

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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August 23, 1976
Bold Mission Thrust
Gets Major Boost

76-139

By Dan Martin

RIDGECREST, N. C. (BP)--Bold Mission Thrust, the emphasis aimed at evangelizing the nation by 1980, got a major denominational boost here.

Representatives of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood Commission, Executive Committee and Stewardship Commission joined the Home Mission Board in presenting the emphasis to more than 2,000 persons at Home Mission Week at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

Also participating were the editors of 19 state Baptist papers and of Baptist Press, the SBC news service.

Bold Mission Thrust, a major emphasis for the denomination's Home Mission Board (HMB), has as its twin aim evangelizing and "congregationalizing" the nation.

"This is an opportune time for Bold Mission Thrust," said Arthur B. Rutledge, HMB executive director-treasurer. "People are more open to the gospel now than they have been in decades. People are seeing we need to make a turn; that we need help beyond ourselves."

Rutledge cited the 12.7 million strong SBC.

"For the past five years, we have exceeded 400,000 baptisms each year. That is more than two million people in the past five years. People are responsive to the gospel."

He added it would be "unthinkable for our evangelistic minded denomination not to structure itself for growth. One of the unique things about Southern Baptists is that we are committed to growth."

Rutledge dipped into the political arena to note the nomination of Southern Baptist Jimmy Carter. It has helped "people in areas where Southern Baptists are relatively unknown to learn something about Southern Baptists. People in all sections of our land are learning a little about us and that is not hurting . . . It is helping."

Gerald Palmer, head of the HMB missions section, noted: "We know the answer to the question that is being asked across our land: 'What does it mean to be born again?'"

He added: "Without apology, this is a time for direct, intense, personal evangelism."

Carolyn Weatherford, WMU executive director, commented: "At the end of 200 years, our nation is still not Christian. Southern Baptists must bear responsibility for a good part of that."

She said that if Bold Mission Thrust is to succeed, "We must have mission action. Mission action is an organized effort of a church . . . to minister and to witness. Ministry and witness are the sharp, two edges of the sword, and you can hardly have one without the other."

"If we are going to present the claims of Christ boldly to our nation, we are going to have to do more than just take the opportunities as they present themselves. We are going to have to organize ourselves to carry out this effort."

Weatherford added: "The Lord did not put us here to do the best we can. He gave us the commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel."

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Glendon McCullough, executive director of the Brotherhood Commission, told participants: "Our conventions and associations have not yet really dealt with lay involvement in our denomination, and one aspect that we have not dealt with is the role of women in the church and as missionaries."

"Bold Mission Thrust is not intended for denominational leaders, mission board, pastors, staff members. It is intended for every believer."

"If we are going to have a Bold Mission Thrust, we are going to help all of God's people. If we are going to have a Bold Mission Thrust, all of God's children have got to be involved."

He said he wishes "we had developed a cooperative program of human resources, but we haven't done so well in that area."

"Jesus in his ministry seemed to seek out ordinary people and help them do extraordinary things," McCullough added. "This can be the basic Bold Mission Thrust today--ordinary people doing extraordinary things."

Edgar Cooper, editor of the Florida Baptist Witness, told editors he feels "a spirit of cooperation we haven't had in several years."

But, he warned planners not to "overlook inspiration. We can get bogged down in statistics, planning, computer data and overlook inspiration."

"I think this missions thrust should have a deep spiritual current," he added.

A. C. Queen, editor of the Penn-Jersey Baptist, noted he feels "We are getting a boost in what we already are doing."

"We are overwhelmed by the assignment (of sharing the gospel with every person)," Queen added. "We have 125 congregations and about 15,000 members (in Pennsylvania and South New Jersey). We are attempting by the assignment to take on eight million unchurched people and three or four million more in somebody's church who are not born again. We are overwhelmed by the assignment."

"But we are optimistic. We feel we are on course. We feel we are building toward the future."

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Church Adds World Hunger
To Its Overall Budget

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HOUSTON (BP)--First Baptist Church here decided it wasn't giving enough for world hunger relief.

They did some checking and found that Southern Baptists give about \$2 million annually in special gifts to alleviate world hunger.

It occurred to them, pastor John Bisagno said, to add world hunger to their overall budget, which is \$1.6 million. Now their special hunger gifts are one percent of the budget or about \$16,000 annually.

"As a denomination we could easily give about \$12 million annually for world hunger relief," Bisagno said and challenged others to evaluate their world hunger giving.

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Graves Elected VP
Of Ministry Group

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LOUISVILLE (BP)--Allen W. Graves, dean of religious education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here, has been elected vice president of the Association for Professional Education for Ministry. The association is composed of professors at seminaries related to the Association of Theological Schools.

Graves, who was recently reappointed to the dean's position which he held from 1955-69, has been executive director of the seminary's Boyce Bible School since 1973.

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**Baylor Gets \$100,000
From U. S. Steel**

WACO, Tex. (BP)--A grant of \$100,000 for Baylor University has been authorized by the trustees of U. S. Steel Foundation, Inc., according to Abner V. McCall, president of the Baptist school.

