a deacon in Georgia allegedly objected to the burial of a mixed-race infant in a Baptist church cemetery.

Henry emphasized the importance of inclusiveness in Southern Baptist life, saying in committee appointments he has made as SBC president he has tried to be sensitive to the concerns of both minorities and women.

"Also, I have asked each committee to be conscious of women and minorities when selecting leaders for boards and agencies in the convention," Henry said. "I told them, 'No quotas, but no barriers either.'"

Henry said his longing for more inclusion of women and minorities within the denomination is shared by other SBC leaders.

"They have said, 'Please, we hope the committees will send us godly, qualified women and minorities on our board.' That has been healthy," Henry declared. "I have sensed no discrimination or hints at it from anybody at the state or denominational level, about cutting anybody out of the process, as far as women and minorities are concerned."

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Henry suggested that theologically conservative nominees from churches that allow designated giving to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship should not automatically be disqualified from serving.

"I think there's a difference between a church putting the CBF in the budget and a member designating," he stated. "I think if the church puts it in the budget, they've made a statement that they're not focused on SBC concerns.

"If an individual designates money to the CBF through a church, that can happen anywhere. It could happen in my church or any other church," Henry said. "In terms of who is going to be in denominational leadership, I believe you have to be committed.

"If a church is saying we're CBF -- or both American Baptist and Southern Baptist -- you're getting a mixed signal," Henry said. "They may be wonderful people, but we should be focused in leadership."

Henry also suggested there are people within the SBC who are conservative but "maybe don't feel like they would be looked at to serve because they're not in a certain group or clique. I'm not talking about the CBF. Some of our people just want to know that they have an opportunity to serve."

Among those who need to be involved in denominational life are young pastors, Henry said.

"I think some of them have been used to operating independently and don't see any need for the structure or fellowship in it," Henry said. "They get their inspiration and resources from a wider venue.

"In a few years, when they become key leaders, if they don't have the commitment to who we are and what we're about, we're going to have some serious problems," Henry said.

Some within the SBC who feel left out "want to feel like they have a part," Henry said. "They want to be sure that we don't go back to the way we accused things of happening before 1979 -- where there was an inner circle that decided 'who and what and when.' There's deep concern that that's not repeated. That's something we need to deal with."

Henry acknowledged what some Christian thinkers -- such as church-growth consultant Lyle Schaller -- have called the "decline of denominationalism."

"I think as the generation dies off that has been very denominationally oriented we're going to lose something very special unless the younger generation picks it up and sees the value in the denomination," Henry said. "I think we're already getting a little bit into that slide."

Restructuring the SBC may "help some," Henry said of the "Covenant for a New Century" -- a restructuring plan needing only a second bylaws vote at the SBC meeting in New Orleans, June 11-13, to be enacted.

"But it's a deeper thing than restructuring," Henry stated. "A lot of our people do not appreciate our good traditions, our structure or the value of it. They have become independent-minded, thinking, 'I don't need the denomination.'

"They work through other churches or para-church groups, which I'm not saying is wrong. I'm just saying that we're not up to speed as a denomination. They're finding their information and inspiration outside the SBC," Henry said.

"God has raised up some people outside our denomination," Henry said. "Whenever we in the SBC offer the conferences and other things that are meeting people's needs, our people will come to what we offer.

"They're not against being Southern Baptist, but they're not limited to the SBC world. I'm not saying they need to be. But we need to pick up some speed there and see how we can better meet the needs of our local church.

"We should remember that the denomination serves the church; the church does not serve the denomination. We need to get back to that," Henry declared.

Still, Henry said he believes denominations will have a role in the future.

"I think there's a place for denominations but I think that paradigm will change. And as it does, we need to see how we will fit into that change. It's going to call for some thinking and for some coordinated action," Henry said.

Asked if he expects the SBC meeting in New Orleans to give final approval to Bylaw 15, which will initiate full-fledged restructuring of the denomination, Henry said if the few letters he has received are any indication, then there's not likely to be much controversy about the bylaw's final approval.

At the SBC meeting, the Committee on Order of Business "wants to emphasize revival with music, theme interpretations, and I know in Dr. Ronnie Floyd's message," Henry said.

"It seems kind of quiet. We've had so many heated and demanding conventions," Henry said, "I think this is going to be a period of reflection, renewal, revival and focusing on where we're going.

"I'm expecting an exciting convention, but I hope with no major divisive issues coming before us -- healthy discussion, but nothing that will keep us stirred up," he said.

During his past year as president, Henry said, time seemed to pass quickly.

"It was a fast year," he said. "There was more travel but I also had a lot more contacts with people and denominational leaders. I felt it was more physically demanding but more rewarding, perhaps spiritually, than the first year."

Some of Henry's presidential activities included a trip to Yitzhak Rabin's funeral in Israel; attendance at a White House ceremony where evangelist Billy Graham and his wife, Ruth, received the Congressional Gold Medal; and conversations with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

"It was a privilege to be in contact with the president and share our prayers and our views on moral issues and family values -- to speak up on some of the issues that confront us," Henry said.

In recent weeks and months, Henry said he has urged the president "to establish a commission to look at the effects of gambling on the American scene" and to sign a bill prohibiting "partial-birth abortions." In April, however, Clinton vetoed the abortion ban, which seems unlikely to receive enough votes in Congress to override the veto.

Henry said he hopes his influence has urged "some movement toward right decisions and hopefully in the future, those nudges will help. ... I've tried to emphasize the value-oriented moral standards that God has honored in the past in a nation -- and will honor in the future."

The SBC as a whole has made progress during the past year, Henry said.

"We've seen an improvement in baptisms and record giving to the Cooperative Program. Missions offerings set a record, and we started the second-highest number of new churches in our history," he noted.

