

(BP)
February 26, 1976**--- FEATURES**
produced by Baptist PressSBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
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(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Editor**Businessman-Pastor Enjoys
Dual Role in Community**

By Toby Druin

TUCKER, Ga. (BP)-- When Lester Buice was called as pastor of Rehoboth Baptist Church here, back in 1947, he was raising chickens for a living. He's since made his mark on the community as a business-pastor.

The church has grown from a nucleus of 160 to a congregation of more than 4,000 and expects soon to double its sanctuary's seating capacity. Last year Buice baptized 447 new converts, an all-time Georgia Baptist Convention record. The previous high in Georgia was 352, and before that it was 299. Both records were set by Buice at Rehoboth. The church's slogan, "Follow Me to Rehoboth," is plastered on automobile bumpers across the Atlanta area.

Motorists driving down Lawrenceville Highway in the Tucker area see housing developments with such titles as "Galilee Acres," streets named "Jordan Valley Road" and "Cana of Galilee." All are Buice's handiwork.

Buice has mixed business and the pastorate almost ever since he took the reins at Rehoboth. For awhile it was necessary, he notes.

"The church called me on one Sunday and ordained me the next. The same Sunday I was ordained we began a revival," he says. "One night they took an offering and gave me \$56.10. That was in August, and it was all the money I got until next February."

Out of necessity, he stayed in the chicken business about 18 months before telling the church he was willing to sell out and be a full-time pastor.

As a "full-time" pastor he drew \$200 monthly but soon found that even in 1949 it wasn't enough to support his wife and two sons. Then a brother-in-law in the building business approached him about a partnership -- Buice providing construction capital gleaned from the sale of his chicken business and the brother-in-law doing the work. They would split the profits.

After they built a couple of houses, the brother-in-law told him there was no need to split the profits, that Buice could sub-contract the work himself. The contractors were mostly members of the church anyway.

"To begin with I would build a house, sell the one I was in and move in to the new one until I sold it," Buice recalls. "Once we moved four times in one year, but it was the only way I could stay in business. I didn't have the money to build two at once."

Even in the beginning the building business hours didn't hinder his pastoral work, Buice says.

"I did it mainly by using the phone," he says, "calling subcontractors when I needed them. I would ride by the house once a day or so. Maybe it amounted to about a day out of the week."

Finally, another brother-in-law, Quill Johnson, was laid off at one of the Atlanta auto assembly plants, and Buice asked if he would like to build a house or two. The arrangement worked so well that Johnson never went back to building automobiles but stuck to houses. He and Buice have been partners for the last 15 years.

"Now it doesn't take me much time at all," Buice says. "Quill takes care of the job, while I arrange construction loans, sell houses and write checks every Friday when we meet payrolls. The whole thing may take me two hours a week."

Buice says he spends more time in pastoral duties than any minister he knows. He doesn't preach revivals in other churches and doesn't play golf, hunt or fish. The business is his hobby.

"My people know I would get out of business if it ever hurt my effectiveness," he says. "I love this church and never would do anything to hurt it."

Besides, the business actually enhances his Christian witness, Buice feels.

"At least a fourth of the persons to whom I sell a house eventually join the church," he says. "Not that we put that in the contract, though we kid them a lot that the fine print of the contract says they have to come to Rehoboth. They just do. We reach people that way. And the very fact that I'm a builder and a pastor gets around. Some come to Rehoboth just to hear a guy that does both."

It "frees" his preaching, too, the minister says.

"Almost from the start I haven't had to worry about finances--about the church firing me and what I would do about supporting my family if it happened. From the beginning, I have almost been in the position of being self-supporting.

"I haven't held it over the church like a club, but it has enabled me to preach what I feel like preaching--whatever the Lord lays on my heart."

For awhile, in the 1960s, because of Buice's outside income the church paid him no salary. But it wasn't a good arrangement for either party, he says.

"The church didn't feel the same relationship to me that they needed, knowing they weren't paying me. And drawing a salary also helped my relationship to the church."

About 12 years ago the church began paying him about \$8,000 a year, and he's held it to that ever since. Every other member of the church ministerial staff and even the custodian is paid more--one or two twice as much, Buice says.

Probably the greatest benefit of Buice's business relationships, he says, is his tie with the business community and an awareness of current economic problems conditions and problems confronting church members.

His contact, for example, with the federal savings and loan association which finances all of his buildings, enables him to carry a Christian witness into the halls of finance.

He usually carries a handful of church newsletters or tracts when he goes to arrange a construction loan or to close out a loan.

His business ties and experience have given him special feeling for the 75 families in the church involved in some phase of the construction business, Buice believes.

"I know what they are encountering," he says, "in trying to cope with today's pressures. The building business has been particularly hard hit the last couple of years. I think my sharing in it with them has made me closer to them."

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

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BWA Gave \$254,800 In
Relief Funds in 1975

Baptist Press
2/26/76

WASHINGTON (BP)--Baptist World Relief, the relief and development arm of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), gave \$254,800 in assistance to people and churches in 40 projects in 1975, and anticipates a larger outreach in 1976.

The projects met emergency needs in famines, earthquakes, droughts and floods, assisted refugees, and developed religious programs in depressed areas. Church construction, Bible printing, and pastoral training were among inter-church aid projects.

All relief and development expenditures came from contributions received by the BWA from churches, individuals, member bodies, and foundations. About 45 member BWA conventions participated in the 1975 program.

Total Baptist participation in relief projects is several times the \$254,800 figure, the BWA reported. "Many conventions administer relief through their own mission stations, and others give assistance directly to Baptist groups in the area of need. Such was the case on many developmental projects approved and publicized by the BWA," said Carl Tiller, BWA associate secretary.

