



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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August 30, 1976

76-143

Retired Missionary Begins 550-Mile Jog to Richmond

By Robert Stanley

ATLANTA (BP)--Orvil W. Reid, 68-year-old missionary to Mexico renowned for his feats of strength, will jog from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board here Sept. 3 on the first lap of a 550-mile "Run for Life."

During appearances along the way to Richmond, Va., he hopes to win 1,000 people to Christ and collect at least \$60,000 for U. S. and world relief.

He plans to reach the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond by Oct. 11. That's the date when he and his wife, Alma, will officially retire after 38 years missionary service. Along with other retiring missionaries, they will be honored by the Foreign Mission Board at that time.

Each retiring missionary receives a bonus, and the Reids have already pledged \$1,000 of theirs as a contribution to suffering people of the world.

Like other proceeds from the run, the contribution will be divided, with 60 percent going to world relief through the Foreign Mission Board and 40 percent to needs in the U. S. through the Home Mission Board.

Executive director Arthur B. Rutledge of the HMB will offer a prayer of dedication as Reid starts his run down auxiliary roads of I-85 and along U.S. 29 through Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina to Richmond.

The lean and wiry missionary will jog about 20 miles a day, five days a week. He'll take each Thursday and Sunday off from running, but not from the arduous schedule of rallies, personal appearances, and demonstrations of physical fitness.

At rallies in churches, schools, prisons, stadiums and other locations, Reid will challenge youth and others to clean living, to acceptance of Christ as Savior, and to commitment to the will of God.

Publicity about the world relief offering has scared off some churches, Reid said, but he stressed that the giving will be strictly voluntary.

"I'll emphasize the importance of storehouse tithing through the local church," he explained, "and then I'll challenge people to give up something that would be harmful to them anyway--like cold drinks or candy--for the period of my run to help people around the world."

During his appearances Reid will perform feats of physical strength which seem incredible for a man his age.

In one such stunt he clasps his hands and challenges 32 men (equal to two football teams and two basketball teams) to pull his hands apart. He also accepts the same challenge with two cars or two horses doing the pulling.

Another feat allows someone with an 18-pound hammer to break a rock on Reid's stomach. Or he may recite poetry as an auto rests on his stomach.

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As dangerous as these may seem, Reid says he runs more risk in a wrestling challenge in which he gets down on his all fours and defies anyone to turn him over. His only requirement is that the challenger not catch his hands below the wrist or his feet below the ankle.

So far, he said, he's been turned over only once. And that was by a 185-pound wrestler who took him on after Reid had just outlasted another opponent. Reid weighs 150 pounds.

Expenses for Reid's distance jogging are being underwritten by a group of his friends so that all of the offering can go to relief, reports his general coordinator, E. Eugene Greer of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Reid will get no money or any type of honorarium for his run.

State Baptist Convention Brotherhood departments in Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia are coordinating plans in those states, and Fletcher Allen, associate editor of the Baptist Courier, Greenville, S. C., is working out arrangements in South Carolina.

Running groups are encouraged to run with Reid for portions of the route, Greer said. The jogger plans to run 6 to 10 miles in the mornings and also in the afternoons. Reid says this will be his longest continuous run. From Dec. 1 to Aug. 1 he ran 2,300 miles and also received the special Bicentennial patch from the National Joggers Association for 1,776 miles of jogging.

"I had a little problem with my heel recently, and I went to the doctor thinking it might be a spur," he said. "But the doctor said it was just a bruise. I think I'm in good shape."

Reid had done some wrestling with an Indian friend while a student at Oklahoma Baptist University, but he really didn't discover the extent of his physical powers until after he and Mrs. Reid became missionaries to Mexico in 1938.

When they arrived they found the churches had been closed, and Reid looked around him to see how they could have a Christian witness. Soon he noticed that crowds always gathered whenever someone came to a town to perform some kind of stunt.

If these people could do it for money, he reasoned, why couldn't he do it for the Lord?

He started with the feat of defying anyone to turn him over when he was on his all fours, and then gradually developed other stunts. During the performances, he had a chance to tell his audiences that it was Jesus who had sent him to Mexico and that Jesus also loved each of them.

Since that time Reid has given demonstrations in 20 countries on four continents. He is the author of six books in English and four in Spanish.

As part of his campaign for clean living, he founded the Mexican Baptist Anti-alcohol Campaign. In addition to his general evangelism work in Mexico, he also served at the Baptist student home in Guadalajara and handled print shop and good will center assignments.

Even after retiring, the Reids don't expect to slow down too much. Already they're getting ready for a tour of East Africa which the Foreign Mission Board is planning early in 1977.

(B P) Photo will be sent to state Baptist papers

Team Effort Called for
On Biomedical Ethics

By James Lee Young

Baptist Press
8/30/76

NASHVILLE (BP)--"This is the first time I have been asked to express my views as a Christian" on biomedical ethics, commented an ethics and theology professor from Texas Medical Center's Institute of Religion, Houston.

Indeed, while perhaps not the first opportunity for some, it was the first nationwide "Biomedical Ethics Conference" known held by Southern Baptists, and was attended by medical, clergy and academic professionals from 12 states.

Speaker Kenneth L. Vaux, who said he has addressed numerous biomedical gatherings of government, academic and civic origins, was expressing a growing concern among Baptists and other denominations--how to provide input with the medical and other professions on, literally, "Who is to live or die, how and why?"

A thread ran through the two-day event in which medical, legal and ethical experts--however they disagreed or agreed on other issues--were together recognizing a need for cooperation and input from all factions.

"Some people would say," for example, "that Christianity has nothing to do with biomedical ethics," said Harry Hollis, director of family and special moral concerns, Southern Baptist Convention Christian Life Commission, which sponsored the conference.

