



September 11, 1970

Personality Profile

New BWA President Approaches
Work Like Long-Distance Runner

by C. E. Bryant

GERMANTOWN, Pa. (BP)--Vernon Carney Hargroves, the new president of the Baptist World Alliance, goes quietly about his work like a long-distance runner--with a fantastic capacity for endurance.

His endurance was tested almost immediately after he returned from Tokyo where he was elected in July as the president of the organization including 31 million Baptists in more than 125 countries.

The sanctuary of the 104-year-old Second Baptist Church of Germantown, was gutted by fire just a few hours before Hargroves was scheduled to report to his congregation on the 12th Baptist World Congress, and his election as president.

Despite travel fatigue, he and Mrs. Hargroves led a group of 25 members all the next week in cleaning the smoked, but otherwise undamaged educational annex for Sunday services the next week.

Sitting in the congregation that particular Sunday, I expected to see both the pastor and the congregation upset by the loss of their building, but saw no sign of discouragement. "This tragedy will bind us closer together and give us strength," Hargroves said. "It will challenge our generosity."

"We count our losses in the hundreds of thousands of dollars," he told the congregation. "But let us also look at what the fire did not destroy. We have our people--and they are the church even more than a building. Most of all, we have our faith that enables us to face the future with courage and confidence."

Like a long-distance runner, Hargroves sets a goal and paces himself toward it with a determination and confidence based on his highly optimistic Christian faith.

This life style has characterized his 38-year ministry at the Second Baptist Church of Germantown, a suburb of Philadelphia.

Although he has asked the congregation some months ago to let him retire, they have taken their time looking for a new pastor.

He was 70 years old on Sept. 4, 1970, but Hargroves works with the confidence and stamina of a man many years younger. He is of slight build (5 feet, 8 inches and 148 pounds), and seemingly possesses tireless energy.

His name was presented to the Baptist World Congress in Tokyo as the choice of the nominating committee. A Southern Baptist pastor, Herschel Hobbs of Oklahoma City, was nominated from the floor, but Hargroves was not perturbed.

"I am not seeking the job," he said; "but will serve if elected." He won by a margin of 841-636 votes.

Hargroves has a long-standing background of seeking to draw Baptist groups within the Alliance closer together. He was a founder, and the first president of the North American Baptist Fellowship, which drew nine major Baptist bodies into a closer fellowship and working cooperation.

He has been a member of the Baptist World Alliance Executive Committee since 1955, and was vice president of BWA from 1960-65. He was president of the American Baptist Convention 1954-55, and chairman of the editorial committee of the highly respected devotional magazine, The Secret Place, 1950-54.

One of his deacons is Harold Stassen, one of the signers of the charter for the United Nations and an American political leader who served as "Secretary of Peace" in President Eisenhower's administration. Stassen and his pastor together share an idealism for human dignity and world peace.

After his election, Hargroves told the 8,556 delegates to the international Baptist meeting in Tokyo of his concerns for opening new areas of Baptist outreach during his five years as the Alliance's president.

He said he hopes, for example, to lead a Baptist delegation into the China mainland, visiting Baptists there with whom there has been almost no contact since the Communist takeover of that country in the 1940's.

It is not a fantastic dream. His heart has been in China since he taught in the American school at Kuling, China, 1922-23.

In 1955, Hargroves was a member of the first Christian group from America to enter the USSR after Stalin's death, and that trip was just as unique then as a trip to the China mainland would be today. An article he wrote about the Russian trip was published in the mass-circulation magazine, Saturday Evening Post.

He has also made subsequent trips as a people-to-people visitor to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia in the Communist bloc of Eastern Europe.

One top BWA official credits Hargroves' people-to-people visits to Eastern Europe and his understanding of the problems facing Christian believers under Communist governments as a factor in the increasing ability of East European Baptists to participate in the Alliance.

Representatives from eight East European countries were present at the congress in Tokyo. It was the first time in history a Baptist from Bulgaria had attended the congress, and the first time in more than 30 years for a Romanian to attend.

In his characteristic optimism, Hargroves said he believes that God is beginning to work miracles in today's world, even in Communist lands with atheistic governments.

Writing recently of Christians he has met in the Soviet Union, he observed: "many of them are young, strong and vigorous. It may be that through their religious convictions they shall release in their society the forces of moral judgment and social action."

