

February 14, 1968

Project 500: The  
Philadelphia Story

By Roy Jennings

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Disappointment spread slowly across the face of the youngster as the policeman blocked the door of the church and waved him away.

"I'm sorry but you can't come in without your parents," the officer explained.

"But they are working and can't come," the boy argued.

"That's too bad, but it's still the rule," the policeman replied. "Now run along."

Several boys and girls standing at the corner of the church awaiting the outcome of the conversation melted into the darkness as the officer stood his ground.

That's the situation Jack Redford, assistant secretary for the department of pioneer missions at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, found recently when he arrived in Philadelphia, Pa., to investigate a request to start a new Project 500 church.

Project 500 is a two-year effort to start 500 new churches in strategic areas of states where organized Southern Baptist work is less than 20 years old.

Part of Redford's inquiry in Philadelphia called for a five-day Mission of Concern in which investigators examined the need and desire of the neighborhood for a church while conducting worship services nightly.

The night before, almost 75 boys and girls between 10 and 15 years of age swarmed into the old Frankford Avenue Baptist Church for the opening night of the religious services and almost caused a riot.

No match for the youngsters, the three staff members finally called the police for help, Redford said. By the time officers arrived, wrestling boys had damaged several pieces of church furniture, including the organ.

To prevent a recurrence, church workers stationed a policeman at the door the second night and stipulated that each youngster must be accompanied by his parents for the remaining services.

"The children weren't mean and destructive basically," Redford said. "Many of them hadn't been in a church before and were religiously illiterate. They didn't know how to act."

Even with parents there, two girls were ejected for wrestling during later services and a 10-year-old boy was asked to put out his cigarette.

This area of interest in Philadelphia is Kensington, an inner-city section three miles wide and five miles long into which 135,000 persons of English, Polish, German and Italian descent are packed into row houses.

The only organized Baptist witness in the heart of this area was Frankford Avenue Baptist Church which operated under American Baptist auspices until it disbanded recently and deeded the property to the Philadelphia Baptist Association (American Baptist).

C. Burt Potter, director of city ministries for Southern Baptists in Philadelphia, sought to interest American Baptist leaders in a joint ministry to the area.

In addition to the traditional worship services, plans call for a strong weekday program which meet the needs of people, Redford said. That could include a day care center, after-school activities, and projects for language groups and senior citizens.

Working arrangements between American and Southern Baptist groups in Philadelphia are still under discussion.

Southern Baptists will provide the money for this Project 500 church when they give through the Annie Armstrong offering for home missions in March. Of the \$5½ million goal, part of the last \$1 million has been designated for a ministry to these children, he said.

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February 14, 1968

**Baptist Work In Birmingham  
Outlined To City Officials**

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--When a detailed report on the influence of the religious community in Birmingham was presented to the city's Downtown Action Committee here, Southern Baptists took the spotlight.

Speakers reported that Southern Baptists in Birmingham claimed the world's only Baptist women's headquarters building, the largest number of churches and church property, the largest book store, and the largest denominational newspaper.

The Downtown Action Committee which heard the report is a group of business and industry leaders working with the Chamber of Commerce to revitalize inner Birmingham.

Miss Alma Hunt, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, was one of four speakers who assessed the value of churches and religious institutions in Birmingham before the prominent civic organization.

She explained that the WMU, SBC headquarters building at 600 North 20th St., is the only Baptist women's headquarters building in the world. It houses offices of the Southern Baptist Convention auxiliary founded in Baltimore and moved to Birmingham in 1921.

"Our purpose is educating and motivating women, girls and children in missions," Miss Hunt said.

She said property value of the WMU office is \$919,413; operating budget is \$2.2 million; salary and employee benefit budgets, \$548,000; postage bill, \$90,970; and total employees, 94 persons.

"We earn 95½ percent of our operating funds from magazine subscriptions and from sale of promotional materials and supplies," Miss Hunt said. Almost all the printing is contracted to Birmingham firms. Last year, the WMU circulated more than 10 million copies of magazines to a million persons in 50 states and 66 foreign countries, she added. Portions of translations of the magazines go into 47 foreign countries.

Miss Hunt displayed copies of promotional posters for the home and foreign mission weeks of prayer, saying that special offerings promoted by the WMU for home and foreign missions totalled about \$18 million last year.

Miss Hunt's presentation explaining the WMU's new "mission action" program whereby WMU groups seek to minister to the needs of the community prompted such interest at the meeting that one man in the audience promptly ordered a set of mission action guides.

James H. Landes, pastor of Birmingham's First Baptist Church who coordinated the program, introduced Mrs. R. L. Mathis, promotion division director of the WMU and a vice president of the Baptist World Alliance by saying that she "probably sends and receives more foreign letters than anyone else in Birmingham."

Rabbi Milton Grafman of Temple Emanu-El summarized the assets of churches and institutions in Birmingham, saying that there are more than 400 churches in Birmingham. Baptist churches alone, he said, have a property value of more than \$47 million.

Rabbi Grafman reported that Samford University, a Baptist school here, has pumped \$40 million into Birmingham since moving to a new campus in 1957, and that it expends most of a \$4 million annual budget in the area. Students and faculty spend an estimated \$2 million in Birmingham.

