



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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AUG 6 1971

HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SBC

August 5, 1971

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PITTSBURG, Calif. (BP)--Members of the Pittsburg Baptist Church here are racing to rebuild before their 25th anniversary after an arsonist ripped pages from the pulpit Bible and used them to set five fires in the building.

"It broke our hearts," said David Edenfield, pastor of the church.

Fire department officials said the blaze was set by an arsonist.

Edenfield, pastor of the church for about a year, said he knew of no reason why anyone would want to set fire to the church, nor did he know of anyone with a "grudge" against the church.

Edenfield, a second-year master of divinity student at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., said that the arsonist ripped 15 pages from the pulpit Bible-- from Psalms 1 to Psalms 67.

Many of the Psalms torn from the Bible and used to start the fire express praise to God for his presence and help in time of trouble. Psalms 66, for example, states, "...We went through fire and water, but thou hast brought us out into liberty." (Psalms 66:12b, N.E.B.)

Though damages were estimated at \$12,000 insurance covered all of the building damage and a large portion of the \$1,200 equipment loss, Edenfield said. He said he anticipated no problem in handling finances in rebuilding and repairs.

The church's silver (25th) anniversary celebration and homecoming has been scheduled for Oct. 24, 1971. "We hope to have everything back in shape by that time," Edenfield said.

Immediately following the fire, the church moved its worship services and other activities to the fellowship hall, next to the burned building, and began to rebuild.

"People have responded graciously by giving their time and finances to clean up and repaint the Sunday School spaces, the sanctuary, and upper part of the building that was damaged," the pastor said.

He said that building contractors were scheduled to finish their work in August, and most work by church members should be completed by September.

The fires were set in five different locations throughout the church. Extensive damage was done to an upstairs room in the northwest rear corner of the church, and a rear furnace room received slight damage. Extensive damage was also done to the secretary's office at the other end of the building.

The church organ suffered some damage, and several downstairs classrooms were burned. There was also extensive smoke damage throughout the building.

Only recently, the church had been painted inside, and new fireproof draperies had been installed.

Edenfield, a 1969 graduate of William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Miss., said that other churches in the area had recently been the victims of burglars and vandals.

Of his own church, the Pittsburg pastor said, "Our people built this church 25 years ago. It broke our hearts when it burned. We hope to be ready for the anniversary and homecoming celebration on Oct. 24."

Students Remodel Chicken
Coop Into Prayer Chapel

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (BP)--Where chickens used to roost, Baptist college students here will soon kneel to pray.

The 1971 graduating class at California Baptist College has remodeled a chicken coop into a prayer chapel.

The students gave their time, money and work to completely renovate an old eyesore on the campus as their senior gift to the college.

Keys to the new prayer chapel were recently presented to President James R. Staples.

Not more than two years ago, the little shed housed bantam chickens, doves, rabbits and a monkey.

Students and visitors who parked in a back parking lot had to pass by the dilapidated building. Stucco was falling off the sides of the building, and rotted beams held up what was left of the rusty chicken wire.

Only the original tiles on the roof seemed to have any value when Frank Hall, a senior, realized the potential of the small building. At his suggestion, the entire senior class voted to make a place of beauty out of the unused building.

The class contributed \$1,200 to the renovation and worked long hours to complete the project. Some of the graduating seniors continued to work on the project during the summer to complete the chapel for use in the fall.

The tile roof is the only remnant of the original facade. The stucco walls were replaced and painted, and a concrete porch added.

A carpet covers the floor which only a few months ago held sacks of grain and tools.

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Westmoreland Named Pastoral
Consultant for SBC Seminary

8/5/71

LOUISVILLE (BP)--E. Hermond Westmoreland, pastor of South Main Baptist Church in Houston for the past 33 years, will serve as pastoral consultant in residence at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here during the second semester of 1971-72.

Seminary officials described the appointment as an attempt to help faculty and students focus upon the role of the pastor as the seminary makes preparations for the doctor of ministry degree in 1972 with an emphasis on practical dimensions of the ministry.

Westmoreland, who holds the master of theology degree from the seminary, was a member of the board of trustees for nine years and served as national president of the seminary's alumni association in 1951-52.

He was also chairman of the trustees of Golden Gate Baptist Seminary for 12 years, has served as president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and was president of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board until 1968.

In 1970 Southern Seminary granted him its highest accolade, the E. Y. Mullins Denominational Service Award, in recognition of his role in Baptist life.

The native Arkansan has been pastor of the Houston congregation since 1938 and has announced his intention to retire from that post in December, shortly before he assumes the Southern Seminary post.

He has been asked to deliver the annual sermon at the 1971 sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention in Philadelphia next June.

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Home Mission Board Personnel
Director Suffers Heart Attack

ATLANTA (BP)--Glendon McCullough, director of the Division of Personnel for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, suffered a mild heart attack (Aug. 2) while preparing to leave Atlanta to attend the board's annual trustee meeting in Glorieta, N. M.

Although placed in intensive care at the Georgia Baptist Hospital here, McCullough's brother-in-law, Frank Kirkland of Missouri, said he was much improved, was resting comfortably, and even reading a newspaper.

Physicians described McCullough's heart attack as "mild."

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Alabama Baptists To Vote
On 1972 \$7.4 Million Budget

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--The Alabama Baptist Executive Board voted here to recommend adoption of a record 1972 budget goal of \$7.4 million when the Alabama Baptist State Convention meets in Huntsville in November.

Of the total goal, \$5.5 million would be sought through the Cooperative Program unified plan to support missionary, educational and benevolent work of the Alabama and Southern Baptist Conventions. It would be an increase of \$200,000 over the 1971 Cooperative Program goal.

The remaining \$1.8 million would be sought through designated contributions through special offerings for home and foreign missions, and for Alabama Baptist children's homes.

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