



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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December 12, 1972

**SBC Brotherhood Commission
Creates Lay Renewal Effort**

MEMPHIS (BP)--Opportunities for experiences in lay renewal are being offered through development of a new lay ministries department at the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission here.

James Johnson of Arlington, Tex., a Southern Baptist layman experienced in lay renewal work and computer consultant professionally, will head the department on a part-time basis, according to Glendon McCullough, executive director of the commission.

Lay renewal is one of three emphases of the agency's lay ministries department, McCullough said. The other two are personal ministries and communication of lay activities.

The Evangelism Division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board is cooperating with the commission to make a variety of spiritual experiences in lay renewal available to Southern Baptists, McCullough said.

The mission board is majoring on renewal evangelism, including a renewal evangelism weekend, and a continuing spiritual growth process.

Within lay renewal, the commission is emphasizing the lay witness mission, a three-month initial experience of exposing people to positive spiritual experiences in small groups and of relating to people on a personal basis, McCullough said.

Johnson, who spends the other half of his work day as a computer consultant, now provides churches with leaders for 30 lay witness missions a month.

In his new relationship in the denomination, Johnson works with state Brotherhood departments to train lay witness coordinators for the churches.

"I see Baptists majoring on Christian growth by nurturing one another through lay renewal activities," Johnson said. "Through lay witness mission, we are encouraging mutual dependence of Christians upon each other."

Stressing the three-month experience as the ideal, Johnson said that lay witness mission isn't just a weekend experience.

Some churches which have given lay witness mission an honest try have disbanded nominating committees because everyone wanted to work, Johnson said, while other churches reported giving above the budget for the first time in years.

Johnson said he also recommends a second type of renewal experience which he calls an experiment in discipline and discovery. It's a three-month program in which a church experiments by small groups in five basic Christian disciplines--Bible study, giving, prayer, ministry, and worship, following instructions on cassette tapes.

The 32-year-old Baptist layman, who operates Dallas Information Processors Corporation and Baptist Information Processors, has been active in Southern Baptist work for 14 years and interested in lay renewal for about four years.

Johnson's sister Miss Margaret Johnson, is a Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil. His father is a retired builder in Arlington.

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During a six-year stint in the United States Air Force as a captain, Johnson organized a Baptist church, served on the Executive Committee of the European Baptist Convention and did personal church work as a deacon, Sunday School teacher and music director.

As a military man, Johnson said he found a need wherever he was assigned for an evangelical ministry and spent his efforts trying to provide one.

"Since I left military service, I've been looking for a business which would support me and still leave me time for significant Christian ministry. I found it in the computer service."

Johnson said he discovered the meaning of Christian ministry while serving as mission action leader in his church. He got the opportunity to respond to a request for help from a South Texas Baptist church.

"Since then, I've organized projects myself--discovering needs and the people who could meet them and getting the two together."

Lay renewal attracted Johnson's attention when he read how a group of Christians in Ralls, Tex., were responding after a lay renewal experience.

"I saw the changes in the lives of people involved in a lay witness mission and I liked what I saw."

Ben Johnson (no relation) of Atlanta, Georgia, a pioneer in lay renewal work and a specialist in the lay witness mission concept, helped train the Texas Baptist layman and encouraged him to continue in the work.

"Now I put lay renewal at the top of Baptist priorities. Out of lay renewal can come true evangelism."

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SBC-Produced Program
Slated for Television

12/12/72

FORT WORTH (BP)--"Legacy," an hour-long documentary program produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission here in association with the National Broadcasting Co., will be shown by the NBC-TV network on Sunday, Jan. 21.

The program, filmed in the Netherlands, is designed to show the enduring contribution to America and the world of the Dutch people of the 17th century and today. It is the first of NBC's hour-long religious specials for 1973.

Narrated by Alexander Scourby, "Legacy" presents the portrait of Dutch people through the works of such modern artists as Appel and Mondrian, as well as Van Gogh, Rembrandt, and Vermeer. The film will also show Pilgrim's Church in Amsterdam and Anne Frank's House.

Emphasized in "Legacy" are the Dutch traits of hard work, a love of life, and above all, a love of political and religious freedom.

The program is slated on the network for broadcast at 8:30 p.m., EST, Jan. 21, but local stations may vary the time of showing, according to Radio-TV Commission officials.

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