"I think as we've been able to devote more time, prayer, resources and energies to God's priorities -- rather than our denominational difficulties -- we've seen what God can do," Henry stated. "The theological struggles had to be dealt with, but now we are able to focus more on soul-winning, missions and church starting."

Asked if the SBC is likely to continue the direction of the past 15-plus years, Henry answered, "I feel like it will. Most of the leadership positions in our convention are led by conservatives and boards that are conservative.

"I think there's been a real sense of being alert to drifting away from our roots. I hope the coalescing and a consolidating of our effort to do the main thing will help us concentrate on loving Christ, loving each other and loving a lost world. That's where we're healthiest and do the best."

Henry indicated he has enjoyed sensing the heartbeat of Southern Baptists -- especially during the past year.

"I hear this time and time again from Southern Baptists. We want to start churches, get the gospel to the world and reach the lost," Henry said. "We're still talking that, and I think a lot of churches want to practice that.

"I sense a stirring for revival. I think all of this is indicative of the heartbeat God is putting back into our people," Henry said.

What Southern Baptists have done in the past will not be "adequate for the demands of the future," Henry noted.

"Since the mid '60s and '70s, I think we've let up and I think there's been a deterioration in reaching people. We've lost the edge and excitement. We've gotten more concerned about some other things," Henry said. "Soul-winning, discipleship and prayer was lost in the shuffle of some good things.

"I think we got off the road. I think in recent years there has been a turn to get back on the road. There's a hunger for that," Henry said.

The spiritual hunger is not limited to Southern Baptists, Henry said. He cited such phenomena as Promise Keepers, "Experiencing God" and calls for fasting and prayer by national Christian leaders such as Bill Bright.

"All indicators are that something's moving beyond Southern Baptists. As big as we are, we could be in the vanguard of what God wants to do in the future," Henry said.

Asked if Southern Baptists are in the vanguard yet, Henry replied, "In isolated cases, yes. But denominationally we're not ready yet. I think there has to be revival first.

"Indicators of a heart cry would include longing for revival, for authentic Christianity, for not playing the game anymore, for getting rid of the trivial, focusing on the majors, for the purity of the faith and living the morals," Henry said.

But Southern Baptists must deal with problems that beset the spiritual life of the denomination and of churches, Henry said.

"We've seen so much disorientation, disintegration with our churches -- divorce, sexual addiction and other problems," Henry said. "I think God's got to do something special.

"We face a crisis in losing staff and pastors, because of marital or moral crises or conflict in the church. We've got to stop that somehow and find some help there."

Henry said First Baptist in Orlando has been supportive of his role as SBC president.

"The church has just been absolutely wonderful. I have not had one phone call, one letter of complaint or one word said as complaint about the two years I've put in," he said. "They've prayed for us and encouraged us.

"It's been a fantastic opportunity and privilege to be SBC president," Henry said. "I pray to God that I've been faithful to him, to his charge and to his people."

During the interview, Henry also listed other key concerns he said Southern Baptists should address in the years to come:

-- inner-city ministry. "Along with emphasizing abortion and homosexuality as issues, we also need to include the homeless, the poor, crime and racism as objects of our prayer and concern," Henry said.

-- youth ministry. Henry said today's youth are often "more violent and less interested in church. I think we have to have an emphasis on dealing with students -- particularly high school-aged and under."

-- Christian schools. "I think more churches should look at the possibility of establishing quality Christian schools -- not because of segregation -- but building quality education with a Christian view and mind-set to the world through God's eyes," Henry stated. "I think we need to look at how we can help those people who want to establish Christian schools."

For the most part, public schools will not be a positive influence "unless there's some restructuring in their leadership to help in this area," Henry said.

Henry suggested Christians who teach in public schools should be the best witnesses they can be, under the circumstances.

"We certainly encourage them and pray for them. We would say, 'Stay in there and let the light shine,'" he said. "We've got a lot of public school teachers and administrators in our church."

But in some places, Henry said, "educators are inhibited at every level about their faith and find their hands tied. There's just no opening whatsoever to let faith make a difference or even answer questions about their faith."

Christians who feel led to stay involved in public schools should "get into the PTA and make a difference. Speak up for moral values and religious freedom in the schools -- not for religious persecution by school administrators and others who operate out of fear, and sometimes, I think, with a definitive commitment to keep anything morally religious or Christian out of the schools. That's wrong," Henry stated.

-- worship. "That's rapidly changing, sometimes creating conflict and concern in our churches," Henry said. "Many of our people worship the best way we can without forgetting tradition but at the same time not ignoring the contemporary things."

New worship styles, Henry noted, may involve clapping, raising hands, different kinds of music, different orders of worship, drama and even different days of worship.

Henry said First Baptist in Orlando will begin a Monday night worship service in August. The target group, he said, will be mostly singles in their 20s and early 30s. The worship service will provide child care and may also attract young adults. The church's singles minister will preach and provide Bible exposition, Henry said.

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Estimated 2.5 billion see
Graham's latest TV effort

Baptist Press
5/14/96

MINNEAPOLIS (BP)--An estimated audience of 2.5 billion people heard the gospel message through the "Billy Graham World Television Series," an evangelistic preaching program featuring Graham and offering what one national broadcaster called "a very powerful counterpoint to the daily drudgery that most of mankind faces."

The World Television Series was aired at prime time April 14 on national television networks and international satellite systems in more than 200 countries -- including some traditionally opposed to the proclamation of the gospel. It is likely that more people heard the gospel message that day than on any previous day in history, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association reported.

