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76-72

Charleston Baptists' Mission
Even Older than the U.S.A.

By Larry Jerden

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)--In 1775, a year before the American colonies were to declare their independence from Britain, Baptists here were banding together for missions.

Their mission was to fellow Baptists in New England who were suffering from religious persecution by the state and established church.

Leading out in response to appeals for aid was the Charleston Baptist Association--the first association in the South--24-years-old at the time.

South Carolina Baptists were begun when a congregation from Maine fled the persecution in 1683 and organized the First Baptist Church of Charleston. Nearly a century later, Baptists who remained in New England were suffering the same persecution, and South Carolina Baptists responded with financial aid.

Charleston association was organized in 1751 by four churches, and in its first quarter-century--the end of which coincided with the colonies' declaring themselves independent--pioneered in education and evangelism. John Gano, Revolutionary War chaplain and missionary for the association, led out in evangelism, and the association gave solid financial support to Rhode Island College, Baptists' first institution of high learning.

In its 225th year in 1976, Charleston Baptist Association is still banding together for missions--coordinating the witness of 37,600 Baptists in 49 Charleston-area churches as they try to win a metropolitan area of some 300,000 to Christ, led by Director of Missions William F. Bishop. Cooperating with the General Board of South Carolina Baptists and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, the association is involved in evangelism, campus ministries, social ministries, counseling, hospital work, youth work, camps and dock ministries.

"A lot of churches get so involved in their own little areas that they think they are totally independent--they lose sight of the whole..., Bishop said, "so we at the association try to get them working together."

The already growing city may be on the verge of a veritable population explosion. "There is talk of the possibility of offshore oil, Bishop explained. Charleston is a fast-growing area anyway, but if the oil comes, we will have a population explosion."

Bishop explained that while Baptists are the largest single religious group in the area, they are not the dominant one. So if they are to increase their influence in the city, Bishop feels, the association must play a more strategic role. Toward that end, the association is in a year-long self study aimed at enlarging the scope of its ministries and improving existing ones.

Helping Charleston association in its role are Richard McQueen, the director of Christian Social Ministries; Jim Morgan, associate director of Christian social ministries; Campus Minister Harold Syfert; and Hospital Chaplain John Wade.

Morgan describes his role as "anything I can do to disturb a sleepy church." He once carried a brick into one of Charleston's most beautiful sanctuaries and announced he was going to throw it through one of the priceless stained-glass windows.

"When I drew back my hand, you could just see a couple of the deacons have heart attacks," he quipped. "After that got them awake, I made my talk."

Morgan's "talk" is to make churches aware of the needs around them:

"In one church the need may be for migrant work, in another it might be for a deaf ministry," he said, "but whatever it is, I tell them about it. Sometimes they don't invite me back--but that's their problem. I just tell it like it is."

Sometimes, Morgan explained, churches are reluctant to get into new ministries because they don't know how they are going to work out.

"But that's not what's important," he emphasized. "Trying is what's important."

One of the ministries of which Morgan is most proud is that of a couple of laymen from Brentwood Baptist Church here who teach Sunday School at the county prison farm. Raleigh Allsbrook, administrator of the farm, is a member of Brentwood and sees his job as his ministry.

"This class has been going 12-14 years," Allsbrook remembered. "I taught it a year, then turned it over to Bill Pease. He's been doing it ever since."

The pressures of the 20th century are evident in historic Charleston, even though tourists remark about the 18th century "charm" of the old downtown area.

"These are changing times," Bishop remarked, "and there is a lot of need for counseling. In fact, we'd like to open a counseling center if we relocate."

The counseling function is one that three of the associational staff members mentioned in describing their jobs. Bishop mentioned "counseling and administration" as taking a lot of his time, and Wade spends much of his hospital visitation time in counseling.

McQueen has taken on just about the whole city as his client for counseling. In 1975 he received over 1,000 referrals for help in about as broad a range of categories as one man could handle.

He is also the "chaplain" of the juvenile court and counsels with alcoholics, youths on drugs, and unwed mothers. He arranged for over 50 foster homes for children in and out of the court system in one year.

Charleston Baptists' caring through McQueen has helped provide food, clothing and housing for needy families and helped jobless men find work. But he also has found great satisfaction in just being friends to those who need friends. Near the top of that list are the friends he has made as chaplain of the "stroke club."

