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Appointment services still vivid
in retired missionaries' memories

Baptist Press
3/22/96

By Shari Schubert

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo. (BP)--Betty Sledd sensed God was calling her to become a foreign missionary, but she didn't see how it could be possible. There was more education to be completed before she and her husband, Max, could serve. Betty wasn't sure she had any gifts or talents that could be useful on the mission field. And there were children to consider. "We couldn't take four children," she was thinking.

But then her husband attended a missionary appointment service in St. Louis. "He came home and he was all on fire for missions," she recalled. And he happened to mention one of the couples who had just been appointed had six children.

Just a few years later, in 1961, the Sleds and their four children -- ages 6, 8, 10 and 12 -- were on their way to Nigeria. "It seemed impossible," Betty recalled, "but the Lord's grace saw us through all of it." The Sleds served from 1961-92 and now live in Gilbertsville, Ky.

It is not unusual for people to respond to God's call to missions after attending a missionary appointment service and hearing the testimonies of others who have already responded to that call.

Bob Wakefield didn't even attend the appointment service for his younger brother, Bill, in 1960, but he heard the call just the same. Bob was pastor of First Baptist Church, Mountain View, Mo., at the time. Bill, who would serve 16 years in Southeast Asia before becoming an administrator with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., dropped by and brought a tape of his commissioning service for Bob and his wife, Marge, to listen to.

One of the newly appointed missionaries who gave his testimony during the service was a man who was going to serve in Italy. "His testimony was so compelling," recalled Bob, who now lives in Hartville, Mo. "Marge and I realized that the Lord had been working on us, and we had not responded."

They called the Foreign Mission Board the next day to begin the missionary appointment process. The next year, they were appointed as missionaries to Singapore.

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In later years, during hard times on the mission field, the missionary appointee's testimony "sort of stayed with us." The Wakefields finally had an opportunity to meet the man who had gone to Italy, along with his wife, at their retirement service in 1990.

Mariam Misner, a medical missionary to Indonesia from 1956-92, pointed out, "A Foreign Mission Board (missionary) candidate goes through quite a process. You begin by finding out if the board could use you and your talents."

Candidates must write a statement of their Christian beliefs. Past and current references are checked. A decision must be made about where in the world to serve.

"The appointment service, then, is in many ways the culmination of preparation," Misner said. "You have finished that and you're ready for a new phase."

Formal appointment also helps to finalize the decision for missionary service, Misner added. Missionary candidates working with the Foreign Mission Board may drop out of the appointment process at any point if they begin to sense God is not leading them to pursue this type of service.

"Once you're appointed, there's a kind of seal put on it, that it's hard to back out on," Misner explained.

The appointment service is a time of affirmation for the new missionaries. Sledd recalls a personal word spoken to her by Foreign Mission Board then-Executive Secretary Baker James Cauthen at her appointment service in Richmond. He said to her, "You have a lot to give." That meant a lot, she said, remembering her struggle with doubts about her gifts and talents for service.

Later, on the mission field, she found she did have much to give. Home schooling her four children, she discovered her ability to teach. She later taught the wives of students at the Baptist seminary in Nigeria.

Attending an appointment service brings back memories for these retired missionaries. Sledd recalled going to an appointment service in Richmond shortly after she and her husband retired. "Of course, they all seemed so young ... We picked out a couple who reminded us of ourselves when we were appointed."

She added, "It's good to see young people willing to give themselves to the uncertainties."

Missionary service has never been easy. When Mariam Misner began her work at Kediri Baptist Hospital in Java, Indonesia, the relatively new hospital was offering 24-hour emergency room service. Part of her job was to train others in laboratory procedures, but until she got them trained, she was the only medical technologist at the hospital. "I was on call, period."

Through the Baptist hospital -- the only one in the area that offered a wide range of surgical services -- doors were opened for evangelistic ministry. Misner joined Simampir Baptist Church, where she worked with ministries to young people and women, and in Sunday school.