Denson Franklin, pastor of First Methodist Church here, reported that book stores are maintained by two Episcopal churches, the Church of God, the Roman Catholic Church, and a Pentecostal Holiness Church; adding that the largest by far is the Baptist Book Store with the newly-opened Cokesbury Book Store second largest. The Baptist Book Store, he said, has 26 employees, a \$100,000 payroll, and \$250,000 in property value.

The editor of The Catholic Week, Frank Wade, reported on the number of denominational newspapers in Birmingham, citing The Alabama Baptist as the largest with 150,000 weekly subscribers. It was followed by the Methodist Christian Advocate, 28,000 circulation; The Catholic Week, 25,000; and three other publications.

Concluding the program, Fred Weil, head of a local department store and president of the Jewish Congregation Emanu-El, said, "It sounds as if Baptists take the lead in figures in Birmingham."

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Contract Let For New  
Hospital Power Plant

2/14/68

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--A contract for more than \$1 million to construct a new power plant as the first phase of a \$27 million development program has been let by Baptist Memorial Hospital here, an institution of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The power plant will provide all services--electrical, heating, air conditioning, mechanical--for the new hospital. The overall \$27 million expansion program will add 480 beds to the hospital's capacity.

The power plant is scheduled as the first phase of construction so that the present power plant area in the existing hospital building may be dismantled in preparation for construction of the new hospital building, said Ed Ball, honorary chairman of the hospital's development council.

The contract, signed with the Auchter Construction Co., totalled \$1,018,500. Construction is to start immediately and will be completed in 8½ months.

Future phases of the overall program will include a 16-level medical and surgical tower and a complete renovation of present buildings, said Ball.

Of the \$27 million total cost, \$5½ million is being raised through contributions. To date a total of \$1.7 million has been raised, Ball said.

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Baylor Professor Urges  
Teaching of Religion

2/14/68

DALLAS (BP)--A Baylor University professor who supports the U.S. Supreme Court decisions barring religious exercises in public schools has urged that religion should be taught as an academic subject in all schools.

James E. Wood Jr., told delegates to the National Council of Churches Christian Education division session that such court decisions did not outlaw teaching of religion in public schools, just exercises such as prayers.

Wood, director of J. M. Dawson studies in Church and State at Baylor University and editor of A Journal of Church and State, said religion has been one of the most dominant factors in the formation of world culture and history.

"The court has left no doubt that religion has not been emasculated from the curriculum of the public schools in the court's outlawing a school-sponsored religious exercise," Wood said.

Wood said the schools must give due recognition of the role of religion in the culture and convictions of Americans. The schools, he said, should assist youth to have an understanding of the place of religion in human affairs.

He recommended such courses as comparative religion and the history of religion be taught in public schools.

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Southern Baptist Appointed  
To Alcoholism Task Force

NEW YORK (BP)--A 35-member Task Force on Alcoholism which includes one Southern Baptist has been established by the National Council of Churches to explore and help shape a national policy for the National Council of Churches on problem drinking and alcoholism.

The Task Force will also "explore the meaning and implications" of a comprehensive and controversial report on alcohol problems called the Cooperative Commission on the Study of Alcoholism.

A storm of controversy surrounded release of the report, which among other things called for lower drinking ages, over whether or not the National Council of Churches had endorsed the report. The NCC strongly denied it had endorsed the five-year study as reported by the press.

The Task Force represents a broad cross-section of groups across the nation concerned with problems produced by alcohol. It includes high officials of Alcoholics Anonymous, National Council on Alcoholism, American Public Health Association, Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems, North American Association Alcoholism Program, Addiction Research Foundation, the North Conway Institute, directors of two state mental health departments, ministers representing 12 Protestant denominations, two Roman Catholic priests, and several Jewish leaders.

The Southern Baptist appointed to the Task Force is Thomas A. Bland, professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C.

Chairman of the Task Force is Robert Middleton, pastor of Hyde Park Union Church, (American Baptist) in Chicago.

Bland said that he was grateful that a Southern Baptist who believes in abstinence had been appointed to the Task Force, and that he felt he could make a contribution by communicating Southern Baptist concerns for alcoholism to the group. He pointed out, however, he was not an official representative of the Southern Baptist Convention or the seminary where he teaches, but was serving as "a concerned individual."

"It seems to me," he said, "that if we are going to effectively attack the problems of drinking and alcoholism, we are going to have to work together with other concerned groups and individuals. We don't have to agree on every point, but we must work together to be effective."

Bland has been teaching a course in Christian ethics and alcohol problems at the seminary for several years, and has lectured extensively on the subject.

The Task Force, in its initial meeting (which Bland was unable to attend), decided that a comprehensive approach to the problem is "a must", since no single method could succeed when so many different causes compound the issue, according to a release from the National Council of Churches.

The Task Force also plans meetings in May and November when it will analyze the controversial report prepared by the North Conway Institute, and hammer out a policy on alcoholism for the National Council of Churches.

The 35-man body came into being as a result of requests that the Council develop a policy on alcohol problems, said John McDowell, National Council of Churches social welfare director. The Task Force was created by the Council's Division of Christian Life and Mission.