



-- FEATURES

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75-44

'In-residence' Program Boon
To Cooperation, Missions

By Larry Jerden
For Baptist Press

When John Wilkes, missionary to France and director of European Baptist Press Service, spoke at the First Baptist Church of Gordonville, Tex., it was really something special.

Except for a special statewide program promoting the 50th anniversary of the Southern Baptist Program, (unified budget) the missionary would probably have never visited that 150-member congregation in North Texas.

Wilkes is one of 11 "missionaries-in-residence" serving a year on the staff of the Baptist General Convention of Texas to promote the Cooperative Program during its 50th anniversary, being observed by Southern Baptists in 1975.

The missionary-in-residence program, where furloughing missionaries spend a year with the state convention, is in its fifth year in Texas.

Several other states have, or are considering, similar programs.

For this special anniversary year, Cecil Ray, stewardship secretary for Texas, expanded the program so that a missionary could be assigned to each of 11 geographical areas of the state.

Wilkes, for instance, stationed in Arlington, is working with 11 North Texas associations.

Gordonville Pastor Charles Davis had heard of the missionary-in-residence program through his associational missionary and thought it was an answer to what he considers the "remoteness" of missions.

"I believe the people are too far removed from what's being done in missions," he told Wilkes. "Missions is something vague."

In his sermon that Sunday morning, Wilkes told the members of the Gordonville church how their gifts through the Cooperative Program had permitted the gospel to be broadcast into Communist Poland from Monte Carlo.

He told how the head of the Polish Baptist Federation had washed Wilkes' car in gratitude for what Southern Baptists had done through their gifts. And he told Baptists' how their gifts had helped to build a 450-seat sanctuary in the last town in Poland next to the Russian border.

Wilkes encouraged the people of that small church in their giving, and challenged them with the statewide goal of \$20 million for the Cooperative Program and the goal of every church increasing its gifts by one per cent of the budget.

"There are 400 churches in my area," Wilkes said, so that is more than a church a day for the year I am here.

"Obviously I can't contact them all. But this program has made it possible for me to reach more churches than I normally would on furlough and to speak to churches, like Gordonville.

Wilkes' sentiments were echoed by Don Richards, a furloughing missionary to Brazil, serving eight Texas Baptist associations.

Its advantage for Cooperative Program promotion, Richards said, is that it makes the program "more personal.

"In all the churches I have spoken in this year," he continued, "only one had cut their percentage to the Cooperative Program. Now all of them did, or will, increase it."

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"The most obvious advantage of a program such as this is making people aware again of the Cooperative Program," he said.

"It is the miracle of Southern Baptist life, and people need to be aware of it, especially in an era of special gifts. The special gifts are momentary, but the Cooperative Program is our day-to-day existence," Richards said.

Ray said the missionary-in-residence program is coming at a good time, because it is helping what he sees as a "turnaround" in people's attitudes and giving habits, toward the Cooperative Program.

"In the past two years, there has been a dramatic attitude change toward the value of the Cooperative Program," Ray said. "There has been a surge of interest that has been very positive."

"The missionary-in-residence program started because "one day I thought of a good thing to do," Ray chuckled.

"I thought it would be an excellent relationship for a missionary to work with us promoting the Cooperative Program. I sought approval of our state missions commission and the Foreign Mission Board, and both agreed."

The Texas program, which started in 1970, is financed jointly by the Southern Baptist Foreign mission board and the state commission. The board pays the missionary salary, while the state convention supplements the salary and pays travel and expenses.

This arrangement frees the missionaries from dependence on church honorariums, thus permitting them to speak at churches that could not "afford" a missionary speaker.

Each missionary makes his or her own schedule, but the state convention promotes their use through the overall program. Their time, Wilkes and Richards agree, is used to the maximum.

"This year," Ray said, "we'll contact 2,000 churches with missionaries--churches of all kinds and locations. I doubt that has ever happened before in Southern Baptist life."

"The trend in recent years," Ray continued, "has been that Cooperative Program growth has been carried on by small churches. This past couple of years has seen a dramatic response from the larger churches," he said, "and that is encouraging."

"Another encouraging thing is that this program ties in promotions of the Cooperative Program, the WMU and the missionaries. (WMU is Woman's Missionary Union)

"It has removed much of the sense of competition between the special offerings and the Cooperative Program..." Ray said.

If it does nothing more than promote awareness of the Cooperative Program, Texas' expanded missionaries-in-residence program will be considered a success, because the missionaries have found an amazing amount of Cooperative Program ignorance in the churches where they've spoken.

"Some churches invite me because I am the missionary 'for their area,'" Richards said.

"They don't know why. When I get there and have questions about the Cooperative Program, I am amazed at the lack of understanding.

"At one church I asked how many knew what the Cooperative Program is. Quite a few raised their hands. Then I asked how many really knew what it was, and not even the pastor raised his hand."

But the word is getting around in Texas, and every association in the state is having a 50th anniversary Cooperative Program rally.

The missionaries-in-residence will be helping with the rallies.

As one observed, "Anything we do to promote the Cooperative Program promotes missions too."