She also helped with evangelistic outreach in surrounding villages. Sometimes it was hard to balance that work with her hospital responsibilities, she acknowledged.

Sledd noted Nigeria was fairly calm when she and her husband went there in the early years after the country gained its independence. But since 1967 the country has experienced a civil war, five coups and several assassinations. "We were never in danger from those," she said. The Sleds were robbed twice.

The 37 missionaries who will be appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in Cape Girardeau, Mo., on April 20 will face challenges of their own. They anticipate as many as several thousand fellow Christians will join them at the Show Me Center to hear their testimonies and to help them celebrate the beginning of their missionary careers.

"God calls us, but it's the church that sends us," Misner pointed out. It is important the churches who send out these missionaries have an opportunity to witness the appointments and to give their blessing to the missionaries' endeavors, she said.

Misner plans to travel to Cape Girardeau from the opposite corner of the state -- her home in St. Joseph -- to attend the appointment service. She hopes others will join her. "I'm anxious for people to come and see."

**Missionaries experienced
empty hands, full heart**

By Shari Schubert

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo. (BP)--Thirty-five years later, Bob Wakefield still remembers the words of "Mr. Missions" -- Baker James Cauthen -- as he spoke to a group of young, new missionaries at their appointment service in Richmond, Va. Cauthen, then executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, spoke frankly to the new recruits about what they would have to give up in order to serve God on overseas fields.

Cauthen noted some of the new missionaries might be debating whether to take possessions such as their family's heirloom sterling silver when they went to the mission field, recalled Wakefield, a former missionary who now lives in Hartville, Mo. "He said, 'Take it if it is meaningful to you, but never take it in your heart. Just take it in your hands.'"

The time might come, Cauthen told them, they would have to leave such things behind. If they had taken it only in their hands, they would have just empty hands, not empty hearts. The only thing they should take in their hearts, he said, was the one thing that is most valuable: Jesus Christ.

Cauthen "lives on in our memory because of the advice he gave," said Wakefield, who retired with his wife, Marge, in 1990 after 29 years' service as a missionary in Asia and the Pacific islands.

The Wakefields' experiences eventually demonstrated the wisdom of Cauthen's words. They became the Foreign Mission Board's first itinerant missionaries in 1985, after serving most of their careers as resident missionaries in Singapore and Malaysia. Over the next four years, they worked not only in those two nations, but in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, Australia and the Fiji Islands -- where their son, Mark, is now a missionary. The goal of the pilot project was to enable the Foreign Mission Board to respond to needs in places where missionaries did not, or could not, live.

For four years, the Wakefields had no house, no car, no bank account.

They stashed one large suitcase in Bangalore, one in Bangkok, another in Singapore. They typically carried with them only flight bags with three changes of clothes. In 1987 -- Bob kept track -- they slept in 99 different places, not counting the nights they didn't go to bed because they were waiting in airports. Some nights they slept on floors of little mud churches. Other nights they slept in beds where the bedding was never changed, but just allowed to rot on the mattress. Sometimes they shared their accommodations with bedbugs and cockroaches.

Between trips in and out of various countries, they would go to the office of Jerry Rankin -- at that time the Foreign Mission Board's area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific -- to debrief. Physically and mentally exhausted, and sometimes sick with dysentery, they would admit, "Jerry, it's so hard."

But when offered the chance to return to more traditional missionary work, they declined. Despite the hardships, Bob said, "We knew that we were squarely in the center of God's will."

During those four years, the Wakefields saw new churches started among the Kondh tribespeople in rural India. They saw virtually whole villages accept Christ as Savior within a span of just a few months after Indian Baptist leaders went to those villages to share the gospel. They witnessed the dedication of Indian Christians who persevered in the face of persecution from Hindu leaders, church burnings and even death threats.

The Wakefields worked with the Indian leaders, teaching them methods, Bob recalled. "And they would teach us what simple faith really means."

Throughout that time, "day by day, Dr. Cauthen's statement sort of rang in our ears," Wakefield recounted. "We had nothing in our hands, but our hearts were full."