"You can't seem to find happiness. You can't seem to find joy and peace and satisfaction. What is it? What is it that you're missing?" Graham, 77, says on a special one-hour "Starting Over" evangelistic telecast, which made up this outreach along with two Billy Graham feature-length films. "Faith in Christ can fill that void and give you a reason for living. You can start all over."

During the hour-long MTV-style program, Graham's message was enhanced by music performed by acclaimed Christian artists. Visual techniques such as switching between color and black-and-white images and rapidly shifting scenes were meant to reflect people's desperate search for happiness. Graham's message was supported by testimonies from one-time ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young, Cliff Richard and Graham's own son, Franklin.

Government officials and television executives in a number of countries have contacted the Billy Graham association to ask it to rebroadcast the program, interpret it into additional languages or do another next year.

In South Africa, "Starting Over" was the second-most-watched program in the country's history, behind the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela. The director general of the national network said, "This is what we need." Across the nation, an estimated 50,000 home cell groups viewed the telecast, spanning 400 different religious groups.

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The program was aired on nearly 170 stations in all of the former Soviet republics -- most on national television, including the major Russian channels. In some republics, the placement of these programs took on state importance, requiring approval from the offices of the president or parliament.

The interpretation of the program into 48 languages helped get prime-time exposure in many countries as well as support from church leaders and government officials, said Bob Williams, BGEA director of international ministries.

"This program is not only evangelistic," a national newspaper columnist in Uganda commented, "but it also comes across very well as a kind of moral rehabilitating program, where material help and spiritual help can go hand in hand. This is the kind of program we would want to see on our (television) screens."

Television commentators called "Starting Over" both "innovative and creative -- the gospel presented in an upbeat and relevant way" and "religious programming that will compete with what our young people are watching."

Officials of one channel in Mexico said there had never been so many calls in relation to a program. As a result of the impact of the broadcast, five of the television staff made personal commitments to Christ.

Church leaders similarly welcomed the new format of the World Television Series, which was more than a television program, but actually a worldwide virtual crusade -- linking BGEA with 1 million churches invited to participate in the outreach. Using a program called "Operation Matthew," church members were trained to hold television house parties, offering an international audience the possibility of a new beginning, as they invited friends and relatives to their homes, numbering in the millions, to view the program and then discuss Graham's message.

According to one church leader in the Philippines, "The concept of television house parties is one of the most effective and productive ways to proclaim the gospel -- it is a painless way of bringing uncommitted people to hear the good news." A woman in Burundi wrote, "My little living room was filled with 20 people and I could not ask them to leave. They wanted to talk."

In Russia, a church leader reported, "Young people came together in groups to watch the evangelistic preaching program and found it easy to understand, edifying and inspiring. Our church building was overfilled with newcomers after the program with Billy Graham."

More than 450 million pieces of literature were required in 48 languages for follow-up by mail, telephone counseling and in-home Bible studies. Many churches are reprinting follow-up literature, having already depleted their supply.

At an individual level, reports from the program, translated into 48 languages, included:

A man in Argentina called to say the program had saved his life as it came on when he was about to leave his home for the railway station to lay down in front of a passing train. Another man in the United States who had been contemplating suicide for several days was channel surfing, stopped on the broadcast and realized he needed God right then.

A youth in Panama called the telephone number displayed on the screen and said, "I am in a satanic group, please pray for me. I want to get out of it." He prayed with a Christian and received Christ.

The program was shown on the national television network in Croatia, which Christians there called one of the most significant historical events of the century. They thanked BGEA for "helping us evangelize our own people."

In Moldova, one local coordinator negotiated with the mayor to arrange for uninterrupted power during the broadcasts in the several districts of his city where the electricity goes out every day. He reported that as a result, everyone in the village knew about the coming TV programs, and after the broadcasts there was no room in their church for all those who wanted to hear the Word of God.

At a maximum security prison in the Ukraine, the nationally broadcast program was the evening show for the convicts. As a result, 16 criminals came to the Lord. "Eight times have I been imprisoned for crimes," one of them said, "but now I have gained real freedom."

The day following the broadcast, two Christian women met in the northern Russian city of Murmansk. When a woman passing by slipped on the ice-covered street, they helped her and started to talk. She told them she had watched the program the previous day and had personally responded to the call, praying the prayer of repentance, but was not sure what to do next. That meeting in the street helped her to find sisters in Christ.

In the United Kingdom, a lady heard about the program, walked along the street until she found a house with a satellite dish and invited herself in. In Lisbon, Portugal, two women who opposed and tried to block an existing Bible study group watched the program and decided to join the group.

In South Africa, one viewer called to say, "The program had the right mix of reality and hope through Christ -- if this is church, then I am in." Another caller exclaimed, "'Starting Over' does for one spiritually what vitamin C does for those with scurvy."

An older man in Tanzania, after seeing the program, said, "People are dying of AIDS because they are looking for the cure from wrong sources." From trouble-torn Burundi came the question from one man, "Does Billy Graham know Burundi, to prepare this message specifically for Burundians?" His friend replied, "Billy Graham has prepared for the whole world but the Spirit of God knows Burundi and the Burundians."

There was a strong interest among the international media, including those in London, where the rival BBC network made the SKY Television transmission a focus of a news report. All major newspapers and radio stations there covered the broadcast. The Scotsman, in Edinburgh, reported, "Evangelist Billy Graham Moves Religious Broadcasting to a New Era."

When asked if the success of the World Television Series indicates a new direction for the Billy Graham ministries, the BGEA's Williams said, "The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association is always looking for every opportunity to reach as many people as possible with the gospel." Seventy percent of the series' viewing audience, he noted, was under age 30.

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Compiled by Art Toalston from reports by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and southern California-based journalist Dan Wooding. (BP) photos available on request from the Billy Graham media office at (612) 335-1371.