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March 19, 1975

75-44

Protest Musical, 'Hair,'
Wins Partial Victory

Baptist Press

By Stan Hastey

WASHINGTON (BP)- The U. S. Supreme Court ruled here that city officials in Chattanooga, Tenn., were wrong in banning the rock musical production of "Hair" in advance of its running.

At the same time, the high court refused to rule on the alleged obscenity of the play, which has enjoyed successful runs in more than 140 American cities.

The effect of the court's decision is to afford live theatrical performances the same constitutional safeguards as those already applied to films and literature.

"Hair" was originally produced as an off-Broadway show in 1968 to protest the Vietnam War, the draft and the establishment in general. Much of the protest, directed at the controversial musical, is aimed at its liberal use of four-letter words, allegedly obscene gestures and bodily movements, and one nude scene.

The 5-4 decision, written by Justice Harry A. Blackmun, holds that public officials may not exercise unbridled censorship before an allegedly obscene play is actually performed. To do that, Blackmun stated, constitutes a form of "prior restraint" which the court has consistently said violates constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression.

"The danger of censorship and of abridgement of our precious First Amendment freedoms," Blackmun declared, "is too great where officials have unbridled discretion over a forum's use."

He continued, "Our distaste for censorship--reflecting the natural distaste of a free people--is deep-written in our law."

City officials erred in denying the application for use of a municipally-leased theater for the production of the play, the court said, because they anticipated that the production would violate obscenity laws.

The court went on to state that strict procedural safeguards must be followed by officials to avoid censorship.

First, officials functioning as censors must initiate legal proceedings against an alleged offender of obscenity laws and must prove that the production or material in dispute is unquestionably obscene.

Second, any prohibition against such a production or material can be imposed only for a specified brief period. And third, the questions must be solved promptly in court.

Four of the justices dissented, but for widely differing reasons. Justice William O. Douglas, who opposes all forms of official censorship, objected to the majority's narrow procedural approach. He stated that denial of First Amendment rights "cannot be treated adequately or averted in the future by the simple application of a few procedural band-aids."

Douglas went on to argue that despite the fact that "Hair" attacks "various sacred cows of our society," its "contribution to social consciousness and intellectual ferment is a positive one."

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Justice Byron R. White, joined by Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, dissented on grounds that sufficient evidence of obscenity was available to justify Chattanooga's refusal to provide its municipal auditorium for the production of "Hair."

In still another dissent, Justice William H. Rehnquist, generally regarded as the most conservative member of the high court, objected to the majority view that a municipal theater must be regarded in the same light as a private forum or even a city street or park when freedom of expression is at stake.

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Book Sales Top \$1 Million
For Japanese Baptist Publisher

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3/19/75

TOKYO, Japan (BP)--The Jordan Press, Baptist publisher for Japan, has achieved book sales totaling more than \$1 million in fiscal 1974 for the first time since it began publishing in 1948.

For several years, the press has ranked as one of the three leading Christian publishers in Japan. Formerly a department of the Japan Baptist Convention, with Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board support, last year it became an independent, self-supporting organization.

Six book stores in four key cities provide Baptist materials. The "Book Nook," adjacent to Waseda University in Tokyo, and the Seinan Gakuin University campus store in Fukuoka reach academic communities on the islands.

The Jordan Press publishes educational and promotional materials for Sunday Schools, youth groups and the women's department, as well as tracts, books and a monthly paper.

All periodicals are written and edited locally, but occasionally the press prints translations of popular European and American books.

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(BP) Photo will be mailed to state Baptist editors.

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Court 'In Effect' Affirms
Former Abortion Rule

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WASHINGTON (BP)--The U. S. Supreme Court has declined to make a final ruling in an abortion case involving strong religious liberty arguments.

The case, *Westby v. Doe*, was brought to the high court by state officials in South Dakota who refused to grant federal funds to a woman to pay for a non-therapeutic abortion she was seeking.

Before coming to the Supreme Court, a U. S. district court in South Dakota ruled that the state law, invoked by welfare officials to deny the funds, was unconstitutional in that it violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

South Dakota's law does provide for federal funding of abortions which are medically necessary.

In a related action, *Burns v. Alcala*, the high court also held that states receiving federal financial aid under the AFDC program are not required to offer welfare benefits to pregnant women for their unborn children.

That decision, in effect, reaffirms the view of the court, reflected in the 1973 abortion decisions, that it is not capable of determining when human life begins.

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In *Westby v. Doe*, the South Dakota officials questioned whether the Social Security Act, through which the states receive the welfare funds in question, was intended to cover non-therapeutic abortions.

The woman in question was eight weeks pregnant when she brought the original complaint that state officials had refused to provide her with federal funds for an abortion through the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. She argued that as the mother of four children, ranging in age from four to ten, she "was unable to care for another child," even though an abortion was not medically necessary.

The woman argued that the Supreme Court's historic 1973 abortion decisions covered her case. Those decisions held that during the first trimester of pregnancy the state has no compelling interest in prohibiting any abortion and that a woman may obtain a legal abortion in consultation with her physician. The court further stated that during the second trimester, the state's only interest in abortion lies in protecting the woman's health.

