



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2481
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5461
RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

December 4, 1974

World Baptist Men Express
Concern About World Hunger

74-93

HONG KONG (BP)--Expressing concern over the world's food crisis, the immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention challenged participants in the first World Conference of Baptist Men to give up at least one meal and donate that amount to feed starving people.

Owen Cooper, who retired last year as president of the Mississippi Chemical Corporation in Yazoo City, Miss., made the proposal during an evening speech to the conference at the beginning of the week-long session.

On the final night, the conference took up an offering to be used to fight the world food shortage through the Baptist World Alliance's World Relief Program.

Cooper, in his address, reminded the 482 participants that one-third of the world's population would go to bed hungry that night.

Noting that "most of us eat too much when we go to a meeting like this," Cooper urged the participants to do without at least one meal--the most expensive one they might plan in Hong Kong--and donate that amount to feed hungry people.

He told about his own involvement in an organization called the Agricultural Missions Foundation, which seeks to encourage farmers, ranchers and others interested in agriculture to give cattle, seed and professional expertise to help in Baptist agricultural mission projects.

The foundation recently produced a film showing the overwhelming needs of the drought victims of the Sahel region of Africa and hopes to use the film to help raise funds to assist these people, Cooper said.

In another project, the foundation sent two plane loads of livestock to farmers and ranchers in Ecuador to help them upgrade their stock. Baptist missionaries in Ecuador coordinated the project there, and the foundation encouraged people in the U. S. to give the livestock.

Cooper said the foundation believes you can feed a starving person one meal, and he will be hungry the next day. But if you teach him to grow more and better crops, he can feed himself from then on.

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Afro-Asians Must Play A
Stronger Role Says Tse

12/4/74

HONG KONG (BP)--Afro-Asians must come to the forefront in Christian missions work, declared Daniel C. W. Tse, president of Hong Kong Baptist College, during an address to the first World Conference of Baptist Men here.

There was a time, said Tse, when spreading of the Christian message seemed to be the job of the missionaries from the West, but that is changing.

Afro-Asians must also change their attitudes toward their responsibility in spreading the good news of Jesus Christ, he said.

"We must not just rely on our western colleagues to do the job.

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"Missionaries may still have to travel across oceans and seas to help spread the gospel, but the travels should no longer be just from the West to the East.

"Churches in Asia and Africa must rise," he declared. "Afro-Asian Christians must come to the forefront in the field of missionary work, for missionary work is as much the eastern responsibility as it is the responsibility of missionaries from the west."

Perhaps it is even more the responsibility of the Afro-Asians, because "we have the advantages of the languages, of cultural lineage, of geographical proximity."

Tse, who just returned from a speaking tour of Japan, said he had come home with "a burden, as a Christian born and raised in an Asian setting, but I have a debt to pay, a heavy responsibility in the spreading of the Christian message in this part of the world."

In another address to the conference, the general secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, J. T. Ayorinde, echoed the Tse plea, saying he was a direct product of Southern Baptist mission efforts in Nigeria, but the time has come for Africans to play a stronger role in spreading the gospel.

"The winds of change are blowing across the length and breadth of the world today, and especially in Africa," Ayorinde said. "This is particularly so in the economic and political aspect of national life."

He pointed to the economic instability of the Hong Kong dollar during the meeting, the extreme drought in the Sahel region of Africa and the political coup in Ethiopia, which has toppled not only Emperor Haile Selassie but the general who led in deposing the emperor.

Ayorinde pointed out that people depend too much on their own intelligence in seeking to solve the problems of the world.

"We really haven't done much in successfully preserving peace and economic stability," he declared. "We put too much emphasis on economic things and too little emphasis on spiritual things. Spiritual security is far more important than economic security."

What we need, he said, is a band of Christian men who will penetrate the world and bring Christian principles and the message of Christ to education, government, economics and the affairs of the church.

"We don't need to be afraid that the church will die," he said. "The danger is that it may be so insipid that it stands for nothing."

In another address, Alan C. Prior of Australia, executive secretary of the Asian Baptist Fellowship, told of both "good news" and "bad news" from Asia. "To be honest there is a great deal of bad news from Asia," said Prior. He cited the war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, poverty, malnutrition, hunger, unemployment, poor medical services and over population

"Here in Asia, 65 per cent of the world's population occupies 35 per cent of the world's agricultural land, and produces only eight per cent of the world's food. There are just too many people and there is too little food in Asia," he said.

"But there is also good news from Asia, and most of it has its origin in the Christian gospel. And if I am charged that my view is a narrow one, I would reply that it also is a close and sharp one brought into focus," Prior claimed.

There is good news for Baptists in that Asia has outstripped Europe in Baptist membership, said Prior. Asia now has more than 1.6 million Baptists, compared to about 1.59 million in Europe, he said. Baptist churches have grown to the point in Asia that they will be heard and heeded, he added.