**Ky. Baptists to vote on
reduction in SBC giving**

**Baptist Press
5/14/96**

CEDARMORE, Ky. (BP)--A proposal to reduce Cooperative Program gifts channeled to the Southern Baptist Convention from Kentucky by 2 percent, from 37 to 35 percent, has been approved by the state convention's executive board.

Messengers to the Kentucky Baptist Convention in November will be asked to approve the proposal, with the change beginning in September 1997.

The change, approved on a 59-36 vote by the KBC executive board May 7, was proposed by a Cooperative Program work group appointed out of the board's business and finance committee.

The work group reported financial projections made in the late 1970s and 1980s related to Bold Mission Thrust were "unrealistically ambitious" and have not come close to being met by Kentucky's churches. Bold Mission Thrust, launched in 1979, is a Southern Baptist effort to share the gospel with every person on earth by the year 2000.

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The proposal would reduce KBC contributions to the SBC about \$375,000 -- 5.4 percent -- in the 1997-98 fiscal year. For the 1996-97 fiscal year, the KBC is projected to forward to the SBC \$6.94 million.

In response to the vision of Bold Mission Thrust, the KBC earlier adopted a goal of increasing over time the percentage of undesignated Cooperative Program gifts sent to the SBC to 40 percent, leaving 60 percent of receipts for state ministries. During this period, the percentage given to the SBC has increased from 35 percent to 37 percent.

The original goal was based on the assumption that local churches, inspired by Bold Mission Thrust, would significantly increase their contributions to the Cooperative Program.

However, while the KBC has increased the percentage of its receipts forwarded to the SBC, the state's churches on average have reduced the percentage of their receipts forwarded to the Kentucky Cooperative Program.

The proposal drafted by the work group and approved by the executive board has two parts.

First: "Effective Sept. 1, 1997, return to the original base of 35 percent for SBC causes, a percentage which reflects the percentage decrease in church Cooperative Program contributions since 1987."

Second: "Base the future percentage allocated to the SBC on the percentage of growth or decline in Cooperative Program giving from the churches."

To become effective, the proposal must be adopted by messengers to the KBC annual meeting in Bowling Green next November.

The SBC portion of the Cooperative Program funds the Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board, six SBC seminaries and other national ministries. The KBC portion of the Cooperative Program funds a variety of missionary endeavors across the state, services to the churches provided by KBC staff, student ministries on college and university campuses, five Baptist schools and a family of state agencies and institutions.

Had Bold Mission Thrust goals been achieved, Kentucky Baptist churches would have contributed \$45.6 million to the Cooperative Program in 1995. In reality, Kentucky Baptist churches contributed \$17.8 million in 1995, less than 40 percent of the target.

The Bold Mission Thrust goals also projected Kentucky Baptist churches would contribute \$57.6 million to the Cooperative Program in the year 2000. However, that goal is three times higher than what Kentucky Baptist churches actually contributed last year.

During the same period the KBC increased its percentage giving to SBC causes, Kentucky Baptist churches on average reduced their percentage of undesignated gifts forwarded to the Cooperative Program. The average percentage of undesignated church receipts given to the Cooperative Program in Kentucky has declined from a high of 11.88 percent in 1987 to 9.97 percent last year.

This has placed a squeeze on mission money available for use in Kentucky, the work group reported.

The work group said this squeeze has been made more severe by two other factors: the KBC assuming ownership of Jonathan Creek Baptist Assembly and the KBC assuming greater responsibility for matching contributions to ministers' annuities.

Upon obtaining Jonathan Creek in 1983, the KBC spent \$1.8 million on building improvements. Additionally, operating Jonathan Creek has required about \$100,000 in subsidies each year since.

KBC expenditures on the expanded annuity plan have increased from \$250,000 per year to \$640,000 last year.

Some results of this squeeze, the work group reported, include:

- reduction of KBC staff by seven positions.
- no new funds for KBC executive board programs in nine years.
- decreasing allocations to KBC Christian education causes.

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-- no increase in allocations to Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children in 10 years.

The Cooperative Program proposal generated the most discussion of any item presented to the KBC executive board during its May 6-7 meeting at Cedarmore Baptist Assembly. Although the majority of board members voted for the proposal, those who opposed it had the most to say during discussion.

Several pastors compared the KBC's predicament to tight financial situations faced in their churches in the past. At such a time, reducing missions giving isn't the answer, they argued.

Bill Groover, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church in Louisville, said he has faced difficult financial challenges in three churches in the past. "Each time we increased our missions giving and God blessed us," he reported.

For the KBC to decrease its contributions to the SBC "would send out the message that this is the way to solve financial problems in churches," Groover said.

Ron Davis, pastor of Franklin Crossroads Baptist Church in Cecilia, echoed that thought. "Whenever you step back in faith it is not recognizing a total commitment to the Lord," he said.

Further, Davis said, support for SBC causes is the primary reason churches give through the KBC Cooperative Program. "The SBC is what we are; the KBC is how we do it," he said.

Supporters of the proposal, however, said comparing the KBC's ability to inspire greater contributions from the churches cannot be compared to a pastor's ability to inspire greater contributions to local church offerings.

"The churches have voted with their pocketbooks. They have not caught the vision of Bold Mission Thrust," said Michael Barley, pastor of Franklin Street Baptist Church in Louisville and a member of the business and finance committee.

Barley noted he hopes the downward trend in giving from the churches would be reversed. But in light of how churches have been giving, "this is a realistic proposal," he said.

Plus, the proposal puts the burden of concern on the churches, Barley said: "People will know if their churches cut back there will be consequences. This puts the accountability on the churches."

