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3,400 Backgrounds Mix
Well in Seminary Setting

By Mike Searcey

FORT WORTH (BP)--Question: Take a retired Air Force Colonel, a Navaho Indian, a professional golfer, a former president of a large savings and loan association, a professional tennis player. Mix about 3,400 other persons and what do you have?

Answer: The student body of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

The backgrounds of students at Southern Baptists' six theological seminaries are as varied as you can imagine. Most people are surprised that all seminary students are not young people just out of college. Some are, but most are not.

Most are preparing for full-time Christian vocations, but these vocations range widely from pastoring churches to directing public relations programs. All, however, are considered ministries, since each is involved in its own way with ministering to people.

The path from home to seminary may take many interesting and unusual turns. For Ruger Winchester, it was a career with the Air Force. When he was flying B-52's and serving as commanding officer of a base in Guam, he had no idea that within a matter of months he would be sitting in a classroom at Southwestern Seminary preparing to become a preacher. Today he is.

When Russell Begaye was leading demonstrations in California for the American Indian Movement (AIM) he would have been more than a little surprised if someone had told him he would soon be the only Navaho Indian from a reservation attending a Southern Baptist seminary. After his graduation next year, Begaye will return to Ship Rock, N.M., to become a minister on his home reservation.

Three years ago, Lonnie Cleveland was earning a good living on the professional golf circuit. Today, he is enrolled in Southwestern's extension school in Houston. Cleveland will join a number of other professional athletes, including evangelist Bill Glass, who have entered the ministry via Southwestern Seminary.

The business world is also well represented. Ralph Lee Jr. came to Southwestern from Houston where he had worked up to the presidency of a large savings and loan association before deciding to enter the ministry.

Each student has a different story of circumstances and feelings that caused him or her to change their life's direction.

Begaye feels he will help his people more as a minister than as an AIM activist. "When I used to help people on the reservation with their problems, I noticed that often they would return a few months later with the same or similar problems. Now, as a Christian minister, I will be able to help them change their lives for eternity," he said.

Lee achieved what most people would call success at a relatively early age but "found it did not make me completely happy. Now, as a minister, I believe I can relate to other business people and help them have a deeper, more satisfying relationship with God."

Many students continue secular vocations while attending school. For example, if you take tennis lessons at Fort Worth's Colonial Country Club, your instructor may be Josef Solc, a second generation professional tennis player from Czechoslovakia. He is currently completing work on the doctor of Philosophy degree at Southwestern.

The age range of Southwestern students runs from around 21 to just a few years short of social security. And it is becoming more common these days for fathers, sons, daughters and mothers to make seminary a family affair. At Southwestern, William Garland Jr. was joined this summer by his father, William Sr., a longtime minister and college graduate who previously never had the opportunity to attend seminary.

J.L. Countryman, who recently finished Southwestern's diploma in theology program designed for students 30-years-old and up who have not attended college, worked over 17 years for a freight company before entering the ministry:

"It's a big decision for a man with two teenagers to give up a secure job and become a student for the first time since high school. My wife and children have had to make as many sacrifices as I have these past two years. But I know it will be worth it because we are all sure that this is what God has called us to do," he said.

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Pulpits Need Innovation
Says Baptist Pastor-Professor

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By Michael Duduit

LOUISVILLE (BP)--Many preachers are "spitting into the wind" when they try to communicate as they did in the 1930's, 40's, and 50's, believes Alton McEachern, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Greensboro, N. C.

McEachern, who spent July on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here as J. Clyde Turner Visiting Professor of Preaching, urged ministerial students to use current idiom and innovative technique to communicate the gospel more effectively.

He argues that the pastor's primary task is preaching, and thinks the greatest question facing today's pastor is, "How do you get the attention of the people and communicate the gospel to them?"

A pastor for 24 years, McEachern has experimented with several pulpit tools. One of his favorite is the dramatic monologue, a first-person biographical sermon by a real or imaginary character. "It has great teaching value and is a good attention getter," he says.

Another technique is the "Devil's advocate sermon," in which the preacher makes a statement opposing a Christian doctrine--such as, "I don't believe in the resurrection"--and gives several arguments to support that position. The congregation is then invited to respond to the issue, and the preacher wraps up the message by answering his earlier arguments and reaffirming the Christian position.

"Play It Again Sam" is a tradition at his church, says McEachern. The congregation is given a list containing summaries of 10 or 12 sermons that have "struck fire during the year." They vote on several that they'd like to hear again, and he preaches one a month throughout the summer.

"Some of the people call it 'summer reruns,'" he says with a grin.

Special attention has been given to making the Lord's Supper a more meaningful event in the life of the church, McEachern explains.

"When I grew up in Georgia, the Lord's Supper was tacked on to the end of the service and didn't have a great deal of meaning," he says. "We try to make it a focal point of the service."

One method used with great success, says McEachern, is to observe communion in the church fellowship hall with families seated together around a number of tables. The minister and his family sit at one table and the elements are passed from family to family.

The nation's Bicentennial has provided several opportunities for innovative worship experiences, says the visiting professor.

"One Sunday night I dressed up like a Baptist preacher might have dressed in 1776--powdered wig, knee britches, the works," he says.

McEachern emphasizes that these various innovations are only "spice"--that the "main course" of a pastor's preaching should be expository messages, working systematically through the Scriptures and applying them to everyday life.

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Nevertheless, emphasizes the pastor of North Carolina's largest Baptist church, the pastor must strive for "freshness in preaching and worship--not just change for change's sake, but to add meaning to worship."