Freedom to choose an abortion, the woman's brief before the court stated, is "a constitutionally protected choice deriving from her fundamental right to privacy."

The religious liberty arguments surfaced in a separate "amicus curiae" ("friend of the court") brief presented by the National Black Feminist Organization and the National Organization for Women (NOW).

Those groups argued that South Dakota officials violated the First Amendment's prohibition of an "establishment of religion" in refusing funds for the abortion.

"The (state) policy rests solely on the state's moral judgment that one answer to the inherently religious question of when life begins should be imposed upon all poor women, whatever the individual woman's belief and choice," the brief stated.

The argument continued that such a policy has the effect of imposing the religious views of a minority on all women, especially the poor, who must rely on state benefits if they wish to terminate a pregnancy.

"The larger effect of South Dakota's policy," the brief concluded, invites "precisely that political strife and political division along religious lines this court has condemned as excessive entanglement."

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Churches in Crisis Need
Survival Kit SBC Told

Baptist Press
3/19/75

By Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP)--A national consultation on problems of churches located in economically and racially-changing communities urged the production of a "transition kit" designed to help churches in their struggle for survival and service.

Baptist pastors and associational directors of missions from six selected cities listed 37 needs of churches in transitional communities as part of a study being conducted by the SBC Inter-Agency Council's Coordinating Committee.

Over and over, the consultants pointed out that many Southern Baptists simply are not aware of the extent of the problems faced by churches in transitional communities.

A statistical survey by the SBC Home Mission Board, given to the conference participants, concluded that nearly 500 of the denomination's churches will not exist in 10 years if the present trend continues.

The survey results indicate the majority of the churches in transitional areas are slowly dwindling until they will cease to exist, said Don Mabry, of the Home Mission Board's department of survey and special studies which conducted the survey.

As a part of the program for the consultation, the participants visited three Atlanta churches in transition communities and listened while the pastors bared their souls about problems.

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All three churches had decided to stay in their communities and minister to the residents, after whites had moved out and blacks or low-income whites had moved into the area.

Don Aderhold, pastor of Columbia Drive Baptist Church in suburban Decatur, Ga., said the members who leave the church often include the tithers and big givers and new members occasionally are a financial liability. Thus, the church has to learn how to do more with less money in a time of economic crisis.

Charles Hamlin, pastor of Euclid Avenue Baptist Church, told about the "partnership" concept his church has formed with a stronger, wealthier, suburban congregation and the financial aid the larger church had given.

Clarence Drumond, pastor of Brown Mill Park Baptist Church, made the suggestion for the "transition kit" that would help prepare churches for dealing with the crisis of a changing community.

"We need a denominational program as well-designed as the Forward Program of church finance, and as Baptist-oriented as Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong (the SBC's special mission offerings) to help churches in crisis communities," Drumond said.

He said that too many churches, which have seen their communities change, have felt that they were going through the crisis alone that they had no guidelines and no resources available.

Drumond said his church had not been successful in reaching and involving the 85 percent black community which now surrounds the entire church, but that it was struggling to do so.

He added that the best thing the denomination can do to help is to not only provide the "transition kit," but to give better support to the association and its program. "We couldn't live without the association," he said.

Loyd Corder, director of the Home Mission Board's associational mission division, said Southern Baptists will have to realize change is a normal thing, and sooner or later every church will face it.

"In a way, it would be better for Baptists to write off all churches already in crisis and concentrate instead on the churches that are going to be facing the problem in the future," Corder said. "Of course, we're not going to do this, but the point is, prevention is easier and more effective than cure."

Another conference participant pointed to the need for churches to grapple with the mission of the church and the theological understanding of what it means to be the church in the community.

Wilson Brumley, associational missions director from Houston, said the church is not called to succeed but to minister. Southern Baptists, he said, need to develop a theology of failure.

If a church dies in the effort to redeem its community, it has not failed if it's following in the steps of Jesus who also died to redeem humanity," Brumley said.

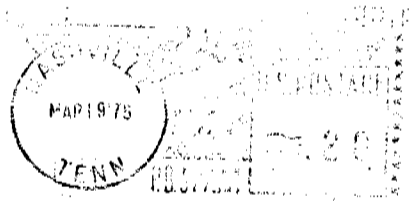
Other needs outlined by the participants included:

- More financial help from stronger churches in the city, the association, state and national SBC convention agencies for churches in transition communities;
- A checklist of characteristics and symptoms to help a church realize that the surrounding community is in transition before the crisis stage is reached;
- Better understanding of the black church and the role of the black pastor, and better relationships between blacks and whites;
- Need for standards of success other than numerical, statistical growth.
- Assistance to pastors and church staff members in finding new jobs when and if the church no longer can use their services.
- National awareness that there is indeed a crisis in churches located in transitional communities and a concern about the problem.
- Training for laymen to assume a larger responsibility in the role of the church in transition. The suggestions proposed by the teams from the five cities were fed into the study being conducted by the Inter-Agency Council Coordinating Committee. The teams came from Jackson, Miss.; Birmingham, Ala.; Houston, Tex.; Baltimore, Md.; and Tampa, Fla.

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