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Gaines Dobbins, 90--'No
Signs of Slowing Down'

By Jack Brymer

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--Seemingly ageless Gaines S. Dobbins--believed by many Southern Baptists to be the denomination's greatest teacher in religious education--celebrated his 90th birthday here amidst preparation to return to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville to teach a special course.

He is additionally completing two books, submitting the manuscript for another and teaching in his home Shades Mountain Baptist Church here, which held a surprise birthday party in his honor.

The veteran educator and native of Langsdale, Miss., broke ground as the first Southern Baptist to teach Christian journalism, pastoral care, psychology of religion and church administration. He was on the Southern Seminary faculty 36 years and was the school's first dean of the School of Religious Education.

In 1956, he retired and joined the faculty of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., as distinguished professor of church administration. In 1968, Southern Seminary named him emeritus professor of religious education and church administration and recently established the Gaines S. Dobbins Chair of Church Administration.

Dobbins' 90th year was not without some difficulties. In early January, he suffered a temporary heart blockage and was hospitalized for several days. A pacemaker was installed in his chest and he is "back up to walking a half-mile every day it doesn't rain."

Two cataract operations and the death of his wife, Mary, in the last three years have not slowed his torrid pace.

Broadman Press has just released Dobbins' 31st book entitled, "Good News to Change Lives." Next month, Word, Inc. will release his 32nd book, "Zest for Ministry." He defines ministry as service to people and says fulfillment comes through service, a factor he feels has contributed to the length of his life.

Charles Carter, pastor of Shades Mountain Church, says Dobbins practices what he preaches in his classes and writings. During a recent revival at the church, Dobbins enlisted and brought to one of the services a family of prospective members, Carter said.

"During the 10 years Dr. Dobbins has been a member of this church," Carter continued, "he has demonstrated by personal example and practical involvement all of the truths he taught so long in the academic community."

Dobbins' most recent manuscript, which has just been submitted to a publisher, deals with what he calls the mutuality of business and religion.

Referring to the June, 1976, meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Norfolk and the mission thrust adopted for the next 25 years, Dobbins responded, "So what, if we double our mission force in the next quarter century? We'll be right where we are now because the world population will have doubled," he smiled.

"We will never win the world with clergy--meaning fulltime religious vocation workers," he shook his head slowly. "If we do, it will be done by thousands of dedicated businessmen and women on their jobs," he said, jabbing his finger into the space before him.

Although he retired to Birmingham in order to be near his son, Austin Dobbins, who is chairman of the department of english at Samford University, Dobbins still maintains his own residence.

Because of habit, he said, his day begins at 6 a.m. with a hot breakfast, which he prepares. Following his devotional and prayer period comes the morning paper and by 8 a.m. he is "huntin' and pecking" at the typewriter.

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"Lunch and dinner are with my son and daughter-in-law," he explained and then quickly added in sotto voce tones, as if to keep it a secret, "I get a half-mile walk every day it doesn't rain."

"To what do you contribute your long, successful and happy life?" he was asked.

"Well," he responded, "It's been long. Any success I credit to two choices I made very early in life. First, I chose a grandmother who lived to be 94 years old and a mother who lived to be 90."

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

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Senate Defeats Buckley
Move for Tax Credits

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WASHINGTON (BP)--The U. S. Senate rejected a move by advocates of aid to parochial schools by defeating an amendment to the Tax Reform Act which would have provided tax credits to parents for the school expenses of their children.

Sen. James L. Buckley (Cons.R.-N.Y.), a consistent proponent of various kinds of government aid to parochial schools, had asked Senate colleagues to approve an amendment which would have provided tax relief to parents with children enrolled in any school, public or private, at all levels--college, high school, or elementary school.

By a voice vote of 52-37, the Senate rejected the move, although it did pass by voice vote a measure introduced by Sen. William V. Roth, Jr. (R.-Del.), providing a tax credit to parents of young people enrolled in any college, public or private.

Roth's successful amendment provides for a tax credit of \$100 for parents with young people enrolled in any college or vocational school for the tax year 1977. The credit will be increased by \$50 a year to a limit of \$250 in 1980 and thereafter.

Buckley's proposal would have granted a tax credit of up to \$1,000 for parents of college or vocational school students, up to \$500 for parents with youngsters in secondary school, and up to \$250 for those with children in elementary school.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs (BJCPA) here had sought the defeat of the Buckley Amendment by urging Baptist leaders and constituents to wire or call their Senators.

James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Washington-based Baptist agency, hailed the measure's defeat as a victory for opponents of tax aid to sectarian institutions.

"Both the purpose and primary effect of tax credits for tuition paid for dependents who are enrolled in church schools amount to aid to religion," he said.

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A breakdown of the Senate vote will be mailed to state Baptist editors; available to others on request.

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Republican Delegates to Hear
Midland, Tex., Youth Choirs

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MIDLAND, Tex. (BP)--The youth choirs of First Baptist Church here will present the musical, "I Love America," at the Republican National Convention in Kansas City, the church's minister of music said here.

The 115 choir members recently performed the musical for the Texas Republican Convention in Fort Worth. Their position on the program in Kansas City has not been set, but David Campbell, the church's minister of music, said he hopes it will be the day of nominations to ensure a maximum audience.

"We are counting it as a missions venture, an opportunity for the musical to witness to people from all 50 states. We got tremendous response from the state convention, with many delegates expressing appreciation," Campbell told the Baptist Standard.

The musical, written by John Peterson and Don Wyrzten contains patriotic songs, choreography, drama and multi-media presentations. The last section of the musical emphasizes a need for the country to return to its spiritual foundation.