Billy Randolph, a layman from Franklin, echoed Barley's thoughts, speaking in favor of the motion. "There's a time when you've got to balance your checkbook," he said. "We can't place more money than we actually have."

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Reported by Mark Wingfield.

Moonwalker Duke helps
others walk on earth

By Don Kirkland

Baptist Press
5/14/96

PAGELAND, S.C. (BP)--"You never know how life's going to turn out," former astronaut Charles Duke said in a visit to the church where he was baptized, First Baptist Church, Pageland, S.C.

"If I had told Granny Duke that one day I was going to walk on the moon, they would have put a net over me."

And it may have been good that Neil Armstrong was there for his famous utterance about one small step for a man and one giant leap for mankind. "Probably all I would have thought to say," said Duke, "was 'Yaaaahoo, we're here.'"

The former moonwalker and his younger (by six minutes) brother, William, a Lancaster, S.C., physician also baptized at the Pageland church, were the speakers at an April 28 service honoring 53 people who had been members there 50 years or longer.

In his introduction, interim pastor Fred Miller called attention to Duke's worldwide ministry by saying, "The man who walked on the moon is now helping people walk on the earth by walking with God."

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But it wasn't always that way for Duke, who admitted he once was "more a churchian than a Christian." After his moonwalk at age 36, Duke then wondered, "Now what?"

"I was never satisfied, always looking for the next adventure," he said. "I was in charge of my life, not Jesus. He was my Savior but not my Lord."

Duke's personal life was in shambles when he turned to God. "He healed my marriage and my family, and I can truly say that we walk with Jesus. Walking on the moon was exciting, but it lasted three days. Walking with Jesus lasts forever."

Brother William, the "sickly one" of the two who spent so much time in a doctor's office that he never considered being anything other than a physician, told of his own earthly walk -- and the need for glancing back from time to time. "It's only in looking back," he said, "that you can see what God has done in your life."

Duke drew attention to that time, recorded in Joshua 4, when the Israelites and the Ark of the Covenant crossed the Jordan -- safely -- and were ordered to erect a memorial of stones on the banks there to remind them of God's great act on their behalf.

Those stones, Duke noted, were a "spiritual marker" of a significant event in the lives of the Hebrew people. Bringing it up to date, he said what an "awesome responsibility" it is to remember "what God has done in your life."

Duke concluded his testimony by asking the Pageland congregation, "How many altars have you built to his love and grace?"

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Southeastern names pastor
as new dean of students

By Lee Weeks

Baptist Press
5/14/96

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary has tapped a familiar face on campus to be the school's new dean of students.

Allan Moseley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Durham, N.C., and adjunct professor of Old Testament at Southeastern, has been named vice president for student services, dean of students and professor of pastoral leadership and church ministries at the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary.

"Allan Moseley has proven himself as pastor, preacher, theologian and counselor," said Southeastern President Paige Patterson in announcing Moseley's appointment. "He'll be a double-service man for us."

Moseley, 38, has been the Durham church's pastor more than six years and has taught Old Testament adjunctively at Southeastern since 1994. Southeastern's board of trustees unanimously elected Moseley to the faculty during their March meeting.

Moseley said he believes more than 14 years in the pastorate have prepared him for the multi-dimensional job of seminary administrator and professor.

"A pastor wears a number of hats as a counselor and administrator, preacher (and) teacher," Moseley said.

"Over the last few years, God has rekindled that interest in academics in ways that could only be explained with his providence," he said.

Southeastern's academic vice president and dean of the faculty, L. Russ Bush, said God had given the seminary a gift: "Dr. Moseley is one of the best pastor-teachers I know, and the seminary could not be more fortunate than to have this staunch Baptist leader in this role. He is a solid evangelical with a pastor's heart."

Moseley said he is looking forward to returning to the classroom. "In every (academic) field, good scholarship is presenting students with various views of the issues at hand," he said. "That is what I want to do as I teach pastoral leadership styles."

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Moseley said he plans to emphasize Christlike love be the pastoral priority. "Churches are more likely to achieve kingdom goals if the people know their pastor loves them and lives like Jesus," he said.

Moseley is filling the vacancy left by Dean Danny Akin's departure from Southeastern to become vice president for academic administration and dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Akin, vice president for student development and dean of students at Southeastern, is scheduled to step down from his post June 1 to begin his new job at Southern. Moseley will assume his administrative duties at Southeastern June 1.

A Montgomery, Ala., native, Moseley received a bachelor of arts degree in religion and philosophy with a minor in business from Samford University in 1980, subsequently earning his doctor of theology degree with an emphasis in Old Testament and Hebrew and his master of divinity degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Moseley and his wife, Sharon, married 16 years, have two sons, 14 and 12, and a 2-year-old daughter.

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**Winfrey named news director
for Ky. Western Recorder**

**Baptist Press
5/14/96**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--David Winfrey has been named news director for the Western Recorder, the weekly newspaper affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Winfrey, 30, has been associate director of news and information at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board since January 1992. He was elected unanimously to his new position May 13 by the Western Recorder's board of directors.

Recorder Editor Mark Wingfield commended Winfrey as "bright, energetic, articulate and an innovator."

"David shares our vision for maintaining the Recorder's reputation as one of the premier Baptist publications in America," Wingfield said. "His love of missions, his personal involvement in the life of the church and his excellent skills as a writer and editor make a dynamic combination."

At the Recorder, Winfrey will have primary responsibility for developing and editing the news and feature pages of the weekly publication. He also will do extensive news and feature writing.

Prior to working for the HMB, Winfrey was a staff writer for the Greenville Piedmont in Greenville, S.C. In that capacity, he covered city government, breaking news and religion.

