

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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December 6, 1971

Baptist-Jewish Prayer
Prompts "Dream of Peace"By Chandler Lanier
Southern Baptist Missionary to Israel

TEL AVIV (BP)--Rabbi Reuben Mandell is head of the Kibutz Kedma, a religious kibutz near Ashdod which ministers to troubled young people, usually from America.

Rabbi Mandell and I talked recently about his problems at the kibutz, especially the lack of water. At my suggestion that we pray together about the water problem, Mandell was visibly moved. He seemed surprised that a Christian should be willing to pray with him about his problems.

Several weeks passed, and then one day Mandell called. "I would like to come to Tel Aviv to discuss with you a dream of mine," he said.

On the day we met, Rabbi and Mrs. Mandell and another member of the kibutz spoke to a group of Christians representing many denominations.

"My dream," said Mandell, "is based on a teaching from the Talmud. If every Jew in the world were to observe one Sabbath correctly, peace would come.

"This year, Christmas, a day holy to Christians, falls on Sabbath, a day holy to Jews. My dream is for every Jew and every Christian in the world to pause on Christmas day and pray for peace. Perhaps God will hear and grant us peace."

Mandell will do all he can to enlist Jewish participation--he appeared on Israeli television on Thanksgiving Day--and the Christians present at the meeting will do all they can to enlist Christian participation around the world.

Is it just a dream? Can it be a reality?

In the meantime, the lines between Kibutz Kedma and the Baptists in Tel Aviv are being kept open.

Each Sunday night a "singspiration" is held at the Baptist dormitory near Tel Aviv. Once in a while the group is enlarged to include young people from the community, and this is called a "coffeehouse." Guitars are strummed, and rock and folk music prevails.

The members of Kibutz Kedma were invited to attend a "coffeehouse" the week of Thanksgiving, and the Mandells and several kibutz members came.

Later, an invitation came from Kedma, and the Baptists made plans to visit their Jewish friends at the kibutz.

Rabbi Mandell, who was reared on the streets of Brooklyn, speaks the language of the young people to whom he ministers.

Mrs. Mandell, whose devotion to Orthodox Judaism is deep and sincere, is meticulous concerning the Kosher laws. When we went out to dinner together, we had some difficulty in finding a Kosher restaurant.

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As we walked up the Dizengof (street), the sight of the Orthodox Jewish Rabbi and his wife and the Baptist missionary almost caused a traffic jam. He was dressed in a flowing black and white prayer shawl and she was wearing an eastern style robe which she had made herself, complete with jingling jewelry.

"Your Kosher sign is not enough," Mrs. Mandell told one hapless proprietor. "Where is your certificate from the Rabbis?"

Finally, a suitable restaurant was located. During the meal, Rabbi Mandell stated that he would not pronounce the name of Jesus.

"It is a holy name to my Christian brothers," he said. "I honor it by not pronouncing it."

A recent telephone call from the Rabbi brought some happy news.

"Remember that prayer we offered up for water?" he asked. "This past week, several wells have been dug, and now we have more water than any place around us."

We both believe God heard and answered that prayer. Perhaps he will hear and answer the prayers of many Jews and Christians who will be praying for peace on Christmas Day.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Chandler Lanier is a Southern Baptist missionary in Tel Aviv, where he and his family have lived since 1962. His work includes editing Hayahad (togetherness), the Baptist Hebrew-language paper, and its English version. He also is in charge of the Baptist-sponsored Dugith Art Gallery, reading room and bookshop, located in the city's theater and cafe district. The Macon, Ga., native is married to the former Sallie Cook of Covington, Ga. They have four children.

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Singapore Hotel Bar
Is Pulpit on Sunday

12/6/71

SINGAPORE (BP)--The Equatorial Hotel's lush Hibiscus Lounge has become a Sunday morning chapel for the hotel's staff and guests. Southern Baptist Missionary Associate Lehman F. Webb led the first worship service from the polished bar where drinks had been served eight hours earlier.

Hotel guests from diverse nations--Russia, China, the United States, and others--were attracted by the gospel songs and remained to listen to the sermon.

Webb, pastor of the International Baptist Church here, got permission from the hotel manager to hold services in the lounge, which was the only unoccupied room there on Sunday mornings.

