



-- FEATURES
 produced by Baptist Press

'Life, Death' Struggle
 For Inner City Church

By Jim Newton

LITTLE ROCK (BP)--Second Baptist Church here "struggles between life and death" as it ministers to the rich and poor, the down-and-out and up-and-out, young and old, suburbanite and ghetto dweller, white and blue collar workers.

The church, located in the heart of Arkansas' capital city, has been in the center of the business district since 1884.

Another Baptist church was about eight blocks away but two years ago moved to the Pleasant Valley area of Little Rock.

The church's 2,300 members (1,500 resident) are diverse. Seventy per cent live in the suburbs, 30 per cent in the inner city. Every racial and economic group in the city is represented.

There are large numbers of young adults and children, a smaller number of middle-aged families with teenagers, a large number of older people and a large group of single adults in the church.

The church's pastor, Dale Cowling, is "convinced that the downtown church that tries to be a typical, traditional, suburban-type church is doomed to die. It has to minister in order to survive."

Most of all, it must be willing to try new approaches to ministry and discard things that don't work, said Cowling.

But herein lies the dilemma.

Second Baptist, like other downtown churches, has realized that if a downtown church changes to minister primarily to people in the inner city--most of whom are poor--wealthier suburban-dwelling members may leave the church, feeling it isn't meeting their needs.

It is, generally, wealthier members who pay the bills.

Thus the church is caught in a conflict between service and survival, between "life and death," says Cowling, and the struggle is not yet ended.

In terms of service, Second Baptist has pioneered in what Cowling calls the "satellite" concept of missions.

He got the satellite idea from observing the branch banks in Little Rock.

The church-sponsored missions are "branches" of Second Baptist. They are equals, said Cowling, and parts of the whole.

Monthly, all the congregations meet together at the downtown church building for fellowship and communion.

The satellites include:

--Second Baptist, McKay, located in a predominantly black area not far from the airport;

--Second Baptist, Thayer, in the central section of Little Rock's inner city;

--Second Baptist, Bethel, in southwest Little Rock, now in a period of transition, seeking to minister to 6,000 commuter students at the nearby University of Arkansas campus.

One of the church's most effective ministries is to the elderly through Albert Pike Residence Hotel.

-more-

Built in 1928 as a showpiece, the hotel was bought by the church about three years ago and converted into a retirement center for about 135 middle-income men and women over age 52.

Also located in the hotel is the Christian Center for Psychological Services, jointly sponsored by Second Baptist and an interdenominational board of directors. Dr. Robert B. Doyle and staff offer counseling from a Christian perspective, with fees on a sliding scale for anyone needing help.

Among its many ministries, the church has a food closet, clothes closet and benevolent fund. Others are Friendship House for women and children and the Christian Service Center, an interdenominational rescue mission for men that provides food, housing and spiritual help.

Second Baptist also has a day care and kindergarten program for working mothers and their children.

A day camp ministry and an outdoor recreation center for the whole family at Lake Nixon "takes the kids out of the concrete city into the beauty of god's creation," Cowling notes.

Summer is a busy season for the church. Last summer, more than 250 children participated in a 13-week day camp program, most for the full term. And twenty Bible school programs were held across the city for an estimated 2,500-3,000 children.

Outreach and evangelism remain at the base of all the church does in ministry, says Bob Wright, associate pastor for outreach.

"If this base perishes, so do all the ministries," Wright says.

The church's struggles for survival on the inner city have carried over into the financial arena.

During the last 12-18 months, the church has lost almost \$50,000 in income from more than 100 families who left the church to join suburban congregations, according to Jim Maloch, associate pastor for administration.

"They didn't want to be a part of a ministering, non-traditional church," says Cowling.

Race is another reason many members have left, Cowling and Maloch say.

Whatever the reasons members left, there were times, Cowling said, when there wasn't enough money to pay the church's 10 per cent allocation to missions through the Cooperative Program (unified budget of Southern Baptists) when it was due.

"We got behind several times, but we always made it up, even if we had to borrow the money to do it."

Last year, the church operated with a \$437,500 budget, with pledges of \$275,000 and contributions of \$225,000. They gave about \$25,000 through the Cooperative Program, plus almost \$125,000 to support local missions programs, according to Cowling.

The budget included about \$80,000 for debt retirement, with the remainder going for staff salaries, program and operations.

Both the Albert Pike and Lake Nixon ministries are self supporting, Cowling says.

"We're always broke, always behind in the budget," he confessed.

But I'm convinced a church with imagination can generate income through its ministries and perform a real service at a break-even cost, as we are doing with Lake Nixon and the Albert Pike."

It has not been nor will it be easy, Cowling observes.

"I'm convinced," however, he says, "that if the church has enough faith to step in over its head, then God takes over and takes control."



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
450 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37218
(615) 244-2365
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

April 18, 1975

75-62

**Committee of Seven Against
Name Change for the SBC**

MIAMI BEACH (BP)--The Committee of Seven, authorized by the 1974 Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas to study the possibility of a name change for the SBC, will report to the 1975 convention here in June that it feels the name should not be changed at this time.

