



BAPTIST PRESS
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May 23, 1972

Renewal Evangelism to
Use Laity-Led Weekend

ATLANTA (BP)--Reid Hardin, a ruddy-faced insurance executive turned lay evangelist, said here that the major tool for renewal evangelism in the Southern Baptist Convention would be lay-led weekend emphases in churches.

Hardin, recently elected associate director of the Division of Evangelism for the SBC Home Mission Board, made the announcement during the first Renewal Evangelism Conference sponsored by the mission agency.

The conference gathered 65 leaders in renewal evangelism from throughout the nation to explore directions for the emphasis.

Hardin told the group that this new emphasis "doesn't mean we are going to gas up the laity for old programs."

Instead, he said, the renewal evangelism weekends were developed in recent years to utilize lay persons as catalysts in "turning on other laity through personal and group contact."

Best known of these type efforts has been the Lay Witness Missions, developed by Ben Jonson of Atlanta.

When asked to define "renewal evangelism," Hardin said it was the coming alive in a spiritual awakening of persons who are increasingly discovering a deeper and more meaningful life, the living out of that discovery in the church, and the sharing of the discovery through witness and ministry in all their worlds: neighborhoods, businesses, professions, jobs, schools, and social life.

Hardin said he is now prepared to accept invitations for renewal evangelism weekends. He has a corps of accredited coordinators trained (many were here for the conference) who will take assignments.

He said teams of Christian couples and youth, paying their own ways for the Friday through Sunday efforts, would lead the renewal evangelism weekends.

All kinds of laymen professionally are involved, including airline pilots, physicians, corporation executives, attorneys, salesmen, and workers in nearly every kind of job imaginable.

Renewal evangelism teams, ranging in size from five to 40 according to the church, are scheduled six months in advance for a specific weekend.

The team usually arrives on Friday and leaves on Monday. The weekends include fellowship meals, experience sharing, small group work, "Coke" parties for youth, coffee sharing groups in homes, luncheons and cook-outs, dinner dialogues in homes, and participation in the Sunday School and worship services.

"This is a weekend of real fellowship in sharing on a voluntary and comfortable level," Hardin said. "It is sharing of faith experiences, victories, common problems and needs. It should not be confused with 'sensitivity' training or integrity therapy, or with similar approaches."

Hardin gained experience in renewal evangelism when he founded Layman's Landing near Deerfield, Fla., a Christian retreat center for laity.

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Kenneth Chafin, director of the board's Division of Evangelism, said that in establishing the emphasis on renewal evangelism the Home Mission Board made three commitments: a commitment to renewal, a commitment to the church, and a commitment to evangelism.

"Through the formal and informal things called renewal, I believe God has begun to move," Chafin said.

He said the Division of Evangelism would be working in renewal evangelism with the state secretaries of evangelism and with other agencies of the convention, especially the Brotherhood Commission, Woman's Missionary Union, and the Sunday School Board.

W. J. Isbell of the Brotherhood Commission, and a participant in the Renewal Evangelism Conference, said his agency was creating a department of lay witnessing which would relate not only to the renewal evangelism weekends, but to lay evangelism, and to evangelism crusades in areas where Southern Baptists are not strong numerically.

Hardin said he has a list of experienced coordinators who have been trained in renewal evangelism weekends. Pastors wanting a team of laity for such an experience should contact him or a state secretary of evangelism at least six months in advance of the time he wants to schedule such a weekend.

While the laity travel at their own expense, the church conducting the weekend emphasizes cares for the other expenses of the team. A part of the planned activities is for the team members to be in the homes of church members, quite often those who are not very active, Hardin said.

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NBC-TV to Show "The Prado,"
Baptist Film on God and Art

5/23/72

FORT WORTH (BP)--The National Broadcasting Co., (NBC-TV) will rerun a Baptist produced documentary film entitled, "The Prado," giving the artist's view of God's creation.

The hour-long program is scheduled for network showing on July 16, at 4:00 p.m., EDT, according to an announcement by the Southern Baptist Radio-Television Commission here.

The film was produced in association with the Radio-TV Commission by the network. Doris Ann, director of NBC-TV's religious programming, handled production, and Aline Saarine, NBC art critic, narrated the film.

"The Prado" uses commentary and scenes of famous works of art found in a 150-year-old Spanish museum in Madrid to present "the artist's view of God's creation." Some of the paintings in the film include works by Titian, Hans Memling, Rubens, Fra Angelico, Velasquez, Murillo, Goya and El Greco.

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Baptists in Saigon Organize
Refugee Assistance Groups

5/23/72

SAIGON (BP)--Baptists here have formed social action groups to aid the thousands of civilians seeking refuge from the war that is laying waste to towns and villages in other parts of Vietnam.

With more than 100,000 people from as far north as Hue expected to pour into this capital city by June 1, Southern Baptist missionaries met with pastors of Baptist churches here to organize their congregations into social action groups.

At the suggestion of the missionary social ministries committee, the Saigon pastors formed their own committee to visit refugee camps and report back on conditions and needs.

The pastors visited six of nine refugee groups now located in primary schools here. More than 7,000 women and children are housed in the six camps. Most men stayed in their villages and towns to defend them against the Communist forces.

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Tran Nguon Phieu, Vietnamese minister of social welfare, met the Baptist pastors at one of the refugee centers. He told missionary associate Sam Humphries: "Please thank your Baptist people for their concern and help. We need your help now, but more important, we will need it in the future when we start to rebuild our country. Please tell your people not to forget us then."

With Humphries and the pastors was Eugene Grubbs of Richmond, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board consultant on laymen overseas, who was in Vietnam visiting missionaries and national Baptists.

Relief funds from Southern Baptists through the Foreign Mission Board have been used to buy medicine, mosquito nets, milk, sleeping mats and other necessities for the refugees, Humphries reported.

Missionaries in Vietnam have asked the board for another \$10,000 in emergency relief funds.

"Vietnamese Christians are working hard to aid the physical needs of their people," said Humphries. "In addition, they realize their greatest need is to know Christ as savior. Because of this, each refugee package contains religious tracts and a copy of the Gospel of John."

Mrs. Humphries is chairman of the missionaries' social ministries committee.

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