The manager, an active Christian layman, told Webb, "You are an answer to prayer. I have been wanting such a service, and have considered starting one myself, but just can't find the time."

The hotel management now places a special announcement of the services in their guests' folders. On Saturdays a poster encourages attendance.

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Baptists Open Student Center,
Research Library in Jerusalem

12/6/71

JERUSALEM (BP)--Jerusalem House, a Baptist-run student center, has been opened here. Accessible to students of several institutions, the center contains a New Testament research library and museum in addition to a lounge and coffeehouse.

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The research library and museum are under the direction of Robert L. Lindsey, Southern Baptist missionary engaged in New Testament research and author of A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark.

Missionary Norman Lytle is general director of Jerusalem House. He recently returned to Israel following two years as interim director of Baptist student ministries at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Approximately 250 guests representing Jerusalem's Arab, Jewish and Christian communities attended an open house following a dedication service for the new center. Baptist leaders and missionaries from other cities in Israel also were present.

Lindsey, who is chairman of the Southern Baptist missionary organization in Israel, told the guests about the "15-year-old dream" that became a reality with the center's opening.

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Alton Reed, Who Helped Baptists
Face Retirement, Does Likewise

By Theo Sommerkamp

12/6/71

DALLAS (BP)--The man who has helped thousands of Southern Baptist Convention pastors and church and denominational employees prepare for retirement will retire himself March 1, 1972.

R. Alton Reed, 65, president of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board here, began helping Baptists face retirement in 1953 when the organization he heads was known as the Relief and Annuity Board.

"I'm a great believer in preparing people for retirement," he said.

How does it feel when applied personally? "Not only am I looking forward to my retirement, I am anticipating it with great joy," he replied.

During 1971, Reed has worked closely with Darold H. Morgan, a former Dallas pastor, who is expected to succeed him as president. They have adjacent offices. Morgan is the board's senior vice president.

Reed has prepared himself personally for what he calls "my new plateau in life." A native of Texas, he plans to continue to live in Dallas.

"My heart's in the pioneer mission field," Reed observed, referring to geographical areas of the nation where Southern Baptist work is comparatively new and small in numbers. "I feel I can help some of these churches solve their problems in finance and business administration," he said.

The retiring Annuity Board president also wants to resume some of the role he shed when he left the pastorate in 1947 to become a Baptist denominational worker.

"I'm going to visit in hospitals and nursing homes, calling on persons who don't have anyone else to come to see them," he said.

The fourth executive head of the Annuity Board, Reed administered the agency while it gained a solid financial footing. The board has altered its retirement income as well as government Social Security and has begun to give annuitants a bonus payment.

In 1971, according to Reed, the extra payment to annuitants has been almost 25 per cent more than the amount required in their contracts.

This "thirteenth check," as it is often called, has been made possible by the financial security attained during Reed's administration, according to the board's historian.

Today the Annuity Board serves more than 18,000 pastors and church workers with retirement plan coverage. Nearly 16,000 other accounts are held for employees of Baptist conventions, hospitals, children's homes and other agencies.

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Assets of the board have grown tenfold during Reed's years with it--he started in 1953 as associate executive secretary and became executive secretary two years later. The title executive secretary was later changed to "president."

In 1953, there were only \$26.5 million assets. As of September 30, 1971, they totalled \$281.6 million. The board has added programs in term life insurance and hospitalization coverage, while improving retirement benefits.

Reed might have become a career radio announcer and station manager, but events in his life convinced him God was calling him to preach, he recalled. At one point, he was preaching for a Dallas church on Sunday and handling programs for a Dallas radio station (KRLD) during the week.

In 1947, he left the full-time pastorate of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas to become secretary of radio and public relations work for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. He remained with the Texas convention until called by the Relief and Annuity Board.

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BP PHOTO mailed to state paper editors.

Home Mission Board Honors
Fite, Former Cuba Missionary

12/6/71

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board presented a resolution of appreciation to former Cuba missionaries David and Margaret Fite, after Fite had recounted his experiences of imprisonment for three years in Cuba.

Fite, now a professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, and his wife served under the board as missionaries to Cuba for nine years.

In 1965 Fite was imprisoned on charges of espionage and illegal currency exchange by the Castro regime, along with his missionary father-in-law, Herbert Caudill. Fite was released in 1968 and returned to the United States in 1969.