The committee will now devote all of its time to completing another convention assignment--study of the SBC Executive Committee. One more meeting has been set before the convention to frame the committee's recommendation on the Executive Committee study.

The name change decision was reached after the committee "considered opinions from thousands of Southern Baptists all over the nation and after careful examination of reasons for and against a name change," said committee chairman, C. R. Daley, editor of Kentucky Baptists' Western Recorder, Middletown, Ky.

The 12.5-million-member SBC, the nation's largest Protestant-evangelical denomination, has 34,734 churches, operating through 33 state or regional conventions covering all 50 states.

Three opinion surveys used by the committee revealed strong sentiment for retaining the present name. They involved: (1) written and oral responses sent directly from Baptists all over the nation to committee members; (2) a state by state survey of Baptist opinion through ballots run in state Baptist papers; (3) a professionally-conducted survey, by the SBC Sunday School Board, of name change opinions from all groups of Southern Baptists.

In responses received by the committee from individuals and from churches in 30 states, only 16 percent favored a name change. The overall percentages from 33 state Baptist paper surveys showed 65 percent opposing a name change and 34 percent favoring it.

The state paper surveys revealed that sentiment for a name change was dominant only in some newer areas of Southern Baptist work, although some of those areas opposed a name change.

State or regional groups, with a majority favoring a name change, were District of Columbia (55 percent to 45 percent); Hawaii (76-24); Kansas-Nebraska (58-42); New England, which is now part of the Maryland convention (60-40); Michigan (67-33); the New York convention, which covers parts of Connecticut and New Jersey, (85-15); Northwest convention, which covers Oregon and Washington (63-36); Pennsylvania-South Jersey (67.5-32.5); and West Virginia (56-44).

All the older state groups in the original areas for Southern Baptists--along with Southern Baptist groups in Alaska, the Arizona convention (which includes Nevada), California, Colorado, Indiana, Utah-Idaho, New Mexico and Ohio--rejected the name change.

Percentages against the name change in the older and larger state groups ran from two to one all the way to nine to one. Only five of the states opposing the name change registered higher than 29 percent in favor--Alabama (32 percent), Alaska (40 percent), Maryland (37 percent), New Mexico (34 percent), Oklahoma (34 percent).

Combined with the professional survey, which also revealed a decisive majority opposed, percentages showed about three-fourths against and one-fourth for the change.

Among those included in the professional survey were pastors, deacon chairmen, Sunday School directors and church clerks, all of whom opposed the change. Of these groups, pastors were the most favorable and church clerks the least favorable.

-more-

The committee based its suggestion to make no change on several factors other than opinion polls. They included:

--"The danger and tragedy of other groups claiming the name 'Southern Baptist' and capitalizing upon it once we dropped it for another name. Such a development, in the opinion of the committee, would be very confusing to many who now identify themselves as Southern Baptists.

--"The long and arduous task of communicating a name change and reasons for its adoption to our own constituents, to other religious groups and to the news media.

--"The difficulties and problems of inserting a new name into the charters and all the other documents of the Southern Baptist Convention and its agencies and eventually into the documents of state conventions and their agencies, of district associations and local churches.

--"The absence of a consensus on a suitable new name. In letters to the committee from Baptists in 30 states, 52 different names were suggested, with no name apparently appearing as a popular choice."

Five names did surface as the most popular, although by no means clearcut, the committee said: Cooperative Baptist Convention (in top five submitted by 20 states); Continental Baptist Conv ntion (in top five of 19 states); United Baptist Convention (in top five of 18 states); World Baptist Convention (in top five of 17 states); Baptist Convention of America (in top five of 15 states).

-30-

Mission Day Camp Set
For SBC in Miami Beach

Baptist Press
4/18/75

MIAMI BEACH (BP)--Parents attending Southern Baptist Convention sessions here, June 10-12, may enroll their elementary-age children in the second annual SBC Mission Day Camp.

The mission camp, sponsored by the SBC Brotherhood Commission, will open just prior to convention sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings and will adjourn at the close of the afternoon sessions on Tuesday and Thursday and the morning session on Wednesday.

Site of the camp will be Flamingo Park, located a few blocks north of the convention hall.

Attendance at the camp is limited to children in grades 1-6. The day campers will take part in a mission education program, which includes mission games, sports, crafts, nature studies and sessions with Southern Baptist missionaries.

Registration fee for the camp is \$4 per day or \$10 for three days. The maximum fee for any one family is \$20 for the three-day camp, regardless of the number of children. The fee includes insurance, supplies and two noon meals.

A registration booth for the Mission Day Camp will be located in the main messenger registration area in the convention hall.

Frank Black, director of the Crusader Royal Ambassador department of the Brotherhood Commission, will direct the camp.

Black said the SBC Mission Day Camp will benefit convention messengers in several ways. "Children will enjoy a mission learning experience while their parents are free to take an active part in convention sessions, and parents who might have stayed home because of their children may now be able to attend," he said.

-30-

460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

BAPTIST PRESS



LYNN WAY
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 9TH AVE. NO.
NASHVILLE TN 37203

App 28 1975