The gift, which will be presented in two equal annual installments beginning in November, will be used, along with other contributions, in the restoration of Burleson Quadrangle and the construction of the W. Guy Draper Academic Building, part of the \$22.5 million fund-raising campaign which Baylor began in 1974. Cost of these facilities is \$6 million.

More than \$5 million has already been pledged or contributed to the program which is designed to provide for the university's current and future needs for a stable enrollment of about 8,000 students.

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**Hobbs Retires From
'The Baptist Hour'**

**Baptist Press
8/23/76**

FORT WORTH (BP)--Herschel H. Hobbs, the man who--through "The Baptist Hour"--has preached to more people than any other Southern Baptist pastor, has asked to be relieved of his duties on the long-running radio program heard on 394 stations in the U. S. and around the world.

His final sermon on the program, a modified worship service produced and syndicated by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, will be preached on September 26, about one month short of his 69th birthday.

Hobbs, who has preached more than 700 "Baptist Hour" sermons, described his work as "a privilege beyond description. It has also been a tremendous responsibility. And it has been a labor of love. I have neither received nor desired a salary for this assignment for my denomination and my Lord."

During the 18 years he has been recording sermons for "The Baptist Hour," the now retired pastor and former Southern Baptist Convention president has never had to postpone a recording session due to voice trouble. A heart attack more than five years ago slowed him briefly but didn't really stop him. Instead of his flying to Fort Worth to record, a Radio-TV Commission engineer moved equipment to Oklahoma City to record him there.

"A denomination is fortunate to produce a man like Herschel Hobbs at least once in every generation. Dr. Hobbs comes from the school of ministers who believes in the excellence of preparation," said Paul M. Stevens, commission president, in expressing regret at Hobbs' decision to step down.

"He established himself as a pastor whose ministry was 'textbook' in its classical application and he applied himself to the life of the denomination--that is, to its growth and expansion throughout the world," Stevens said.

"He is a man who has paid his dues in all areas of the Christian ministry and, as such, he made a superb contribution through 'The Baptist Hour'."

Stevens said the Radio and Television Commission will "continue to use 'The Baptist Hour' as a great evangelical instrument in broadcasting and to select men with pastoral experience to reach the people of America and the world." He said Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss., will preach on the program in October, November and December.

Hobbs became "Baptist Hour" speaker after he--and about 50 other Southern Baptist pastors--submitted taped sermons to the Commission's trustees. The trustees listened to the sermons, identified only by a number, selected Hobbs, then looked for the name of the winner.

"I started not to record the sermon when Paul (Stevens) originally asked me to submit, it," Hobbs said later. "He didn't say what he wanted with it. I figured since he was in Louisville that he was probably teaching a course in radio preaching at the seminary and wanted an example of how not to do it. I've often shuddered, thinking of the opportunity for service I would have missed."

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Because he had to write out the "Baptist Hour" sermons to time them, Hobbs was forced to give up 18 of the 36 holes of golf he played weekly. "When I became president of the Southern Baptist Convention (in 1962) I gave up the other 18," he once said.

Hobbs said the hardest lesson in radio preaching was learning to visualize the people to whom he was preaching, and to remember that it was a one-to-one basis as far as the listener was concerned.

He learned to visualize listeners by reading some of the Commission's letters from them. "I'd read those letters until I began mentally to see and feel the needs of the writers. Then I'd preach with them in mind."

One of the letters Hobbs received was from a young woman who thanked him for saving her life.

"She had checked into a hotel room and was prepared to turn on the gas when I asked, on the radio, a hook question, wanting to know how things were going," Hobbs recalled. "I had said, 'Why don't we talk about it?' She listened to the sermon and didn't turn the gas on."

Hobbs also received numerous letters from missionaries telling him they used "The Baptist Hour" sermons to teach English. Many other missionaries, away from their own church fellowships, considered him their special pastor.

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(BP) Photo will be mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Three Baptist Nationals
Die in Philippine Quake

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MANILA, Philippines (BP)--Three Baptist Nationals have died as a result of the recent earthquake and tidal wave in western Mindanao. Some Baptist families have also been left homeless and one Baptist church was heavily damaged.

The August 17 earthquake reportedly left 8,000 dead or missing and left 175,000 homeless, but "Baptists have generally been spared from severe damage and loss," said Robert N. Nash, chairman of the Philippine Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries). Missionaries are all safe, and mission property undamaged, he said.

Nash surveyed the effects of the earthquake in the most severely damaged areas. He reported three deaths, all in one family in Pagadian. Five families, including this one, lost their houses and belongings.

Further south, in Cotabato City, there was heavy property damage, according to William T. Roberson, Southern Baptist missionary press representative who accompanied Nash on the damage survey.

He reported the Baptist church in Cotabato City was extensively damaged. An initial grant of approximately \$2,000 has been set aside from FMB relief funds for repairs.

The church building possibly will be condemned by the city. If so, additional help will be needed. The church's basement was completely destroyed, Nash reported.

Approximately \$10,000 of a \$50,000 relief authorization has already been channeled through local Baptist churches and disaster relief agencies in Cotabato City and Pagadian, according to Roberson.

Nash indicated that government agencies were well organized and are meeting needs in an adequate way at the present time. The board's relief work has been supplemental to the government's work.

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