A South Carolina native, he earned the bachelor of arts degree in journalism from the University of Georgia's Henry W. Grady School of Journalism in 1988, with a minor in political science. During his college years, he served as a writer and front-page editor for the Red & Black, the independent daily campus newspaper.

Winfrey is a member of Second Ponce de Leon Baptist Church in Atlanta, where he serves on the missions committee and strategic planning committee. He also has been active in Christian recreation issues, working to develop a hiking ministry.

Winfrey will join the Recorder staff June 6.

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**Golden Gate vice president
named to development post**

**Baptist Press
5/14/96**

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Steve Thomas, vice president for institutional advancement at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, will become special assistant to the president for development on Aug. 1, relocating to Tulsa, Okla., where he will establish a regional development office for the seminary.

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Since 1991, when Thomas was elected vice president to direct the newly initiated development program, gifts to Golden Gate have increased from \$256,000 per year to more than \$5 million annually. Endowment has increased three-fold to more than \$10 million and the seminary has launched its first-ever capital campaign.

"Little did we know how richly God would bless Steve's leadership in this new endeavor," said seminary President William Crews. "However, while devoting his time and talents to the seminary's programs, Steve has not maintained a life outside work. He has decided to address this void in his life."

Thomas will work with friends and alumni in the region of the country east of the Rocky Mountains, Crews said. The remainder of his time will be spent pursuing additional graduate studies and other business and personal interests.

"Steve has a unique devotion to the seminary and a tremendous passion for leading our development team in securing the seminary's future through gifts," Crews said. "While I regret Steve will no longer be serving as vice president, I am excited he will remain with the seminary and serve in this new capacity."

Thomas, 35, received his bachelor of business administration in accounting from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee. Before coming to Golden Gate, he served as assistant vice president for development and special programs at OBU. Thomas also has worked with Cargill Associates of Fort Worth, Texas, as counsel-in-residence.

Cameron Crabtree, assistant vice president for institutional advancement, will serve as acting vice president during the search for a new vice president.

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Congregation's versatility
fuels inner-city vitality

By Karen L. Willoughby

Baptist Press
5/14/96

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--James Page is a white man from Oklahoma who perfected his Spanish while working in Spain. Now he's so completely bilingual he shelves his books by topic rather than language.

"The Kingdom of the Cults" is held up by "El Caos de las Sectas" and J.L. Packer's "Knowing God" leans against "Dios y la Creacion" in an office jammed with enough chairs for 10 committee members at San Francisco's Primera Iglesia Bautista del Sur, where Page has been senior pastor for 10 years.

Page is the first Anglo to be named executive director of the California Hispanic Baptist Fellowship and also is involved with the similarly named national group. He is chairman of the administrative committee for San Francisco-Peninsula Southern Baptist Association and, as he has opportunity, he leads marriage enrichment retreats for Hispanic couples.

But mostly, Page is pastor of a church that is thriving in San Francisco's poverty-stricken Mission District because it is meeting people's needs.

Primera Iglesia Bautista is on the "San Francisco Free Eats" chart; the first Sunday of each month about 100 people receive a full, hot breakfast in the church's fellowship hall.

Primera also is a member of the San Francisco Food Bank. Every Wednesday after church, committee members bag food products purchased earlier in the day for 10 cents a pound. About 30 bags are distributed each week.

"We started seven years ago because of the need in the area and in our church," Page said. "A lot of people are out of work or are day workers. We wanted the community to know we are here to help."

But physical food is only the first step in the church's strategy to reach area residents with the good news of God's personal love -- a strategy in a continual state of flux.

Evangelistic broadcasts on Hispanic radio and television, for example, gave way to direct mail to new area residents, and that strategy has given way to home Bible study groups.

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"We've tried to go to some things on a more personal basis," Page said. "Massive saturation is not as effective without personal follow-up, but most people live in buildings with locked, gated doors on the outside" that thwart visitation.

So now, about 30 people are in training either to lead or to host home Bible study groups.

"I really put a lot of emphasis on education," Page said. In addition to a full-scale Sunday school program, he leads adults in discipleship training on Wednesday nights. Youth get together both on Wednesday and Friday nights. And for children, there's a Wednesday group and Sunday children's church.

In addition, Primera is a learning site for one of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary's Ethnic Leadership Development centers.

Ultimately Primera's strength is that its members themselves are equipped to find and minister to people who need Jesus; now in its 45th year, Primera has started eight mission churches and is strategizing with an Anglo church to start a new work in San Pablo. Primera worships in English at 9 a.m. and Spanish at 11 a.m. The evening service is sentence-by-sentence bilingual.

With all this to manage, is Primera succeeding?

"Success doesn't necessarily mean someone has come to church, but that you have ministered in the name of Christ," Page said. "Success for a church should be measured in faithfulness to God's calling and in effective use of the church's resources."

But even when it is measured in a more traditional way, Primera still stands up well to that test of faithfulness and stewardship: The church has baptized 40-50 people every year for the last nine years.

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Community replenishes
strained food pantry

By Terri Narrell Mause

Baptist Press
5/14/96

BALTIMORE (BP)--Perhaps it's the sagging economy and the increasing problem of inner-city poverty. Or perhaps the word is spreading that help is available to hungry people in southeast Baltimore.

Whatever the reasons, the number of people served by Canton Baptist Church and Neighborhood Center's food pantry has doubled in the past year, according to pastor-director Jon Spencer.

While the increase certainly represents a greater opportunity for ministry, it does not come without problems -- such as a lack of money and resources for tackling such overwhelming need.

But the Canton church has found support from not only its members and Baltimore Baptist Association churches, but also from businesses, individuals and non-Baptist churches throughout southeast Baltimore.