Goals in most divisions of the BWA's work were met, except for developmental efforts. "Only \$32,000 passed through BWA books for this phase, for which \$298,000 was envisioned," Tiller said. "Some of the developmental grants which had been budgeted were arranged with BWA help, but the money went directly from donors to the field, bypassing BWA accounts. Further, developmental projects apparently held less interest for donors who prefer to designate the purpose of their gifts," he said.



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February 26, 1976

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Southwestern Seminary
Sets Budget, Names Faculty

FORT WORTH (BP)--The board of trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here adopted a record budget, elected new faculty, and participated in the launching of an \$8 million fund drive, during their semi-annual meeting.

The 36-member board approved a record \$5.6 million budget for 1976-77. The projected budget represents a 23 percent increase over the current operating budget.

Seminary officials noted the budget is based upon projected revenues from four sources--61 percent from the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program, 14 percent from student fees, 16 percent from endowment earnings, and the remainder from gifts and grants.

In other financial matters the trustees approved the employment of a consultant to study and make recommendations on the structure of faculty and staff salaries. Recommendations are expected to be made and approved before the new budget begins in August.

Trustees also authorized plans to be developed for the expansion of married student housing. The seminary's business affairs division was authorized to proceed with plans and the construction of 48 units in the J. Howard Williams memorial student village.

During consideration of personnel matters, trustees elected seven persons to the teaching faculty, renewed teaching contracts on six parttime instructors, and promoted seven faculty members.

Among the newly elected faculty were A. Joseph King, current minister of music at Fort Worth's University Baptist Church, as an associate professor of church music education; William Caldwell, church training consultant, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn., as an associate professor of church administration; Bruce Corley, pastor, Bethany Baptist Church, Breckenridge, Tex., as an assistant professor of New Testament; and Bobbie E. Adams, currently on the faculty of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, as an associate professor of Christian ethics. James Bartley, furloughing Southern Baptist missionary from Montevideo, Uruguay, was elected guest professor of missions for 1976-77.

Two current instructors promoted to faculty status were Lorin Cranford, as an assistant professor of New Testament, and Oscar Thompson, as an assistant professor of evangelism.

During the two-day meeting trustees participated in a community-wide kickoff of the seminary's "Eight by Eighty" \$8 million fund drive. The kickoff dinner, which drew over 700 of Fort Worth's leading business, civic and religious leaders, was the beginning of a three-month fund drive to raise \$2 million in Fort Worth. It was announced that \$993,000 had been raised in cash and pledges. Included were two grants of \$200,000 each from the Sid Richardson Foundation and the Amon Carter Foundation.

The board voted unanimously to express appreciation to these foundations as well as to the Mabee Foundation of Tulsa, Okla., for a \$250,000 challenge grant. The Mabee grant will be paid in August if the seminary raises the balance of money needed to construct a proposed \$1.3 million physical fitness center. Seminary officials said that approximately \$800,000 in cash and pledges is in hand, leaving about \$250,000 to be raised to qualify for the grant.

The Jesse J. Northcutt Lecture Series on Preaching and Pastoral Ministries was also approved. The series will honor Northcutt, vice president for academic affairs, who was formerly professor of preaching and who has been on the seminary staff since 1939.

WMU Announces Awards To Children of Missionaries

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--Nelda Ann Bedford, a Baylor University graduate, and David Yelvington a Carson-Newman College graduate, are the recipients of the Elizabeth Lowndes Awards to the outstanding college graduates among children of Southern Baptist missionaries.

The \$200 Lowndes award is given each year to missionary kids (M Ks) who made most outstanding scholastic achievements in college. It is a special endowment administered by Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) from the Margaret Fund, a fund for scholarships granted for sons and daughters of regularly appointed missionaries of the Home Mission Board and the Foreign Mission Board.

Bedford, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. Ben Bedford, foreign missionaries to Argentina, is currently working on a master's degree in Spanish at the University of Texas. Yelvington, son of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Yelvington, home missionaries to New Mexico, is currently temporarily employed by the U. S. Forest Service in special research in northern New Mexico. He plans to attend graduate school in the future.

Allocations for the Margaret Funds scholarships are included in the Southern Baptist Convention's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. The award is named for Elizabeth Lowndes, WMU treasurer 1895-1904 and 1906-1934.

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Florida Church Ordains Vietnamese As Pastor

Baptist Press
2/26/76

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. (BP)--Tran Minh Hai was ordained to the gospel ministry the First Baptist Church, Fort Walton Beach.

Believed to be the first Vietnamese to be ordained to the ministry in this country, Hai came as a refugee last May along with his wife, Nguyet. The couple's two children, ages 2 and 3, had been sent to Holland and were not reunited with their parents until July.

Following his release, from the Eglin Air Force Base refugee center, Hai became a member of the staff of the First Baptist Church to minister to the Vietnamese people who resettled in the area. He has developed a congregation with worship services, Sunday School and doctrinal studies in the Vietnamese language.

In addition to the Fort Walton Beach ministry he has made periodic visits ministering to Vietnamese in Niceville and Pensacola, Fla., and Dothan, Ala. In the fall, he led a Vietnamese Retreat at the Baldwin County (Ala.) camp grounds. Several hundred from Alabama and Florida attended.

The ordination service was led by James L. Monroe, pastor of First Baptist Church. The sermon was delivered by Lewis Myers, Southern Baptist missionary to Vietnam, now working as a special Vietnamese consultant with the Home Mission Board.

Hai, who began his theological training in Vietnam under a Seminary Extension program directed by Southern Baptist missionaries, plans to continue his education at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

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