In his address to the congress following his election, Hargroves also cited concerns for world peace, evangelism, human rights, and involvement of youth in the Alliance.

The new BWA leader is staunchly supported in his pastorate and his travels by his wife, the former Narcissa Bruce Daniel of North Carolina. They have three daughters and five grandchildren.

Having anticipated retirement from the pastorate several months ago, they purchased a home on a quiet street in suburban Philadelphia, planning to keep active in their varied responsibilities in the life of their city.

Though he has been pastor in Philadelphia most of his life, Hargroves is a southerner, born in Nansemond County, Va., and raised in nearby Churchland, Va. Graduating from Virginia public schools, he took advanced degrees from Princeton University and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. He was ordained to the ministry by the Churchland Baptist Church of Portsmouth, Va. Both the University of Richmond and Temple University have given him honorary doctorates.

His first job was teaching school in Kuling, China--between his Princeton undergraduate and his seminary training. He was pastor of the Princeton, N.J., Baptist Church during his graduate years at Princeton, 1926-27. For four years, 1928-32, he was pastor of the Weatherford Baptist Church at Richmond, Va. He has been at the Germantown church since 1932.

In Philadelphia he has worked with both civic and religious organizations. He has been president of the Philadelphia Baptist Association and chairman of the Philadelphia Medal of Honor Award Committee.

One of his childhood memories is a raging fire, fanned by a wind that threatened his family home. His father told the two sons, 3 and 7, to select the one thing in the house most precious to them and carry it to safety.

Carney ran to his room, grabbed a Bible given him as a Christmas gift, and protectively held the scriptures close to his chest.

"I reflect on it now as something prophetic," he said. "Certainly, since that day when I was 7, the Bible has been central in my life."



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**Sullivan Clarifies
Quarterly Withdrawal**

NASHVILLE (BP)--In response to public and private requests, a Sunday School Board official has released clarifying information concerning the withdrawal of two quarterlies originally scheduled for initial release in October.

The quarterlies, "Context" and "The Collegiate Teacher," were withdrawn by action of the elected Sunday School Board meeting in Glorieta, N.M. (Aug. 13).

"We have had no intention whatsoever of withholding any information," stated executive secretary-treasurer James L. Sullivan, referring to a criticism to that effect published in the "Biblical Recorder," state Baptist paper of North Carolina.

"Initially we sought to report the unusually large number of actions of the elected board in a prompt manner for the benefit of the press and public," continued Sullivan. "We are happy to elaborate on the events leading up to this action and to give clarification."

The reason given for withdrawal of the quarterlies was that they were "not up to the editorial standards" of the board. "This is a precise statement," said Sullivan, "but it has been taken to mean some things it was never intended to mean,"

In response to a question concerning a previous demand that the October-December issue of "Context" not be distributed because it supposedly contained material inconsistent with the Baptist Faith and Message Statement, Sullivan said:

"This charge was duly referred to the board's church program and services committee. The committee's recommendation to the full board that the quarterly be withdrawn was based on the editorial problems. This would have made consideration of the doctrinal questions redundant."

The agency executive explained that in the midst of the intense pressures of preparing the new curriculum for the 70's, three different men carried editorial responsibility at different times for the two publications in question. A fourth man, Forrest J. Moorhead, the present editor, started work at the board only a few days before the material was scheduled to go to the printer.

"L. D. Johnson, chaplain of Furman University, was enlisted to write the basic study material," said Sullivan. "He tells us he accepted the assignment reluctantly because of the brief time available for preparation and because of questions he had concerning the proposed editorial approach."

"Part of his material was not transmitted from one editor to another as personnel changes were made," stated Sullivan. "Board personnel were given portions of the writing assignment."

The result of the multiple editorship and authorship has been described by Johnson as "truly a hodge-podge."

In a letter to Moorhead, Johnson states, "I do not feel that my material was used in such a way as to convey to the student what I was trying to say. I deplore the way the material was presented."

Sullivan added that "when we began receiving reactions indicating gross misunderstanding of what the quarterlies were trying to say from some who received sample copies of "Context" which were distributed well in advance of October, we considered several courses of action."