**Draper pledges cooperation
in visit to foreign board**

By Marty Groll

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Baptist Sunday School Board President James T. Draper Jr. pledged to bind with other Southern Baptist agencies to "eliminate duplication" among them during a message at the Foreign Mission Board March 20.

Visiting Foreign Mission Board offices with about a dozen of his staff March 19-20, Draper spoke during a staff chapel service.

"We're making progress, but there is a great deal of wasted energy and wasted funds through duplication across the agencies," he said. "We're committed to trying to maximize the resources, the energies that we have together.

"If we're doing something that can help you, wonderful. If you're doing something that can help us, wonderful. Let's don't both do it and double the cost."

The dialogue between middle- and upper-level staff of the two agencies grew out of a session between Draper and FMB President Jerry Rankin just after Rankin's election in 1993. The two chief executives "spent a couple days together dreaming and brainstorming," Draper said.

As he introduced Draper, Rankin said the consultation would help move the two agencies into a new dimension of partnership. "We have said it is not the responsibility of the Foreign Mission Board to do missions on behalf of Southern Baptists, but to mobilize them," Rankin said. "We have no stronger partner in this than the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville."

Although missions education is not the Sunday School Board's role, missions awareness is, Draper said. "I don't know of anyone who can do it like we can." In his message, Draper pointed out Southern Baptists' strength lies in their willingness to work together, bringing unique gifts as servants energized, not exhausted, by performing God's purposes.

"Being a missionary is not the greatest calling. Being in the will of God is the greatest calling," he said.

"We believe it is our task and our job to do everything possible to let the Foreign Mission Board be a success, in every sense of the word, in every effort you have," Draper said.

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed 3/22/96 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available in SBCNet News Room.

**Georgia 'Barnabas Ministry'
to aid displaced ministers**

By William Neal

**Baptist Press
3/22/96**

ATLANTA (BP)--Georgia Baptists have begun efforts to address the needs of displaced ministers through the work of a special committee created last year in response to the growing number of terminated clergy.

"With over 100 pastors (not including other staff positions) being forcibly terminated each year in Georgia, the needs are staggering and this type of ministry is critically needed," said Allen Hughes, committee chairman.

When the "Committee to Study Assistance for Displaced Ministers" made its preliminary report to the Georgia Baptist Convention executive committee March 12, it informed the larger group it was dealing with five primary areas of concern: counseling, housing, food, insurance and temporary employment.

The convention's executive committee, in creating the special study committee, initially charged it with dealing with the housing issue. But as its members began to study the situation, they quickly discovered ministers cut off from their ministry positions and often from any immediate source of income were needing not only temporary housing but other assistance as well. The committee thus was given permission by the executive committee to enlarge the scope of the assignment last September.

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The subsequent program now being implemented is named "The Barnabas Ministry ... Georgia Baptists Caring for the Hurt of Ministers and Their Families in Crisis."

Among its initiatives:

-- Since many pastors live in church-owned pastoriums, they often find it difficult to find temporary housing once they have been terminated. The committee, utilizing a statewide survey, has found 30 to 35 homes located throughout Georgia possibly available through local churches or other Baptist entities as temporary residences for displaced ministers. The convention's church-minister relations department will be utilized to coordinate the effort to match ministers in need with available housing.

-- While the minister is waiting to be called to another place of ministry, he may need temporary work to help him support his family. A networking effort is being initiated whereby ministers would be put in touch with potential employers willing to hire them on a temporary basis. A survey letter is being sent to Baptist pastors in the state asking them to assist in developing this job bank.

-- Many ministers have insurance through the Southern Baptist Convention's Annuity Board, but when they lose their jobs they may no longer be able to make payments to keep their health policies from lapsing. Adequate medical insurance then becomes a big concern during the interim period and there may be a major question whether they will qualify for reinstatement at a later date. The Roy Hinchey Memorial Fund (named for the first director of the church-minister relations department) has been designated as the vehicle through which the convention hopes to continue payment of insurance premiums for displaced ministers. There is a need to eventually raise the endowment in that fund to at least \$6 million in order to meet such insurance needs.