Canton's food pantry opened during the late 1970s, when the church was still a mission of Patterson Park Baptist Church in Baltimore's Highlandtown. Since then, the traditionally ethnic neighborhoods around the church have changed, with an influx of professional people. But one thing that has remained constant is the plight of poverty-stricken people.

The Canton pantry is the only full-time food provider in the southeast corner of Baltimore. Clients are referred by city agencies and often walk miles to obtain a bag or two of groceries for their families. When they arrive, volunteers at the pantry try to meet more than just their clients' physical needs by sharing Christ, distributing tracts and Bibles and inviting them to church.

In the past four years alone, the number of people served at the center quadrupled from 1,172 in 1992 to 4,590 in 1995. Some of the increase can be attributed to Canton's participation in a Baltimore City Department of Social Services program in which the church distributes food provided by DSS. The large majority of clients, however, are not referred by DSS and are given food provided with money from the Home Mission Board, churches and private donors.

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"I really don't know all of the reasons for the increase (in clients)," Spencer said. "I think it's a combination of economic factors and other variables."

Resources to keep the pantry open, however, did not increase with the number of clients. For instance, in 1992 the pantry received \$16,000 from the Home Mission Board, which provides annual funding for the pantry through its annual world hunger offering in Southern Baptist churches. This year, with hunger giving down across the convention, the HMB was only able to promise \$5,000.

With the HMB money already exhausted and the pantry's expenses straining the church budget, Spencer and the church council brainstormed earlier this year about ways to keep the pantry open without sacrificing the small congregation's other important ministries -- such as youth and children's outreach.

Some of the council's proposed options included the last resorts of cutting back the pantry's opening hours and decreasing the food amounts given to clients. While members hoped to avoid such measures, they agreed that if it came down to those options, cutbacks would be better than closing the pantry.

But, thanks to the generosity of community members and local churches, such actions have so far been avoided.

When Spencer wrote about his concerns for the pantry in his monthly column in the association newsletter, churches immediately responded with donations of money and food. A couple of weeks later, a reporter for The East Baltimore Guide newspaper got wind of the pantry's struggles and printed a front-page story about the ministry. The phones rang continuously for several days afterward with concerned community members who wanted to help.

In addition to food and money from churches and private individuals, businesses began sending checks, including one for \$500. A nearby Lutheran church sent \$800, and a benefit basketball game for the pantry has been scheduled between the local police district and the city's human resources personnel.

"We've had a tremendous response from people," Spencer said. "It's really been inspiring to see the community come together this way. It restores your faith in the kindness of humans." The donations have the church pantry overflowing, and Spencer said he is optimistic God will continue to provide funding for the pantry throughout the rest of the year.

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Chaplain: Mentally disabled
can laugh, cry & believe

By Russell N. Dilday

Baptist Press
5/14/96

BOONEVILLE, Ark. (BP)--Fred moved slowly to the front of the chapel, concentrating on the words of the song he was to perform during the Wednesday evening service.

As he reached the pulpit, he turned to face the audience of about 30 people. All was quiet as he paused before singing. Then, straining to carefully form each word, he began.

"Do Lord, Oh do Lord, Do you remember me?" Fred sang slowly.

He paused again, carefully recalling each word and trying to vocalize the first syllable. Sensing Fred's need, chaplain Chris Copeland prompted him on the next line: As the first word left Copeland's mouth, Fred picked it up and began the song again.

"Do Lord, Oh do Lord, Do you remember me? Do Lord, Oh do Lord, Do you remember me -- way beyond the blue?"

The audience clapped for Fred's performance, just as they had for the other singers that evening. Anyone in the service was invited to provide special music. Fred's broad grin as he returned to his pew showed his excitement at their approval.

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Fred (not his real name) is one of more than 160 residents at the Booneville (Ark.) Human Development Center, where Copeland has served as chaplain the past 19 years. The center provides housing and teaches living and job skills to mentally disabled residents.

Copeland, one of five full-time chaplains supported by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, is there to provide tangible proof God does indeed remember residents like Fred.

"I'm here to provide ministry to people who otherwise would not have it," Copeland said. "The community does not provide it on a very large scale, so therefore, in a specialized setting, we can provide for those people."

May is observed each year as Chaplaincy Month among Southern Baptists. Copeland is among more than 2,400 Southern Baptists who serve as chaplains and pastoral counselors.

More than 1,000 serve in the military, while 823, including Copeland, serve in a variety of health-care settings, but he is one of only 15 who currently serve in a ministry setting exclusively for those with mental disabilities.

Other chaplains, according to 1995 Southern Baptist Home Mission Board figures, serve in such institutions as prisons, jails and nursing homes as well as business and industrial settings, including law enforcement and fire protection.

During the past year, the HMB endorsed 179 new chaplains. Southern Baptist chaplains reported more than 27,000 professions of faith; made almost 2 million visits in work areas, homes and recreation sites; conducted more than 80,000 worship services or Bible studies; and provided approximately 270,000 individual counseling sessions.

Copeland, as a chaplain to the mentally disabled, said he sees few differences between the spiritual needs of his "clients" and the general population.

"I have very few clients who do not comprehend that there is a God," he explained. "I have very few clients who do not comprehend that there is a Christ who loves them. They are more accepting of that than most adults. It does not require a lot to understand who God is, who Jesus is and that he loved you enough to die for you. That's the bottom line of the gospel."

Copeland added, however, the individuals he serves need acceptance more than most. "A lot of clients tend to think of themselves as the person that was beaten up on the highway and left. The expression of love and concern by society was not something many of them were used to when they were growing up. They were teased and taunted."