"It was the feeling of the elected board that the publications were miscommunicating in such a serious manner that withdrawal was the wisest course," he stated.

FMB Votes Widows' Benefits;
Will Host College Freshman

RICHMOND (BP)--Addressing itself to "strengthening missionary families," the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board here voted to start paying monthly benefits to missionary widows, widowers and children, effective Jan. 1 1971.

The board also appropriated funds for a retreat here in November for missionaries' children who are college freshmen in the United States, elected a field representative for the north field of Spanish South America, and heard a report on the status of its personnel in Jordan.

Approximately \$46,800 annually was appropriated for benefits to missionary widows, widowers and children, "including those who are currently widowed and or orphaned," to be incorporated in the existing missionary pension plan.

"This recommendation for the strengthening of our missionary families has been needed for a long time," said Baker J. Cauthen, executive secretary of the board. Similar provisions for widows of pastors and other denominational workers through the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention encouraged the Foreign Mission Board to bolster its pension plan, Cauthen said.

Under the new provisions, a widow not continuing in missionary service will receive \$87.20 per month and each dependent child (maximum of four) will receive \$32.70 per month to age 18. The same amount will be paid to children over 18 who are "unable to perform remunerative work."

Widows who remain in missionary service will be paid in single missionary's salary plus regular child allowance supplements, and each of her children (maximum of four) will receive \$32.70 per month on the pension plan.

Widowers, if they remain in service, will receive the same provisions as for a widow's children but no provisions if they resign. Provisions for both men and women are discontinued at remarriage.

Regarding the board's \$20,000 appropriation for a retreat for MKs (missionary kids) who are college freshmen, Cauthen said, "We are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of ministering to the children of missionary families as they come to this country for college and university work.

"The concerns among young people in our country today point up the necessity of doing all that we can to help missionary children make the adjustment from homes on mission fields to their new circumstances in college," he continued.

The students who will attend the retreat in November, are recipients of financial aid under the Margaret Fund, a memorial scholarship fund of the SBC Woman's Missionary Union for children of missionaries of the Southern Baptist Home and Foreign Mission Boards.

Cauthen also noted that the proposed 1971 budget, to be presented during the October meeting, will include adjustments in emergency compensation for missionaries on the field.

"Adjustments are necessary because of inflation in America and throughout the world," Cauthen said, "as well as the normal increasing cost of operation." Depending on the country in which missionaries live, adjustments for adults will range from \$350 to \$1,800, with smaller amounts allotted to children.

J. Bryan Brasington, missionary stationed in Lima, Peru, was elected field representative for the North field of Spanish South America, effective Sept. 10. His assigned area includes Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela.

Brasington, a native of Heath Springs, S.C., is one of two missionaries who will succeed the late Hoke Smith Jr., as field representative. The other is yet to be named.

Field representatives function in a liaison capacity between missions (organizations of missionaries) and the board's administrative secretary for a geographic area. Brasington will relate directly to Frank Means, the board's secretary for South America.

John D. Hughey, secretary for Europe and the Middle East, told the board that missionary Paul Smith had telephoned from Beirut, Lebanon three hours earlier to report that the situation in Jordan was "rather grim."

The Smith family traveled from Beirute to Ajloun, Jordan, two days earlier but soon returned to Beirut. Baptists operate a hospital, nursing school and primary and secondary schools in Ajloun, just north of Amman.

Smith, who has carried on an evangelistic ministry in Amman, said he will commute to that capital city as conditions permit. Amman has been the scene recently of skirmishes between Jordanian army troops and Palestinian guerrillas.

Dr. Dean T. Fitzgerald Jr., took his family to Beirut, but he remains at the hospital in Ajloun. Dr. John A. Roper Jr., also plans to stay at the hospital, but his family was to leave for Beirut late in the week.

Miss Violet Popp will continue her duties at the hospital "until they throw her out," Smith said, and Miss Maurine Perryman will keep the Baptist girls' school in Ajloun open.

Miss Jeannine Grishman, missionary journeyman, will be encouraged to leave Ajloun for Beirut, Hughey said. He added that he had asked Smith to tell the missionaries "that they should not hesitate to leave Jordan if this seems advisable."

Ajloun has been calm, but there has been fighting in Irbid, Jerash, Amman and elsewhere, Hughey reported.



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