



BAPTIST PRESS

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May 22, 1972

Alaska Leaders Discover "Cabin Fever" Remedy

By Everett Hullum

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (BP)--A remedy for "cabin fever" was discovered recently by a group of Southern Baptist pastors and their wives from all over Alaska.

Men who pastor churches in these vast areas, as well as their families, are not immune to the depression that comes from weeks--even months--alone in areas with few people and no access to the outside world except plane travel.

This "aloneness" is cabin fever; it may not be in the Johns Hopkins lexicon, but Alaskans testify to its validity.

The ingredients for the cure include fellowship, fun, study--stirred together at the first Alaskan Pastors' Retreat in late May at Alyeska Ski Lodge near Anchorage.

The spring-thaw retreat, sponsored jointly by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and the Alaska Baptist Convention, attracted 61 state leaders and their wives--about 60 per cent of the state's denominational leadership.

Featured on the program were D. C. Martin, professor of New Testament at Grand Canyon College, Phoenix, Ariz., and James Barber, assistant secretary in the Home Mission Board's department of Christian social ministries. Paul Barnes, assistant to the president at Grand Canyon College, and his wife, Barbara, led the music.

Equally featured were opportunities for fellowship and discussion--woven into the loosely structured program--that are so important after months of isolation, loneliness and frustration in remote areas.

Alaska Southern Baptist pastors range from Kotzebue in the Arctic Circle, to Annette, the state's southernmost town--a distance as great as from Atlanta to San Francisco.

"You'll never know what this meeting has meant to us," said Eunice Bryant, wife of Hollis Bryant of First Baptist Church, Juneau.

For Betty Brown, whose husband Dan is associate pastor at Annette, the retreat was the first time in two years she'd been off the island. "I couldn't believe it when we saw stoplights in Anchorage," she laughed.

"If we'd had this sooner, maybe I wouldn't be leaving," added a pastor who, after seven years in Alaska, resigned two days before the retreat to return on doctor's orders to the "lower 48," as the states to the south are called here.

"I think we accomplished our objectives," said Troy Prince, the state convention's executive secretary.

"We had planned five things," he added.

"First, fellowship--we wanted to get to know each other under pleasant circumstances.

"Second, we wanted to help each other get rid of the guilt complexes we have when we try to be nice to ourselves. You know, sometimes the work up here is so hard and discouraging, pastors start blaming themselves and pushing themselves to do more and more. They forget to be nice to themselves.

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"Third," Prince continued, "we wanted to give encouragement; we wanted the pastors to go back to their places of service with some good memories--and have something to look forward to next year.

"Fourth, we wanted to provide biblical understanding that would be supportive; and fifth, we wanted an opportunity for wives to get to know each other and know they are appreciated," Prince said.

The retreat had been jelling for more than two years, according to Prince, but short circuits in funding kept killing it.

But Prince recognized the need for it shortly after coming to Alaska in July of 1971.

"When I came the Executive Board asked me to go to every church as soon as possible. We did, and visited in the homes of the pastors. Many times they'd want to stay up all night--they were that hungry for conversation and fellowship.

"Over and over again, the feeling was expressed that they needed this retreat--they felt isolated, forgotten--and this created a depression, a frustration that made their work ineffective," he said.

The pastors were not complaining, Prince explained, just stating facts. "I felt loneliness and isolation were our biggest problems, and I wanted to do something to alleviate them," he concluded.

At a November meeting between Prince and Paul Adkins, secretary of the Home Mission Board's Christian social ministries department, a commitment was made. Adkins, Oscar Romo of the language missions department, and Victor Glass of the department of work with National Baptists, supplied funds and Prince arranged logistics.

After this year's success, plans are to repeat the retreat next year.

As for lasting effects, Prince believes the retreat will give the pastors a greater sense of participation in the work of the convention--and a little old-fashioned togetherness.

"I hate to use a word like that," he laughed, "but I think that's what the retreat was all about."

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Pastor of 2nd Largest SBC
Church Enters Business

5/22/72

LUBBOCK, Tex. (BP)--The pastor of the second largest church in the Southern Baptist Convention, W. David Ray, will resign June 15 to re-enter private business.

Ray, 38, has been pastor of the 9,672-member First Baptist Church of Lubbock since 1967. He will become regional manager of Cosmetics International Corp., based in Amarillo, Tex.

Ray, in an interview, said he was not turning his back on his faith, and planned to continue to preach. "I have an absolutely open mind to going back into some phase of the ministry later," he said. "I'm not disappointed or disillusioned with the ministry."

He emphasized that there were no insurmountable problems in the Lubbock church or in his ministry, but he felt that at this point in his life, God was leading him back into secular work.