The special needs of his congregation, he said, require a special way to deliver the gospel message. "We make an assumption when we use our church language, and many of our clients would not relate to those words," he noted. "If you were to use the word 'lost,' they would think in terms of, 'I have dropped something.'"

"When you talk to them, you ask them if they have a knowledge of who God is and that he wants to be a part of their lives. And if they do not know God, they are in a position of missing out on one of the things that he wants to provide for people -- and that is to go to heaven and be with him."

Copeland said many of his clients often do not have a clear picture of even the most basic images in religion. "I asked a client one day to draw me a picture of the devil. I got a picture back of what looked like Casper the Friendly Ghost with a smile. If, as a preacher, you're standing in the pulpit and you mention that Satan is in the process of trying to disrupt your life in a certain way, but yet their mental image is of Casper the Friendly Ghost, with a smile, there's a direct confusion. You've lost them."

In addition to his pastoral role, Copeland functions as a counselor for residents. Their most frequent questions, he said, "deal with boyfriend or girlfriend problems. Sometimes it has to deal with family problems or authority problems. Sometimes they want to know whether or not God approves of them doing a certain thing."

"Most of it is not different than it would be talking to a youth or lower-aged child," he said. "These are adults who may have childlike ways of achieving their goals, but they have the same ambitions as we do. They still want to own the boat, the truck, the house, the clothes. Their dreams and aspirations are the same as ours, but their handicap lessens their ability to move in that direction."

Copeland also serves as chaplain to the nearly 320 staff at the facility, called "the hill" by many workers. "It's a 60-40 situation," he said. "My first priority is the client. To many of them I'm the only pastor they've ever known. I make myself available to both and I do visitation daily. I move around the hill.

"With staff, my role is in the form of (conducting) marriages, marriage counseling at times and being able to visit them in their work areas. My main focus is the clients, but the two are so intertwined it really is hard to separate."

Copeland said 1980 census statistics show 3 percent of the population is considered mentally disabled. "Consequently, the state of Arkansas was broken down to have approximately 68,000 mentally retarded people. Of that number, there are less than 2 percent in the five major institutional systems in Arkansas -- about 1,200 to 1,300."

He said as adults, even the mentally disabled are accountable for their decisions. "I find nowhere in the Scriptures this watershed that we would like to hold onto ... that certain people are among the holy innocents.

"There are clients and mentally retarded people in this world that do not have a knowledge of what is taking place around them," he said. "I feel that God will protect them. But if you also have to go back to what Adam and Eve did, they ate a piece of fruit. It was a rebellious act against God.

"There was not a lot of deep theological thinking. They didn't understand the consequences," Copeland said. "My clients are the same way. They may not understand all the deep theological statements or relate to Revelation in its fullest capacity, but they know enough that there is a God who loves them and there is a Christ who died for them. And they want him to be a part of their lives."

Some of the knowledge of the basics of good and evil Copeland has taught throughout his chaplaincy ministry is reflected in client interviews he has conducted.

Relationships with other residents is an important theme for Copeland's congregation. A 24-year-old male commented, "The good Lord wants ya'll to do right. No stealing, no cussing."

Another male, 25, noted, "God said to be good to another kid. If you read the Bible, it tells you how to act right and keep from being bad. You listen to God. God will help you."

A female, 27, said everyone should "be nice to everybody. He (God) don't want nobody pushing and shoving and fighting and not cussing either."

And, from a 33-year-old male resident, "When I went to bed last night, I told God I was sorry about what I did. I told him I would never do it again. Ever. He forgave me."

Many also have a good concept of salvation. A female resident, 36, said, "Jesus wants us all to be saved. He don't want the people to do things wrong and he wants everybody to be saved. I want the Lord to help that person do right."

A 35-year-old female remarked, "Do you know what's going to happen to them when they die? Do you know what's going to happen to them when he comes back on earth? Think about all those people that do not believe in Jesus. ... I know that he's going to come any time soon and I'm ready for him. Maybe ya'll are not ready for him, but I am."

And a male, 22, emphasized, "Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins. He didn't die for nothing. He died (for) us to be saved."

Copeland said his own views on ministering to the mentally disabled have progressed significantly in 19 years. "When I first looked at the place, I went back and told my wife there was no way in heaven that I can do it."

Why? "It was the physical appearance (of residents)," he replied. "They were not ugly, just different. I was trained to be a hospital chaplain, had been to two colleges and then a seminary. Then I found myself in a world that went totally against what I was taught as to how to express it. The change came when I felt the Lord leading me here."

Copeland said he "sees them now as people. I used to see the abnormality rather than seeing the person.

"Our society has a way of devaluating people and distancing people," he acknowledged. "We create a group that is 'less than.' The membership of mental retardation is man-made. We pick a number and boom, you're there."

However, he insisted, "They can still understand, they can appreciate, they can laugh, they can joke, they can cry and they can hurt They are just like everybody else."

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(BP) photos available upon request from Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

EDITORS' NOTE: The following three paragraphs can be added at the end of the (BP) story, "Altar calls: Appropriate for appealing to the lost?" dated 5/13/96.

A few hours drive south of Harvest Church, Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Community Church, Lake Forest, Calif., known for its innovative style of reaching the lost, doesn't see it as a choice between one way or the other. He said, "Do both. Keep your 'come-forth' invitation, but then use a card as an alternative."

Warren said he has talked to many people who have told him they would have become Christians earlier, but they just had to work up the courage to walk in front of the whole church. He suggested adding another invitational hook rather than throwing out one method to replace another.

"At the end of the service, say, 'Now maybe you didn't feel comfortable walking down the aisle, and it's not because you don't love Jesus, you're just naturally shy,'" Warren said.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

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