Perhaps the best news of all for Baptists in Asia is the development of the Asian Baptist Fellowship. "Baptists in Asia are thinking together and working together in the common task of making the gospel of Jesus Christ known in Asia."

"The missionary era is coming to an end, or at least taking new directions," Prior said. "The mission boards are helping the healthy Asian Christians to stand on their own feet and

grow into maturity. And Asian Baptists have set out on the journey together in a new unity. This is the best news of all."

Prior said the future of Baptists in Asia could be either bad news or good news, for it will be as bad as our unbelief, our disunity, our isolation, our lack of faith, and as good as our determination, our unity, our faith and our fellowship.

In a report on Baptist work in Europe, Erling Oddestad, a Swedish business man and president of the Baptist Union of Sweden, said that Baptist churches inside Russia were the fastest growing churches in all of Europe.

Noting that about two-thirds of the . . . European Baptists live in Communist-controlled countries, Oddestad said the churches in many of these countries are growing despite opposition of government.

The growth of the Christian churches in Communist-controlled nations demonstrates clearly that "you do not have to have money, religious freedom or fine buildings to win people to Christ," he said.

The 482 registered participants in the world conference included 11 from Europe and Africa, 103 from North and South America, 142 from 14 countries in Asia and 226 from Hong Kong.

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Spanish Church Locates
"Where People Pass By"

12/4/74

By Betty Law

JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA, Spain (BP)--What members of the Bethlehem Baptist Church here felt was the almost "impossible dream" became a reality with the dedication of their new chapel.

For years this small congregation, located in what has been called "the sherry wine capital of the world," dreamed of relocating on "a street where people pass by."

Their previous chapel, a former bakery purchased 15 years ago with funds from the Southern Baptist Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, stood on an obscure, narrow, winding back street--surrounded by small industry.

Three years ago a lot on a principal street, just a block and a half away, became available. Now, the first unit in the new building program has been completed, through sacrificial giving by the small congregation and with funds from the Lottie Moon Offering, which supplements the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program unified budget in support of world missions.

A lighted cross is displayed on the front of the church and a sign of gothic letters in iron reads: "Templo Bautista." Such outward marks were impossible for non-Catholic churches in Spain until a very few years ago.

Over 250 crowded into the chapel, patio and entrance area for dedicatory services. Chartered buses and cars brought Baptist visitors from other towns, and many local people came for their first glimpse inside a non-Catholic church.

Juan Luis Rodrigo, pastor of First Baptist Church in Madrid, delivered the dedicatory sermon and preached in special services for four days.

"Without doubt more new people attended during those four days than in the past four years," said Southern Baptist missionary Thomas L. Law, pastor of the church.

"One detail of interest," he added, "is the investment the people have made. Out of construction costs of nearly \$40,000, they only received \$10,000 from outside, for which they are thankful."

The church's future plans call for the second unit of building which would provide more Sunday School space and a room for youth activities.

Mrs. Tom (Betty) Law, a Southern Baptist missionary to Spain, wrote this article for European Baptist Press Service.

S. C. Church Ordains Woman For Chaplaincy

COLUMBIA, S. C. (BP)--North Trenholm Baptist Church voted overwhelmingly here to ordain Miss Brenda Carol Jowers, a chaplain at Baptist Hospital here, to the ministry.

Her father, Marcus R. Jowers, pastor of First Baptist Church, Haines City, Fla., took part in the ceremony.

Only one dissenting vote was cast at a well-attended business conference at the church during consideration of her ordination. She had been recommended unanimously by the church's deacons.

The action, which made her the third woman ordained by a Southern Baptist church in South Carolina and one of less than 20 in the Southern Baptist Convention, followed two months of intensive study by the church.

The graduate of Mercer University, Macon, Ga., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., said she plans to continue in the chaplaincy and does not envision serving as a pastor.

She said that her call to the institutional chaplaincy requires ordination and that none of the chaplaincy accrediting agencies currently accredit non-ordained chaplains. "To continue my vocational plans," she emphasized, "ordination is a necessity."

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Lay Persons Big-Spenders In Baptist Book Stores

12/4/74

By Jennifer Bryon

NASHVILLE (BP)--The big spenders on books in Baptist Book Stores in the past have been pastors.

No more!

Baptist lay persons are now the major book buyers.

William S. Graham, director of the 56-store chain maintained by the Baptist Sunday School Board, says a major change is taking place in Baptist buying habits.

There are several reasons for this swing from clergy to laity in buying of books, Graham says. One is a new spiritual awakening among the laity. Another is that pastors are preaching in a way that encourages lay people to do further study.

"This is no rejection of what the preacher has said from the pulpit," Graham notes. Rather, "It is actually a credit to him that people are challenged to read further. Ministers are also now commenting more on controversial subjects and lay people want to study these areas in depth.