Although he was out of the pulpit for four months last year because of health problems, Ray said his health was not the major reason for his decision. "But I would be less than honest if I did not admit that the stress and strain of the ministry is one of the contributing factors."

Ray said he faced fewer problems at the Lubbock church than a lot of other ministers face, but said he is a perfectionist by nature and wanted to be both the best preacher and the best pastor possible. "Some pastors can do that--but I just can't," he said. "It's a seven day and seven night-a-week job, and it's more than I can handle."

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"But I'm not running away from any problems. It's just that at this point in my life, I feel this is the Lord's will," he said. "It's the best thing, and it's the right thing at this point."

A native of Nolan, Tex., near Abilene, he has served as pastor of six Southern Baptist churches since he left the real estate and insurance business to enter the ministry in 1957.

He holds a business administration degree from Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, a bachelor of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, and an honorary doctorate from Hardin-Simmons.

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Growth of Cities in Asia
Alters Mission Landscape

5/22/72

RICHMOND (BP)--The arrival of metropolitan problems in Asian capitals is sparking new urban ministries for Southern Baptist foreign missions in Asia.

Veteran observers in the Asian trade and cultural centers of Tokyo and Singapore say that radical urban growth has altered the climate and topography of the missionary landscape.

Two such observers are Melvin J. Bradshaw, Southern Baptist missionary in Japan, and R. Keith Parks, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board secretary for Southeast Asia.

Both Bradshaw and Parks say the urban explosion that is reordering customs, values and social structures has tested motivation for foreign missionaries in a way that neither personal privation nor war has done.

Bradshaw believes the situation makes it mandatory that the missionary avoid paternalistic images and relate to his national colleagues on a partnership basis.

Parks says the critical need is to develop new methods to deal with the high-rise life style and materialistic value system sweeping Asian cities.

"Men with inner-city experience in the states will have a relevant model for work in these expanding urban centers," says Parks.

Bradshaw, who works in Hiroshima, points out changes that have taken place during his 20 years of missionary service. "High-rises, white-collar workers, rapid transit, technology and western values have changed Japan," he says. "The traditionally dressed Japanese is the exception in Tokyo, as are traditional Japanese living quarters.

"The escalation of land and building costs beyond our resources means we must develop new ways of evangelism and church development in partnership with the Japanese," adds Bradshaw.

During the past two years, several American experts in urban analysis have studied Asian cities at Parks' request.

He believes that good groundwork has already been laid for developing the necessary mission methodology. "We are ready to start dealing with specific alternatives in individual situations now," Parks notes.

As to what kind of missionary is needed for such challenges, both men speak of "flexibility, imagination, deep spiritual commitment and a strong sense of God's call to the missionary task."

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Alaska Baptists Name
Negro as President

5/22/72

ANCHORAGE (BP)--Herbert Cotton, accountant with the Recording Corporation of America in Alaska, became the president of the Alaska Baptist Convention during the course of a recent meeting of the convention's Executive Board.

Almost unnoticed here was the fact that Cotton became the first Negro to be named president of a Baptist state convention affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Cotton, former vice president of the convention, assumes the presidency following the resignation of Kelly Dickson. Dickson, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Kenai, resigned upon the suggestion of his physician due to a breakdown in health.

The new president is a graduate of Southern University, Baton Rouge, La. He has served on the Executive Board of the Alaska Convention, and is a deacon in Fairview Baptist Church in Anchorage.

During the board meeting, E. C. Chron, state missions director, resigned to enter the field of evangelism.

The Executive Board also voted to recommend a budget of \$286,000, which will be submitted to the annual Alaska Baptist Convention meeting in Juneau in August.

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Baptist Foundation of Texas
Adopts New Titles for Officers

5/22/72

DALLAS (BP)--The Baptist Foundation of Texas has adopted new titles for its personnel paralleling terminology used in the business community, and in the Southern Baptist Annuity Board here.

J. C. Cantrell, executive secretary, will become president and chief executive officer of the foundation, the largest in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Carr P. Collins, formerly president of the board of directors, will be designated chairman of the board for the Dallas-based agency.

George Shearin, formerly associate executive secretary, will become general counsel, and Lynn Craft will move from a position in the foundation's trust department to the newly created post of executive vice president.

Other vice presidents will be Glynn Sybert, investments; Tal Roberts, trusts; Gordon Bowers, accounting; Wayne Claycomb, special corporations; and Robert G. Bowers, public relations.

The titles were changed, foundation officials said, to avoid continual confusion in transactions with executives of business institutions unfamiliar with terms such as "executive secretary."

The SBC Annuity Board made similar changes in 1970 for the same basic reason.

The Baptist Foundation of Texas manages and invests endowment funds for Baptist institutions, boards and agencies, including several SBC organizations.

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