Other plans call for the church-minister relations department to discreetly provide free food to needy ministerial families through associational food banks and other sources already in place and to provide counseling services for the ministers and their families through the pastoral ministries program of Georgia Baptist Medical Center. The convention will help displaced ministers with career assessment, resume services, emergency financial aid and even a complimentary subscription to Georgia Baptists' newsjournal, The Christian Index.

Hughes, senior pastor of Lizella Baptist Church, said the committee sought input from other state conventions but found none were providing this type of safety net for ministers.

"What this committee puts together will become a prototype for all other state conventions," he said. "This accentuates the importance of the final outcome of our work."

Hughes also noted the committee has no intention of getting involved in church conflicts by taking sides or placing judgments upon the right or wrong in a particular terminating situation. "This ministry will seek to minister according to needs, not judgments," he said.

Leonard Dupree, director of the church-minister relations department, said the convention has done this type of ministry for more than 20 years, but "now, the work of this special committee is heightening the awareness of the growing need, as well as greatly facilitating and expanding this ministry to hurting ministers and their families."

Convention Executive Director J. Robert White, who has met with the special committee throughout its work, said the "termination of ministers is at an epidemic stage. The pain felt by both the church and minister's family is severe. The efforts of this special committee have been remarkable and will place Georgia Baptists on the leading edge of this ministry." White also said the church-minister relations department, under Dupree's leadership, has continued to provide assistance to churches in crisis. The assistance is offered only upon the invitation of the church, he said.

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The church-minister relations office will become the clearinghouse for all these services. Ministers needing aid or individuals and churches wishing to provide resources to help in this ministry are urged to contact Dupree. Ministers can be assured of strict confidentiality and courteous assistance.

The special committee will make its final report to the GBC executive committee in September.

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Arkwright Baptist Mission
a beacon of hope in Atlanta

By James Dotson

Baptist Press
3/22/96

ATLANTA (BP)--On Saturday nights the neighborhood surrounding Atlanta's Arkwright Baptist Mission -- located just north of Interstate 20 near Moreland Avenue -- is not a good place to be, with open drug activity, prostitution and one of the city's highest crime rates. But on Sunday morning, the small block structure comes alive with the sounds of praise for several hours as the congregation of about 50 people celebrates Christ in worship.

It is a small beacon of hope in the troubled community, but one that is making a difference nonetheless. And it was all made possible by a combination of a gift of property from a dedicated Christian and a willingness of a lay leader to put in the hours necessary to help reach a community for Christ.

It was 1989 when Clairmont Hills Baptist Church was the recipient of four vacant lots in the Arkwright neighborhood from LeJeune Bradley, a member who had grown up in the area, according to Jerry Daniel, an associate pastor at Clairmont Hills who supervises the work of the mission. The lots had steadily declined in value since Bradley had purchased them more than 25 years earlier.

Clairmont Hills was then faced with the decision of what to do with the property. One option was to offer them as sites for Habitat For Humanity homes. But one member, Davis Yaun, expressed a desire to begin mission work on the property with underprivileged boys. Yaun, an experienced Royal Ambassador leader who had just finished work at the North Georgia Center of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, began meeting with boys on the site and taking them to the Burnt Mountain Assembly and other wilderness settings.

For several years Yaun met with the boys under the huge trees on the vacant lot. Eventually the ministry gained leadership partners from other churches, and the current mission site across the street was rented for indoor services.

Willie Crawford, the current pastor, joined Arkwright several years ago after a friend told him of the ministry need there. He was asked to serve as interim pastor when the former pastor resigned, and he will celebrate his second anniversary as pastor in June. A truck driver by profession living in Ellenwood, Ga., Crawford said he hopes the church one day will be able to support him full-time.