Comprised of individuals who have suffered strokes, the club is not a religious organization but one of mutual encouragement and fellowship.

From the time Charleston Baptists supported Rhode Island College in the 18th century until today, education and the academic community have been in the heart of their ministry. Harold Syffert, the association's campus minister, personifies that interest.

Syffert, 29 years a campus minister, guides ministry to some 2,800 Baptists among 11,500 students enrolled on four area campuses. His work is divided among students at The Citadel, South Carolina's military college; the College of Charleston, the state's fastest-growing college; the Baptist College of Charleston; and the South Carolina Medical University.

The hallmark of his ministry is that it links the students with the local churches. "Students can only mature as Christians in the churches," he noted.

Syffert says his "greatest joy" has been the emphasis on summer missions on the local campuses.

Six students from Baptist College were named BSU-appointed missionaries for summer 1976, he said, "That's six from the state total of 20." One girl, a BSU president, went two years to Korea, and a Citadel cadet was chosen to go to Singapore as a journeyman for summer 1976. (BSU is Baptist Student Union)

Student work in Charleston started as a ministry of First Baptist church to the College of Charleston and The Citadel. Now it is the work of the association and state convention and covers four campuses.

Through students, as through other means of missions support, Charleston Baptists are ministering far beyond their local area. It's an old tradition where the Cooper and Ashley Rivers meet to "form the Atlantic Ocean"--older than the United States.

'Watch Myths on Baptists
And Religious Liberty'

By Jim Newton

RICHMOND (BP)--Baptists have overplayed their own self-importance in establishing religious liberty in this country. And certain myths and fables have crept into Baptist history that have not been documented, a retired Baptist state newspaper editor and historian says.

Baptists played a very important role in the nation's quest for religious liberty, "but I don't think we should overplay it," said Reuben Alley, author of "A History of Baptists in Virginia," released two years ago.

"It's silly to talk about Baptists," for example, "educating (Thomas) Jefferson and (James) Madison on matters of religious liberty, because they were committed to that principle when they were students," Alley said in an interview here.

Alley, retired editor of The Religious Herald, Baptist paper in Virginia, said it was remarkable, however, that Baptists' concern for religious liberty in the 1770s and 1780s coincided and blended with the concerns of great American patriots like Jefferson and Madison.

Another authority on Virginia Baptist history said of Baptists' role in securing religious liberty:

"Baptists were the first and only people willing to go to jail for the right to preach the gospel and for religious freedom," said attorney Charles Ryland of Warsaw, Va. Ryland's father, Garnett Ryland wrote what has been described as a classic history, "The Baptists of Virginia."

"If it hadn't been for Baptists, America might never have had complete separation of church and state, religious liberty and freedom of conscience," the lawyer said.

"The Methodists and the Presbyterians," he continued, "the only two other groups of dissenting Protestants in Virginia, would have stopped short of complete freedom and settled only for toleration."

Both Virginians agreed that in order to understand the intensity of desire of Virginia Baptists for religious freedom, it is essential to understand the situation that existed in the Colonies, and especially in Virginia, prior to the American Revolution.

Economically and socially, power was with the wealthy plantation owners, who owned vast acreages and slaves. Furthermore, the wealthy had both the time and money for education, while the average colonist was often uneducated and frequently illiterate.

Also, Virginia was a colony that supported the established Church of England.

By the 1770s, the gap between the rich and the poor, the educated and uneducated, and the masses and the plantation owners had increased to the breaking point.

It was in this situation that Baptists began to find great response to the gospel.

Baptists met great success in preaching the gospel among the masses, and great throngs would flock to hear the sermons. The people also found Baptist churches were filling a void in their social life, accounts say.

"I believe one of the most important factors in the development of Baptist churches in Virginia is that they opened the possibility for social contact among the masses," said Alley.

"People met at the church. It was a church not run by the vestrymen, but by the people themselves. And the preachers spoke to them in language they understood at their own level."

By the mid-1760s, Baptists were meeting open opposition and hostility from the vestrymen of the established church. The "Tories," who were loyal to the crown, felt the Baptist movement represented a threat both to the established church and to the authority of England itself.

On June 4, 1768, the first Baptist ministers were thrown into jail in Spotsylvania County for "disturbing the peace."

.An attorney told the court, "These men are great disturbers of the peace, they cannot meet a man upon the road but they must ram a text of scripture down his throat."