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Laymen Needed To Rebuild
Damage from Dam Flooding

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IDAHO FALLS, Idaho (BP)--Almost two months after the 310-foot Teton Dam broke here, flooding the upper Snake River Valley, an area disaster relief committee has issued a plea for Baptist laymen to come help the residents reconstruct farm buildings destroyed by the flood.

George Ichler, pastor of the Upper Valley Baptist Chapel in St. Anthony, Idaho, and co-chairman of the disaster relief processing committee which is coordinating the rebuilding effort, contacted Norman Godfrey, director of the ministries section for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, Tenn. 38104.

Godfrey in turn contacted each of the state Baptist Brotherhood directors asking for their help in recruiting individual laymen who would spend up to one week helping in the project. The layman would need to provide their own transportation to Idaho Falls, but Ichler said the committee there would provide housing.

"The greatest need," Ichler said, "is for men to help farmers rebuild fences, barns and animal shelters before the snows begin in October."

Ichler explained that although thousands of cattle in the ranch country were drowned in the flood, thousands of others survived. But the flood waters leveled most of the fences and barns and many of the cattle wandered aimlessly around the unfenced countryside.

He said the committee also needs persons to do "applicant work" by assisting victims of the disaster in filling out applications for aid and referring them to service agencies which could provide help. He suggested that couples might respond, with the men working in the farm repair project and wives helping in the applicant work.

"Housing is available at no cost in the area churches and schools, and there are excellent camping facilities nearby for campers and motor homes," Ichler said.

Even though the flood occurred June 5, the area residents are just now clearing most of the muck away and need help of volunteers, Ichler explained.

Ten persons were killed in the flooding from the broken dam, and an estimated 3,000 were left homeless. Property damage was estimated at \$1 billion.

Immediately after the tragedy the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board made available \$20,000 in disaster relief funds to Ichler and other area Baptist pastors involved in the relief project.

Home Mission Board Christian social ministries director Paul Adkins flew to the disaster area and surveyed needs.

At first the area leaders felt there was no need for Baptist volunteers to come. But after the cleanup began to progress, Ichler and his committee felt laymen could help farmers rebuild farms and fences before the October snows.

Godfrey urges persons interested in responding to the need to contact their state Baptist Brotherhood director or him at the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis.

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BWA Expands on 'Baptist
Community' World Data

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WASHINGTON (BP)--For every three Baptist church members in the world, at least one other person attends preaching services, Sunday School or other Baptist activities or is at least in a Baptist family, according to a Baptist World Alliance (BWA) estimate.

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The PWA estimates that the total "Baptist community" in the world numbers 46,758,787, expanding its recently announced total of 32,887,522 Baptist church members in the world, according to Carl W. Tiller, BWA associate secretary for study and research.

Baptists, unlike many denominations, count only persons who have been made a personal decision to receive baptism as church members. They do not baptize infants.

This is the first year the BWA has compiled data beyond actual baptized members to reveal the broader outreach of Baptist churches, Tiller said.

He estimates that the world's 135,957 Baptist churches are supplemented by another 35,818 chapels, missions and other places of preaching and worship. This brings to 171,775 the total number of places where services are held on a regular basis.

The number of non-church Baptist worship places exceeds the number of Baptist churches in Middle America, South America, and Africa. The Nigerian Baptist Convention reports 1,600 mission points and 700 churches. The proportionately fewest number of non-church worship places is in North America.

The Southern Baptist Convention, USA, which reports 34,906 churches, has the largest number of mission points 3,807. Baptists of Brazil are next in number of mission points operated, with 2,810, and they have 2,682 churches.

In the "Baptist community" estimate, the greatest outreach beyond church membership was reported for the Middle East, the smallest region in actual number of Baptists. The BWA figures that in the Middle Eastern countries, the Baptist community is 4.5 times the actual church membership.

North America has the smallest ratio of non-member outreach, estimated at 1.3 times the church membership. Tiller attributed this in part to the idea that in North America, "interested persons may make a profession of faith more quickly because there are few or no cultural barriers as compared with other places."

The Baptist World Alliance based its statistical reports on information from its 106 member bodies in 81 countries.

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Carson-Newman College
Names Search Committee

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JEFFERSON CITY, Tenn. (BP)--Jack H. McEwen, pastor of First Baptist Church, Chattanooga, has been named chairman of a search committee to select a successor for John A. Fincher, who will retire August 31, 1977, as president of Carson-Newman College, a Baptist school here.

Also named to the committee were five other Tennesseans, Miss Jodie H. Brown, businesswoman, Erwin; R. Clyde Fox, businessman, Oliver Springs; Joe R. Haynes, attorney, Knoxville; Robert D. McCray, pastor, Dandridge; and Harry D. McNeeley, business executive, Kingsport.

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Southern Baptist Gets
Methodist Citation

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LAKE JUNALUSKA, N. C. (BP)--For the first time in its 36-year history, the United Methodist Rural Fellowship has presented an honorary life membership to a non-Methodist.

The fellowship gave the honor at a banquet to Jeanne H. Page, a Southern Baptist from Cumming, Ga., who has served 24 years as secretary in the United Methodist Southeastern Jurisdictional Council office in Atlanta.

In the citation for Ms. Page, G. Ross Freeman of Macon, Ga., said, "No segment of the jurisdiction has escaped her touch. She is the unofficial sweetheart of the Jurisdictional Council and of all the committees and associations which make up its work. Her work has been efficient, professional and courteous."

A second honorary membership was awarded to Roy Owens of Cartaret Street Methodist Church, Beaufort, S. C.

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