The ministry is difficult, he said, because of the lack of response from the surrounding neighborhood. Residents will accept gifts of food and clothing when offered, but it is rare for an adult to come to the services. His limited time available for visiting also makes it difficult to become known in the community.

The urgency of the neighborhood's problems, and Arkwright's ministry, was underscored in 1994 when one of the Royal Ambassadors was killed by a gang member who had intended to kill another boy. The young RA, Deon Kelly, had accepted Christ two years earlier through Arkwright.

It is primarily the children and youth of the neighborhood who have responded, Crawford said, and they form the core of the church's ministry.

"Every one of them, down to about 5 years old," have accepted Christ as a result of the ministry of the church, Crawford said.

On Wednesday nights he is also teaching them how to share their faith with others. "The kids ... invite other people. ... They are witnessing to other children in their schools."

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On Friday nights, the congregation gathers again for a time of worship and leadership training. Once a month the youth and children take charge of the entire worship services. "They do a better job than the adults do," Crawford said.

To make a further impact on the neighborhood, Arkwright and Clairmont Hills have a dream of building a recreation center on the still-vacant lot where the ministry began. The center would serve as a ministry base and a larger home for the church, which has reached the limit of its current quarters with a maximum seating capacity of 52. Ministries such as basketball and feeding programs would give them a way of more effectively reaching the community.

The labor to build such a structure could be provided free from volunteers, Crawford said, if the money for building materials can be secured.

"The community would receive a tremendous ministry through the use of such a building," said Daniel. "The vision of the Arkwright Mission is not to build a church, but to build a better community where children, teenagers and families learn about the love of God, salvation through Jesus Christ, and hope from people who love them and care enough to give whatever they have."

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(BP) photos (color) available from Georgia Baptists' newsjournal, The Christian Index.

**Basketball helps mission
introduce teens to Jesus**

By James Dotson

**Baptist Press
3/22/96**

CONYERS, Ga. (BP)--Every Thursday night the basketball team of Emmanuel Baptist Mission occupies the gymnasium at Conyers Presbyterian Church for two hours of good hard practice.

Some of the teens are on their school basketball teams. Others have dropped out of school. But the significant factor is that about half of the group were led to Christ by -- and are now being disciplined in -- Emmanuel's ministry, and the others are at least subjected to the positive influence of Christian peers.

The basketball outreach ministry, coached for the moment by Emmanuel pastor Lamonte Scott, has been one of the principle tools for reaching the youth of a largely unchurched community for Jesus Christ. And with 52 baptisms at the mission since its founding in November 1994, it is part of a strategy that's working.

Emmanuel Mission began with the desire of Highland Park Baptist Church and pastor Mackie Hawkins to reach the African American neighborhood adjacent to the church. Hawkins said he personally knocked on more than 2,000 doors, but although some visited they never felt comfortable enough with the difference in worship style to stay. So he approached Stone Mountain Baptist Association about the possibility of starting an African American mission.

Meanwhile, Scott -- a student at Luther Rice Seminary in nearby Lithonia -- had been talking with association leaders about his desire to start an African American congregation. An attorney who currently works as a criminal investigator for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Atlanta, Scott was called to the ministry in 1990 after years as an active lay leader and deacon.

A match was made, and Scott joined Highland Park as co-pastor with responsibilities for the mission. He and his family visited the neighborhood one Saturday to start building a congregation, and about 18 or 19 came out to play basketball. Several from that group formed the basis for the new church.

Scott said he chose basketball as a way of reaching the young men of the community, a group statistically at risk for not only rejecting church but also for ending up in jail. He saw the evidence of this earlier in his ministry when he traveled the state speaking in prisons.

"I did not feel that the traditional 'come to church' (invitation) without them being introduced to the church would help," he said of why he chose basketball as his primary outreach tool. "So I wanted to offer them something, and through that introduce them to some Christian values, and ultimately to our church."

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The strategy worked, and the church has grown to 40 to 50 in attendance on any given Sunday. They share facilities with Highland Park, holding a breakfast at 11 a.m., Sunday school at 11:30 and services at 12:30 p.m.

