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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Church Racial Difficulties
Can B Solved, Minister Says**

By David Wilkinson

RIDGECREST, N. C. (BP)--If relations between predominantly black and predominantly white churches in America are to improve, the changes will have to come in small increments, a black Baptist minister said at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center here.

Too many genuinely concerned church leaders make the mistake of dealing with the race issue by trying to involve the entire congregation at once, says Paul Nichols, senior minister of Good Shepherd Baptist Church, Richmond, Va. The result, he emphasizes, is that good intentions often backfire because of short-sighted idealism.

"The starting place has to be small," Nichols says. "You have to start with something other than groups because the fears, suspicions and prejudices that keep churches apart are really group fears.

"To overcome that," he adds, "you have to start at the barest level of human relationships--one-to-one relationships or one family to another family. If you can get families to share together--meals in the home, for example--when they're not under group pressure, then you have an excellent starting place."

Nichols, who serves a predominantly black church in Richmond with approximately 800 members, led a session on the future of black-white church relationships during the Student Conference, sponsored by National Student Ministries of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Nichols is also the dean of the school of theology of Virginia Union University, one of only three predominantly black schools fully accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

From one-to-one encounters between blacks and whites, churches can move to group relationships, Nichols believes. Any number of activities can serve as beginning points, from alternating Sunday School classes between black and white churches, to social or recreational get-togethers such as cookouts or bowling.

Nichols, however, offers a suggestion for these group encounters.

"My recommendation is that you don't discuss race unless it naturally develops," he explains. "There are so many issues and so many concerns we hold in common. I think we are ahead if we can hold onto those issues, rather than getting involved in the polarities of the race issue."

Nichols stresses that bridges between black and white churches will never be built as long as people continue to voice such statements as "religion is colorless" or "God is colorblind."

"God may be colorblind, but nobody else is," he explains. "We must address ourselves to the realities of human existence.

"This is where we have our greatest problem. I think we want to know how much we can become like black folks and how much we can become like white folks so we can all have this wonderful life together. This is not what it's about.

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"You've got to deal with my blackness, with my cultural difference," Nichols says. "I have a right to be black and I have a right to be different. I shouldn't have to be the same as you to like you, to worship with you."

"I think we ought to be able to work out some means by which we can live in a community and acknowledge our differences."

One difficulty, Nichols says, is that often the minister is willing to step forward in the race issue, while the church is not.

"I have seen many pastors who have literally wept because they are powerless to move their congregations to do what the gospel demands," he says. "I recommend that pastors in a community get together and select a Sunday in which all of them plan to speak strongly on the race issue. Then they will have mutual support and one won't have to bear all the pressure himself."

Despite the intricate problems, Nichols believes that progress is being made.

"There are many more white integrated churches today and many more that are willing to be integrated than previously was the case," Nichols says. "Yet there is still the whole question of control. Many white integrated churches are unwilling to give blacks positions of authority in the church, and this suggests a kind of distrust, another one of those subtle ways that the inferiority of blacks comes through. The problem resides in the whole history of racism, which many people may not even be aware of."

"We've come a long way, but we have a long way to go."

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Southern Seminary Adds
Three New Faculty Members

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LOUISVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here has added three new faculty members, bringing the total of new faculty this fall to eight. Five others were elected earlier this year.

J. Ralph Hardee, associate director for home study education at the Seminary Extension Department of the six Southern Baptist seminaries, Nashville, Tenn., has been named as associate professor of church administration. Hardee has served in educational and music ministries in a number of churches and is the author of Teaching Guide For The Improvement of Sunday School, published by the Baptist Sunday School Board. He is a graduate of Mars Hill (N.C.) College, Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and Southern Seminary.

Olivia Temple Davis, a graduate of Roanoke (Va.) College, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Georgia State University, Atlanta, has been named assistant professor of religious education. The Virginia native has written for several denominational publications and has been active in a variety of Christian social ministries.

Ronald E. Boud, a professor at the Philadelphia College of Bible, is a new assistant professor of church music. A former minister of music, Boud is a graduate of the American Conservatory of Music, Chicago, and Southern Seminary, and has done advanced study at Juilliard School of Music, New York.

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Chaplains Association
Elects Hart President

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DENVER (BP)--Carl Hart, assistant director of the chaplaincy division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, was elected to a two-year term as president of the American Protestant Correctional Chaplains' Association (APCCA) during the group's annual meeting here.

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The APCCA is made up of more than 300 chaplains from the major Portestant denomination working in correctional settings, including city jails, federal penitentiaries, juvenile centers or administrative capacities. It is the only national association conducting certification for correctional chaplains on a professional level.

Hart, who has been first vice president and program chairman, succeeds Frederick Silver, a United Methodist who is former director of chaplaincy for the U. S. Bureau of Prisons.

The APCCA annual breakfast meeting, at which Hart was sworn in, featured an address by Charles Colson, former White House hatchet man who served a term in federal prison for his part in Watergate and who has since made a profession of Christian faith.

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Kendall Berry Will Retire
From SBC Foundation

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Kendall Berry, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Foundation since 1967, has announced his retirement, effective Dec. 31.

Berry, 69, will return to business interests in Blytheville, Ark., where he was a banker and investor when named to the foundation post. The Prentiss, Miss., native previously operated a retail clothing business and had served as editor and publisher of three weekly newspapers. He is a journalism graduate of the University of Missouri.

Active in Southern Baptist life before joining the foundation, Berry has served as both vice chairman and chairman of the SBC Executive Committee.

Ernest J. Moench, a retired Nashville business executive, will serve as chairman of an 11-person search committee, made up of the foundation's executive committee, to find Berry's successor. They hope to fill the position by Dec. 1.

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