"In times such as we are experiencing with the economy right now," he continues, "people are seeking answers to personal problems. People are reading more, perhaps because they are traveling less and television is losing some of its appeal to many adults."

While continuing to serve churches with their program needs, Baptist Book Stores have broadened their base of service and have become more people-oriented. This is to meet demands for the self-help, personal development and growth type books.

"People today seem to be more introspective and are looking at their problems," said Graham. Several years ago, stores usually did not carry books on divorce, but now virtually every religious publisher with whom the Baptist Book Stores deal, has a book or books dealing with this subject. Books dealing with problem areas are in demand because lay people are using them in counseling and helping others, Graham noted.

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"Some of our managers believe the lay person is now doing many things at one time left up to the pastor," said Graham. Also, he added, "people who may not know what or how to say something to a friend with a problem are giving that friend a book dealing with the subject."

Ten to 15 years ago there were a few well-established authors who had great appeal. These have remained favorites, but now there is a greater variety of authors, and people buy books by all of them.

"Books by famous people such as Anita Bryant, Pat Boone, Katherine Marshall and Dale Evans are in great demand," said Graham. "People like to read inspirational books by famous people who are telling their personal experience."

But lay people are also studying theology.

"Some people have called it 'pop theology', but it really seems to be a relational theology instead of critical study," explained Graham. "People are wanting to understand theology in such a way that they can apply it to their daily lives."

This has led to an increase in requests for Bible study materials, many of which are used in home group studies.

Lay people more than ever are studying to find out for themselves what the Bible says," Graham said. "Our book store managers agree this has caused the demand for one volume commentaries to increase considerably.

"Most people are buying one volume commentaries rather than sets," explained Graham. "Often when they buy a set, such as Barclay's which continues to be one of our bestsellers, they buy it one volume at a time. They seem to be buying the commentary of the devotional and exposition nature to supplement study on that subject. When they move on to another subject, they come back for the corresponding commentary."

Bible reference books and Bible dictionaries are selling well, along with the commentaries.

"However, as always, the Bible continues to be our bestselling book. Our sales are as strong and possibly stronger than ever," Graham pointed out. "In this Bible-centered emphasis, both the laity and clergy want to know what the Bible says and are not tied to just one version."

The trend seems to be toward people owning several Bibles. While they may have one which is their basic Bible, they will have several translations and paraphrases which they use for comparison.

"The King James Version is still the one version most in demand. It is used for depth study and memorization," said Graham. "Of course, the Living Bible is a paraphrase which revolutionized sales, not only in our stores, but in all kinds of stores all over the country. Our managers say the demand for this paraphrase has reached its peak. They say now any kind of reference Bible such as the Scofield and Thompson Chain Reference is in great demand."

People do not hesitate to purchase Bibles with quality bindings. According to the store managers, Bibles in the \$15 range are most popular. Unlike 10 or 15 years ago when black was the only color of binding people wanted, today they are buying Bibles bound in various colors. One Bible published has colors described as apple red, cocoa brown, wild raspberry, spruce green and palomino brown.

One specification for many Bibles is that they have Christ's words in red letters.

"It seems that what Christ has to say is even more important today than ever," said Graham. "People are putting an emphasis on Christ's teachings and they want his words to be easily seen when they open a Bible."

Baptist Book Stores seem to be getting more requests for the large family Bibles, many of these by young married people who want a family Bible like their grandparents had.

"It could be that the Jesus movement among young people has caused this returning to some kind of spiritual fervor," Graham theorized.

The number of young people who are customers of Baptist Book Stores is continually increasing, with most buying paperback books. At the other end of the age bracket, the marketing of large print Bibles has caused a demand of other large print inspirational books.

"Some managers report their best customers are older, retired people," commented Graham. "We tend to underestimate their buying power. This is the first time some of these people have had the time to read and to devote to their church activities. We simply don't have the range of books to meet this market."

Children's books are increasingly becoming a part of the Baptist Book Store market. At the same time, this is often one of the first places the cutback in the economy is felt.

"The Children's Living Bible' is still in strong demand," said Graham. The more traditional type Bible story books are slowing down while such items as the Arch Book Series are popular."

In the two Lifeway stores, general religious book stores aimed at the "man on the street," owned by the Sunday School Board, the demand is for family oriented and self-help books. The Living Bible is the most frequently requested Bible in these stores.

Baptist Book Stores sales reflect the general economy, Graham noted.

"People are becoming more discriminating in the books they buy. And because of the price of many hardback books, paperbacks are becoming more popular.

"Some of our managers believe the churches in their areas are really pinching their budgets," he said, "while other managers say the churches in their area continue to buy what they need."

Even with the economy pinch on churches and on the nation as a whole, people continue to buy what they need and want most. "Today is the day for religious books," one Book Store manager said.

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Jennifer Bryon is a communications specialist for the Book Store division of the Baptist Sunday School Board.