The basketball team participates in a church league in Gwinnett County, meaning all of their games are road trips. But team members enjoy the opportunity for fellowship, and it continues as a vehicle for introducing young men to the church and ultimately Jesus Christ.

"Basketball is what got me interested in church, and then I got a relationship with Jesus Christ," said team member Derrick Daniel.

Teammate Khary Rice added, "It lets us know that the church is thinking about us and wants to see us stay out of trouble."

Scott said he hopes interest will develop for a similar league in the Conyers area.

In addition to basketball, there is a strong "Youth For Christ" choir that rehearses on Saturday, an intercessory prayer ministry and a weekly Bible study that meets on Wednesday.

The youth remain the bulk of the congregation, making up about 70 percent of the usual attendance. About half of the congregation is involved in the choir. And because there are not yet any deacons some of the same young men on the basketball team also lead devotionals on Sunday morning.

Scott realizes the congregation needs to build more of an adult leadership base, but he said these early months have been focused on discipling his group of new believers. He hopes to start other ministries, such as an after-school tutoring program, as well as groups to help youth deal with many other pressures of life. Like the basketball ministry, he said, they would address services that often are more available to teens in larger cities but not in smaller towns like Conyers.

To make the growth in ministries possible, Scott said he is trying to get the word out to newcomers to the Conyers area of what Emmanuel is doing, with the hope that more adults will take leadership roles.

"There are so many ministries available, there are so many things we need to touch on." Even the basketball duties, he said, could probably better be handled by someone with more experience.

Scott said his focus was to reach the unchurched. And the community they targeted was just such a mission field.

"It's one of those kinds of neighborhoods where I had heard there was a big problem with drug activity and stuff like that," he said. "Areas like that, those are the last to be evangelized. You've got to be willing to go into some areas where there are people that need to be reached."

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(BP) photos (color) available from the Georgia Baptists' newsjournal, The Christian Index.

**New churches key strategy
for reaching blacks, others**

By James Dotson

**Baptist Press
3/22/96**

ATLANTA (BP)--It's no secret Southern Baptists have found the planting of new churches to be one of the most effective means of fulfilling the Great Commission; new congregations tend to bring in more unchurched individuals who never would have visited an established church.

In recent years, the planting of churches in selected African American communities has been a classic demonstration of this evangelism principle.

Jerome King, an associate in the Georgia Baptist Convention church extension department with responsibilities for new African American congregations, said it is the very nature of the new church start that allows it to be whatever its members need. Rather than them fitting into an existing church's mold, they are free to build a church as they see fit.

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"To me that is the genius of the new church start," he said. "The very nature of the new church necessitates its taking on the makeup that will make it effective in reaching whatever people it is seeking to reach."

The new church start allows different cultures to prosper in winning a lost world to Christ.

"In what we call bridging growth, when an Anglo church is seeking to reach African Americans and is ineffective in doing it with their current worship style, for them to start an African American mission is an effective way for them to reach that end.

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Piper says preaching
must move God-ward

By Cameron Crabtree

Baptist Press
3/22/96

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Preaching must follow contemporary church music's movement God-ward, declared author John Piper.

"There has been a phenomenal resurgence and renewal in contemporary church music that is God-ward in its lyrics," Piper told students at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. "These lyrics and emotionally engaging tunes come together in a very powerful exaltation of God."

While preaching should aim at worship, Piper claimed too much contemporary preaching has moved the opposite way.

Piper, pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, and former biblical studies faculty member at St. Paul's Bethel College, was guest speaker for the seminary's annual H.I. Hester Lectureship on Preaching at the school's Mill Valley, Calif., campus Mar. 19-21. Golden Gate Seminary is one of six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries and the only SBC agency in the western United States.

"While worship songs are moving God-ward, preaching, by and large, is moving man-ward," Piper observed. "A preacher should be making music in his own soul over the glory of God he has seen in his heart. And when he stands in the pulpit, people should hear that music."