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Discouraged Pastor Finally
Advanced "One Step Forward"

By James Lee Young

NASHVILLE (BP) -- In the fall of 1964, a discouraged English Baptist minister left a small church near London to be pastor of a larger congregation at Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

The little church had been a frustrating experience, ministerially speaking, and certainly not very flattering to pastor Bryan Gilbert's sense of self-accomplishment, he said in an interview.

He had tried almost every conceivable form of outreach and evangelism but the little congregation had gone steadily downhill. Gilbert later discovered the missing ingredient--"I had preached truth, except I had no love for the people." God used this discovery to turn Gilbert's ministry around and to gradually show him some "very nitty-gritty" ideas about Christian love and relationships, said the minister who now lives in Leicester, England.

The minister took these principles and formed them into the "One Step Forward" (OSF) program of renewal and evangelistic outreach that has helped hundreds of small churches in Europe and some in the United States to experience success in areas of Christian witness.

At last report, OSF, with Gilbert as its chief spokesman and administrator, had "really caught on" in Europe and was being used in no less than 23 countries, including at least four behind the Iron Curtain.

Gilbert was brought up in the Church of England but says he accepted Christ at age 19, through the witness of members of a Baptist cricket club. At the time, he was studying at the Royal Academy of Music in London and then went into show business--singing in ice shows. He also plays guitar. Later he felt called to the ministry and studied at Spurgeon's College in London where he earned a degree in theology.

For a time he worked in street evangelism and open air meetings. While a student at Spurgeon's he organized a group who went around knocking on pub doors, playing Christian music once inside. But the reception on the streets was anything but the warm, enthusiastic response he had experienced in show business.

Instead, he was stoned by hecklers. A dock worker once asked him, "The Bible says to turn the other cheek, but what do you say?" Gilbert replied, "Why don't you hit me and find out?" The man did not hit Gilbert.

One of Gilbert's primary missions is to smaller local churches where he helps establish continuing programs of evangelism. "Love is how it works," he says. In May, 1965, he and Roger Collins, a fellow English minister began to discuss how to use their experiences to help in churches in their local association. They would emphasize instruction, teaching and an evangelistic opportunity.

"A purely evangelistic meeting wouldn't have helped many of the existing believers in these churches," however, Gilbert notes. "The object was to challenge both the people on the fringe and members in the villages to indeed take 'one step forward' into or along the Christian life;" thus the OSF title evolved.

The first time Gilbert and Collins were able to try their new plan was spring, 1966, in Collin's church. They launched into the teaching ministry of commitment and spiritual growth "with some fear and hesitation," Gilbert recalls. "In the third meeting, when I had finished speaking, almost hesitatingly I invited them to indicate on their covenant card the response they felt was right toward God.

"To our great joy we saw a number put their trust in Christ and ask for Baptism. The church grew by 14 members. Giving, responsibility and loyalty to the church increased noticeably." The two ministers realized, "This was something God had given us to use, develop for his glory and to help the local church."

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Results are often difficult to measure, but OSF, with headquarters in Leicester, has become known through much of the Baptist world. Among OSF associates and representatives, located in Australia, Sweden, Northern Ireland, Brazil and the U.S., is Dr. G. David McClure, a Southern Baptist layman and ophthalmologist from Louisville. In other countries, Gilbert said, the program works directly through Baptist unions and conventions. Not only Baptists have used the program but Methodists in Ireland have picked it up.

The program itself is such that a local church or group can complete the entire series in a year without outside help. Its five points are: One Step Forward in Christian Love... Commitment... in Learning... in Expression... and Follow-up. In the first step, five basic ideas are suggested based on the letters of Agape (Greek word for unconditional love): A--Avoid criticism and gossip daily; G--Go and visit someone in need weekly; A--Acquire another acquaintance each month; P--Pray daily for another person; E--Encourage someone each day.

When Gilbert began researching for a suitable follow-up program, he encountered, "Evangelism the Counter Revolution," a book by Lewis Drummond, Professor of the Billy Graham Chair of Evangelism at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. Gilbert contacted Drummond who wrote the program's follow-up Bible studies.

Southern Baptists have similar programs of lay renewal and Christian witness, and Gilbert insists where the OSF program has been presented in American churches, he **has** consciously tried not to compete.

An incident from Gilbert's most recent U.S. tour illustrates what the evangelist is attempting through OSF. In a church near the tour's end, he asked persons who wished to make decisions to merely stand. On the front row, a little girl stood with tears streaming down her face. When the others went into a back room for prayer and counseling, she went on home with her parents.

Later that night, her father personally led her to Christ. That's what Gilbert's ministry is about--preparing Christians to lead others to Christ.

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Christmas Comes Twice
To Help Missionaries

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Christmas may come but once a year to most, but at Calvary Baptist Church here it comes twice

In mid-summer, Calvary's 100-year-old, downtown sanctuary was decorated with the traditional tree. Its choir and congregation sang traditional carols, and the story of Christ's birth was recalled. A Christmas message was given by Russell E. Brown, a former missionary to Burma.

Brown's appearance underlined the purpose of Calvary's 30-year-old custom of "Christmas in July," not to be confused with "Christmas in August" which is a Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union emphasis for home missionaries. A summertime Christmas emphasis for missions is observed by many Baptists.

Each summer, Calvary, a dually aligned church, takes up a special offering to send gifts to foreign missionaries. A Sunday School class purchases the gifts, wraps and tags them for each member of the missionary family, and the presents are mailed in time to reach Upper Volta, Togo, or elsewhere by Christmas Day.

This year's gifts were sent to Southern Baptist missionaries in four remote African countries and American Baptist missionaries in Japan and the Philippines, a church spokesman said.

Missionaries have responded: "Our package from home didn't arrive in time, and without your gifts our family would have had a bleak Christmas."

Another reported, "I'm a grown man, but I found myself crying in the dark that night."

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