Most of the persecution of Baptists centered in Spotsylvania, Middlesex, Culpeper, Orange, and Chesterfield Counties. The degree of persecution depended largely on the will of the vestries of the established church.

Alley was cautious, however, of an over-emphasis among Baptists of the suffering these preachers endured. He noted, for example, that although Baptists were willing to go to prison for what they believed, no blood was shed and no one died a martyr's death in Virginia.

By 1775, the mood of the country had changed and most of the persecutions of Baptist ministers ceased. Revolution was in the air, and Baptists generally supported the Revolution just as enthusiastically as the established church opposed it.

The plea in the Baptist protest was not for mere toleration. It was a demand for complete freedom of religion. Ryland, in an interview at his home, said that the most revolutionary of all in those days was that the government should have nothing at all to do with religion.

"In those days," Ryland said, "when you established a county, you also established a parish and a vestry to build an Anglican church."

Ryland had strong words of praise for the leadership of George Washington and Patrick Henry in the Revolution, as "both men got things done."

Alley, however, said he most greatly admired the leadership of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, whom he called "the two greatest men of the Revolution."

None of the four was really religious, Alley said. Madison and Washington were both members of the established church, and Jefferson and Henry were not really active in any church, Alley added. There is evidence that these political leaders were influenced by Baptists, he said, but it is doubtful that they first learned about religious freedom from Baptists.

Alley, in his book, attacks the view that John Leland, a "flamboyant" Baptist minister was in large measure responsible for ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

Leland had publicly opposed the new Constitution, citing 10 reasons, including its lack of guarantees for religious liberty.

Some contend Leland was a candidate for the constitutional convention and that he met with Madison on the election's eve. And as a result, Leland allegedly withdrew as a candidate and threw his support to Madison, assuring his election. Those who accept this view contend that without Leland's withdrawal Madison would not have been elected, and Patrick Henry's forces would have defeated the Constitution's ratification in Richmond.

There is no evidence, however, that Leland was ever a candidate for the constitutional convention, Alley argued, and inconclusive evidence that Leland and Madison ever met.

The story about Leland's meeting with Madison never appeared until after Madison's death in 1836, when Leland was 82, almost 50 years after the event supposedly took place, Alley noted.

Alley argued that Leland a flamboyant preacher, encouraged the "myth" in his own writings. "I've seen people like Leland all my life. He was an egotist, and he overplayed it," Alley said. "We don't need that kind of myth. Baptists have enough heritage without distorting the truth."

It was Leland, however, in 1789 who drafted a letter from Virginia Baptists to President George Washington urging him to use his influence to safeguard religious liberty. Nor did Madison let the issue rest. In the opening session of Congress in New York on Sept. 25, 1789, he introduced the Bill of Rights, including a guarantee for complete religious liberty. The first 10 Amendments to the Constitution were ratified by the necessary three-fourths of the states and became law on Dec. 15, 1791.

The First Amendment states:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; . . ."

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

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April 26, 1976

76-72

E. S. James, Noted Baptist
 Editor, Dies in Dallas

DALLAS (BP)--E. S. James, 76, who gained national fame as editor of the Baptist Standard, weekly publication of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, died here, April 26, of cancer, at Baylor Medical Center. James retired in November 1966 as editor of the paper after 12 years of service.

The circulation of 368,000 when he retired ranked the Standard as the largest weekly religious magazine in the nation and the largest circulation of any Texas publication.

James was often referred to as "the conscience of Southern Baptists." As editor, he lashed out at those who questioned the Bible as the inspired Word of God. He was also known for his conviction that church and state must be separate--the former never receiving tax funds and the latter not interfering with the freedom of worship.

The Standard editorial stance under James was a major factor in keeping Texas Baptist institutions from receiving federal funds. Five years after his retirement in 1971 he took the platform at the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting in Houston to oppose a special committee which would have permitted the nine Baptist hospitals to receive federal funds. The convention rejected the committee's report.

James was a former vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention and also served on several of its committees. He was a former chairman of the Texas Convention's executive board and was a trustee for Americans United for Separation of Church and State until his retirement from the Standard.

Born March 1, 1900, at Butler, Okla., James did not affiliate with the church until he was 21 years of age. He said he soon realized "God wanted all I had," which meant first serving as a lay preacher while he taught school, and later, all his time as a pastor.