Piper noted a "fateful decision" is being made all across the country that sermons centered on the character and attributes of God won't captivate a congregation for long.

"The assumption is you have to move where the emotions are already running high and plant your sermon there," he said. "You do have to be relevant, but when it comes to dealing with people's hurts you've got one main job -- deal with it theologically. Take those things up into God worshipfully."

Piper called this type of preaching "expository exultation." He said exposition doesn't necessarily mean going verse by verse through a text, but it does mean exposing what is there to view.

"The pervasive subject matter in all preaching is God in every text," he said. "The task of the sermon is to provide a sharp focus, a fresh picture of why God is the all-satisfying treasure of the universe."

He urged students to be clear about God in sermons.

"Woe to us if we take for granted God as the foundation for the things we really like to talk about and really like to do," he said. "Fill your sermons with expository exultation and the main thing to be expounded is God."

This only happens, Piper added, when preachers have an intense, joyful relationship with God themselves.

"We cannot declare him all-satisfying where we don't treasure him as our prize," he cautioned. "Our people will be most satisfied with God when we preachers are most satisfied in him."

Piper listed six ways to develop that kind of preaching ministry:

-- Be born again. "One of the great reasons there is so little savoring of the treasure of God is because the preacher's taste buds for spiritual things are dead. He is merely a functionary, called by a tradition, and fascinated with an intellectual regime."

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-- Turn off the television. "It's a deadly place to rest your mind. Its pervasive banality, sexual innuendo and God-ignoring values have no ennobling effect of the preacher's soul."

-- Meditate on the Word of God. "If you wonder what to do when you're not watching television, try this: Put the Word of God like a lozenge under your tongue and let it drip and absorb its way into your life. "

-- Plead with God for a passion that matches his reality. "When you read the biblical text, ask yourself, 'Am I experiencing a heart affection with what I am reading?'"

-- Linger in the presence of godly people. "Get around people who are hot with God. If you can't find any living ones, there are hundreds of dead ones who have left us with their writings and stories."

-- Go to a hard place of ministry. "Leave your study and go to a hard place and do the hard work and prove to yourself that you are satisfied with the promises of God more than the comforts of your ministry."

He warned students against preaching on matters not felt by the heart: "Words start to come easy for preachers after a while. You can speak about the mysteries of God without standing in awe, about purity without being pure, about zeal without feeling passion, about holiness without trembling, about sin without sorrow, about heaven without eagerness. And the danger of that is a great spiritual deadening."

Pointing to Philippians 1:20-23 as foundational to joyful Christian living, Piper said, "You magnify the Lord in your living and dying by counting all things as lost when compared to the value of being solely satisfied in him."

Piper said despite the "pain and pressure in preaching, it's a happy work. You build a sick church if you're not a happy preacher."

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Cos Davis resigns post
at Sunday School Board

Baptist Press
3/22/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Cos Davis Jr., director of the preschool-children's biblical studies department in the Baptist Sunday School Board's Bible teaching-reaching division, has resigned, effective May 31.

He plans to begin work with a family education and counseling service in the Nashville, Tenn., area in early summer.

Davis has been a department director since 1992. Earlier, he managed the preschool program section for 12 years.

"The 16 years I have served the Lord here have provided me with a great opportunity for personal growth," Davis said. "I have enjoyed the challenge of helping give direction to preschool and children's work in the convention. I am challenged by the prospect of this new ministry that will involve helping churches with family education and counseling services, an area in which I have had great interest for some time."

Bill Taylor, director of the Bible teaching-reaching division, said Davis has "served with distinction and integrity. He has widespread influence throughout our denomination as he has worked with preschool and children's leaders in state conventions, associations and churches. His recent work on levels of learning will impact preschool and children's ministries for years to come."

Taylor will direct the department on an interim basis.

Before joining the board in 1980, Davis was professor of childhood education at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Earlier, he was pastor of two churches in Louisiana and Alabama.

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