"Now that I look back on it, I believe the reason our church in Havana didn't grow very much was that we were like cranes, stretching out our necks and picking out the people from different communities," Fite recalled. "But we need to realize the potential of the community on the human level and reach out in our own community."

Fite told the board's directors, staff and personnel that Christians are bound together in a human as well as divine community. He recounted an experience in prison which helped reinforce this viewpoint.

Fite said that during his imprisonment, he was transferred from one prison to another. "Prison transfers were always a threat. We had rather face a bad (prison) we knew than a good (prison) we didn't know. This (specific) transfer was a double threat for it meant further separation from my family.

After a long 24-hour bus ride, Fite said he had a feeling of complete loneliness. The prisoners were ushered into a courtyard surrounded by six floors of cells with fronts facing the courtyard.

"A thousand faces were peering down, and not a person I knew," Fite said. Then a familiar voice yelled out, "Brother Dave!" Fite looked up to see a pastor he had known before imprisonment.

"Then it was a community because I knew one person," he said. "We are bound by a human community, but through it have a means of carrying God's love to others.

"We are no longer strangers, for in Christ we become fellow citizens, giving us an opportunity to witness," Fite said.

Also in board action resolutions of appreciation were presented to retirees L. O. Griffith, director of Division of Communication; Geo. W. Cummins, director of Division of Chaplaincy;

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Deedie Kelfon, who has worked in the Division of Communication since 1949; Sara Ophelia Baccus, who has worked in the Division of Business Services since 1954; and to Glendon McCullough, former director of the Division of Personnel, now the new executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, Memphis.

Four student observers, representing four educational institutions, attended the three-day board meeting. In reporting their observations on meetings they attended, one student referred to the board as "the cutting edge of the denomination."

"I found a willingness, a spirit to try new things here to reach people; even controversial things," said Mike Robertson of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

Other student observers were Margie Escalera of the University of Houston, Kathy Zimmerman of Austin College, Sherman, Tex., and Tom Lowry, University of Georgia, Athens.

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SBC Cooperative Program
Gifts Up 5.7 % for Year

12/6/71

NASHVILLE (BP)--An increase of 9.44 per cent in giving through the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program unified budget during the month of November helped to boost contributions through the Cooperative Program to an increase of nearly \$1.5 million over gifts for the same 11 month period in 1970.

Mission gifts through the unified budget plan increased by 5.75 per cent for the period January-November, 1971, over the same period in 1970, according to a monthly financial statement prepared here by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Cooperative Program contributions for the 11-month period reached \$27.3 million in November, compared to \$25.8 million during the same period of 1970, the report indicated.

Porter W. Routh, executive secretary of the Executive Committee, said that if present giving rates continued during the month of December, the denomination would end the year with gifts exceeding the \$29.1 million operating budget, and paying about \$500,000 on the capital needs section of the budget.

This would leave the denomination about \$1.5 million short of the \$2 million needed for capital needs. The 1971 budget includes \$29.1 million in operating funds, \$932,927 in capital needs not paid in 1970, plus \$1,050,000 in capital needs budgeted for 1971.

Routh said that in order to pay the entire budget needs of \$31.1 million, Cooperative Program contributions must increase 11.48 per cent over the 1970 level of giving. For the first 11 months, the average increase was 5.75 per cent.

In addition to the \$27.3 million in Cooperative Program contributions, Southern Baptists have given \$23.5 million in designated gifts to specific mission causes during the first 11 months of the year.

Designated gifts were up nearly \$1.5 million, or 6.79 per cent, compared to the \$22 million in designations given during the first 11 months of 1970.

The combined Cooperative Program and designated gifts for the year surpassed the \$50 million mark, and exceeded in 11 months what Southern Baptists gave in combined world missions contributions for the entire year of 1970.

During 11 months of 1971, the combined Cooperative Program and designated gifts totalled \$50.9 million. During 12 months of 1970, the total was \$50.2 million, an increase of \$500,000.

Of the \$50.9 million total, \$31.6 million has been distributed to support the work of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, and \$10.7 million has gone to support Home Mission Board programs in the USA. Financial support is also provided to six Southern Baptist seminaries, and 15 other Baptist causes, organizations and agencies.

The total figure does not include amounts given to support local and state-wide Baptist mission efforts, but only funds allocated to national and world-wide Southern Baptist causes.

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