James came to Texas in 1930, after a brief pastorate in Kansas, to serve as pastor of the First Baptist Church at Cisco. He served there for seven years, resigning to become pastor of First Baptist Church at Vernon. He had been pastor there 17 years when he was elected editor of the Baptist Standard in 1954.

James was named editor emeritus of the Standard when he retired in 1966. He and Mrs. James made their home near Denton after retirement until several years ago, when they returned to Dallas.

Survivors include Mrs. James; two daughters, Mrs. Shirley Young of Dallas and Mrs. Leroy Daniels. Wichita Falls, Tex.; and a son, Bill James of Milledgeville, Ga.

Funeral services were to be Wednesday, April 28, at 11:00 a.m. at First Baptist Church, Vernon, Tex., with burial in Vernon's Eastview Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions to the local church or the American Cancer Society.

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W. E. Denham Sr.
 Dies in Kentucky

Baptist Press
 4/26/76

HARLAN, Ky. (BP)--Funeral services were conducted here for W. E. Denham Sr., 95, who retired in 1974 after more than 60 years as a Southern Baptist minister and educator.

Born in Swansea, South Wales, in January, 1881, Denham was professor of Bible at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (then Baptist Bible Institute), 1918-1929; professor and dean, Baptist Bible Institute, Lakeland, Fla., 1948-52; and professor, Clear Creek Baptist School, Pineville, Ky., 1961 until retirement.

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He also served as a pastor in Columbia, S. C.; New Orleans, La.; St. Louis, Mo.; Montgomery, Ala.; and Miami, Fla. His last pastorate before resuming his teaching career in 1948 was First Baptist Church, Miami, where he served 1942-48. He was known widely as a writer and lecturer.

First ordained to the ministry in 1911, Denham earned a diploma from Moody Bible Institute, Chicago; master and doctor of theology degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and a master of arts from Tulane University, New Orleans.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Anna Whitcomb Denham of Harlan, Ky.; two sons, W. E. Denham Jr. of Austin, Tex., and R. L. Denham of Midland, Tex.; and a daughter, Mrs. George Clayton of Miami. His first wife, the former Myrtle Lennon Lane, died in 1956. He remarried in 1962.

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Baptists Benefit
From Queen's Gift

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4/26/76

MADRID, Spain (BP)--Her Majesty Queen Sophia, wife of King Juan Carlos, made an initial donation toward the support of a plan of studies which is enabling different philosophical and religious groups, including Baptists, to express their beliefs through Spain's university system.

The donation of one million pesetas (about \$15,000) was made to the department of humanities of the Autonomous University of Madrid, which initiated the plan of studies.

A university-sponsored "work meal," attended by the Queen and various leaders, included Jose Borrás, president of the Spanish Baptist Union. Borrás sat near the Queen and when he spoke on the Baptist position of religious freedom for all, he heard the Queen say, "Very good. This is what we need!"

During the meal, the leaders expressed themselves and exchanged ideas, according to a report from Indy (Mrs. Charles W.) Whitten, Southern Baptist missionary.

Borrás has met with the Queen in two other settings.

The first conversation with her took place in 1972 when the King and Queen of Spain were the prince and princess of Spain. The World Evangelism Crusade was in Spain with a group of churches taking part in the "sister church" campaign. A group, including Borrás and Whitten, presented the prince and princess with a copy of the Bible of the Bear, a popular translation.

Her majesty thanked them, saying, ". . . This is the best gift that you could have given me. I will keep it with great appreciation."

"During the 25 minutes that the interview lasted," Borrás said, "Princess Sofia, as did her husband, showed great interest in our work, the progress of our church, our doctrines, the matter of religious freedom, and many other details related to the life of our denomination."

Other evangelical leaders of Madrid who took part in these activities were Bishop Ramon Taibo of the Episcopal Reform Church and Daniel Vidal of the Spanish Evangelical Church.

The Queen also took part in a study program conducted by Borrás at the Autonomous University of Madrid in the early months of 1976.

The university had incorporated in its department of humanities an exposition on different religious points of view. For eight Friday nights over an eight-week period, Borrás gave studies, planned for two hours each. Often students held him there with questions until after 11 p.m., according to Mrs. Whitten.

Borrás explained that a Baptist church is made up only of regenerated people and discussed its type of congregational government, its ordinances and their meaning, its belief in separation of church and state, and its emphasis on religious freedom.

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One of the most enthusiastic of the persons who heard Borrás was Queen Sofia. "It was a great pleasure for me to see the Queen seated among the other students," Borrás said, "listening attentively to the explanations of the professor and afterward commenting or asking questions along with the class. There is no doubt that the Queen of Spain does honor to her name in Greek which means 'wisdom'--and she is, of course, of Greek origin."

Borrás's studies were not only delivered before university students and professional people but taped and printed for distribution among other interested people who could not attend and for use in other Spanish universities, Mrs. Whitten said. The conference this year will be made available to at least 50,000 people in university circles, she estimated.

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Guatemala Still Receives
Global Baptist Support

Baptist Press
4/26/76

GUATEMALA CITY (BP)--Baptists from around the world continue to aid this disaster-stricken country.

Canadian Baptists are giving money to buy a truck and equip it with a drill and steel-cutting equipment, according to Harry E. Byrd, Southern Baptist missionary.

The Colombian Baptist Convention responded to the earthquake with an offering of over \$1,600, according to Joan (Mrs. J. Thomas) Norman, Southern Baptist missionary. The money will be used to help in reconstruction of church buildings and homes.

Even though the last group of Spanish-speaking evangelists from Texas has left Guatemala, an evangelistic thrust will continue through Guatemalan Baptists.

"The general feeling that there is a need for confirmation of new believers is prevalent," said Byrd. "Let us pray a shift from campaigns will not, in any sense, mean a lessening of the work of the Holy Spirit but rather a deepening of his work in the life of our churches."

Byrd asked Baptists around the world to pray for "the program coordinating group as they make plans for the rest of the year concerning the Guatemalan organization of Southern Baptist missionaries' participation in reconstruction, new believers' growth in Christ and families in temporary quarters who are trying to rebuild before the rains come."

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More Regulations Projected
For Youth Camps

Baptist Press
4/26/76

MEMPHIS (BP)-- Southern Baptists and others can expect more safety and health regulations for youth camps in the immediate future, state and national Baptist Brotherhood leaders were advised here.

Dr. Frank Lisella of Atlanta, an environmental health service specialist for the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), made the prediction in an address at an annual four-day Brotherhood Leadership Conference.

The conference is sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission, Southern Baptist Convention agency for work with men and boys, in cooperation with Brotherhood departments of state Baptist conventions.

Calling for reasonable guidelines for health and safety at youth camps, Dr. Lisella contended some states don't even know how many camps they have within their boundaries, much less accurate information about the condition of the camps' water supply and food.

In other action, the state Brotherhood leaders and members of the Brotherhood Commission staff approved recommendations for a large promotion plan for Southern Baptists' Royal Ambassador (RA) boys program.

In presenting the recommendations, state Brotherhood leaders cited recent efforts by Boy Scout leaders in the Southeastern United States to lead key Southern Baptist pastors to start units in their churches and encourage other churches to do the same.

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About 40,000 resident camps and day camps are attracting millions of persons in the United States, Dr. Lisella continued, in describing the magnitude of the safety and health problem. That doesn't include primitive, travel, trip and troop camps.

Supporters of federal legislation have already pushed a bill through the U. S. House of Representatives requiring safety and health regulations for camps and are supporting two similar bills in the U. S. Senate.

The current federal legislation could require a church to get a license every time it sponsored a retreat, Dr. Lisella acknowledged. "But we intend to do something about that problem."

Among the proponents of the federal legislation are the American Camping Association, YMCA, YWCA, Boy Scouts of America and the national Girl Scout organization, Dr. Lisella said.

The HEW official expressed the hope states would enact their own safety and health regulations for camps before the federal government does. However, only nine have so far.

Citing the need for some degree of regulation, Dr. Lisella said inspectors found 14 retarded children in a camp playing without supervision on the steep bank of a river.

"While there are some good camps, good guidelines will either straighten up camps or put the poor ones out of business," he said.

The Brotherhood leaders also okayed 45 recommendations in 14 areas ranging from denominational emphases to renewal and disaster relief.

In an address opening the leadership conference, Glendon McCullough, executive director of the commission, called for national meetings of Royal Ambassadors in 1979 and 1983 and a national men's conference.

McCullough also proposed enrollment goals for 1976-77 "that will take us beyond the half million mark." He asked each state leader to accept as a minimum an enrollment increase of 10 percent.

The Brotherhood leaders agreed to meet in 1977 on April 25-28 in Memphis.