"They would argue that these are medical, biological and genetic problems. Such a view of life is too narrow, too provincial, too isolated from the wholeness of reality. It fails to take into account the need for an inter-disciplinary approach to these issues . . .

"On the other hand, there are those who say theology provides all we need to deal with these issues. These people cite a scripture text and rush off, leaving the doctor, the biologist, the nurse and the geneticist to deal with these issues."

Purpose of the conference was three-fold, Hollis said. One purpose was to bring together insights from Christianity and the sciences, to relate Christian ethics, however controversial, to crucial issues "for which there are no easy answers."

A second purpose was to identify some major problems related to biomedical ethics, which Hollis said the church has by and large neglected.

Third, the conference was to "bear witness to the fact that the church can get involved in helping people find solutions to biomedical ethics problems.

Leadoff speaker Daniel B. McGee cited the many areas that concern biomedical ethics--including abortion, genetic modification, gender selection, behavior modification, organ transplants, artificial insemination, prolongation of life.

"These are examples of the practices that have alternately created optimistic astonishment and fearful anxiety in the soul of contemporary humanity . . . Our recent and tragic experience with the Philadelphia Legionnaires is one of many reminders that we aren't Gods . . . Even our best efforts are marred by our own corruptions, weakness and ignorance," said McGee, associate professor of religion and environmental studies, Baylor University, Waco, Tex.

While the Christian faith affirms humankind's role in the making of history as "co-workers with God" to accomplish the good he wills, medicine has been cursed with a "God of the Gaps theology," McGee observed.

"This view holds that all areas of life beyond human understanding or control comprise God's territory--a turf from which humankind is forever banned."

But, today, McGee noted, "humankind's capacity for controlling life has greatly increased. How do we respond? . . . Christ calls us to be faithful stewards using responsibly that with which we have been entrusted. We stand today a generation remarkably endowed with capacities and opportunities only dreamed of in the past . . . We are God's stewards . . . We have been entrusted with the miracles of modern medicine.

"There are two ways a steward can fail. One is to avoid responsibility . . . The other is to misuse opportunities and possibilities.

"I see a God," said McGee, "who says to his servants, 'Make medicine serve human needs and nothing else.'"

McGee called for a team approach to determining biomedical ethics. ". . . All of our decision-making must be communal. There is no place for Lone Rangers . . . We must be driven to the kind of cooperative effort described in I Cor. 12:14-26. Here, no one organ can pretend to be the whole body.

"Thus, we must develop procedures that deliberately secure input from as many sources of insight as possible," McGee said. This includes physicians, clergy and theologians, plus such people as social workers, economists, lawyers, all members of the health care teams, and others.

He stressed the establishing of priorities for immediate attention--such as world health and nutrition--rather than overemphasis on the future. And McGee cited also the need for Christians to realize, "We cannot assume that the state exists to enforce the moral conscience of the church upon all society .

"You and I must make a clear distinction between that behavior you and I as Christians would defend as moral and that behavior we would force on everyone by the power of the state."

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Abortion Issue Has Shifted
To Churches, Theologian Says

Baptist Press
8/30/76

By Floyd A. Craig

NASHVILLE (BP)--The issue of abortion has shifted from the courts to the churches, a Southern Baptist theologian declared here.

"The message to churchmen is clear: now that abortion is legal, the task of education regarding the moral issue in abortion must be dealt with," said Paul D. Simmons, associate professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

"The forum has been shifted from the courts to the churches concerning the relation of fetal life to human personhood."

Speaking to a Biomedical Ethics Conference sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Simmons told the participants from 12 states that churches should not try to tell the courts what laws should be passed, "but to shape the moral understanding of American society concerning the value of the fetus."

Simmons urged Southern Baptist leaders to take a client-centered or pastoral approach when the question of abortion is raised. "Debates are usually concerned with 'legality' or 'rights' or 'protection of fetal life' or amendments and due process," said Simmons. "Seldom have such moralisms permitted 'caring' for the client by acknowledging the liberty of conscience and freedom of responsible choice which are basic ingredients in the meaning of person.

"The great temptation," warned Simmons, "is to do the greater wrong--act as the moralistic external judge--ascribing rightness or wrongness to decisions and actions past and present.

"The 'mote-hunters' are alive and doing well but leaving behind a veritable path strewn with guilt-ridden clients who made the mistake of seeking counsel from well-meaning, but misdirected moralists," said Simmons. "It is not the task of either the church or its ministers to tell parishioners what they may or may not do but to enable them to experience grace in the things they feel they must do."

Simmons suggested that before Southern Baptists began making quick moral judgments that they should have some experience with individuals who face the dilemma of abortion and to recognize "the place of personal conscience in moral decision-making."

"Since men will never know the threat and terror of childbirth," said Simmons, "nor be faced with pregnancy--wanted or otherwise--they are poor arbiters in the abortion debate. Even so, men are the power brokers--politically, legally and morally--when it comes to setting the terms for abortion. Fortunately, the Supreme Court has moved to recognize the inequity confronted by women.

"According to the court," reported Simmons, "women have been treated as unequals even to the fetus in securing rights to medical care. The fervid concern for 'life' has failed the most obvious and undebatable instance of life--the woman."

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"This concern has been enforced and extended by the court's subsequent ruling," observed Simmons, "that the woman need not have the permission of husband or parents to request abortion. This is a wise and supportable position since the uniqueness and distinction of pregnancy is hers alone."

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Doctors Face Conflict of
Interest, Chaplain Charges

Baptist Press
8/30/76

NASHVILLE (BP)--A growing conflict of interest between medical doctors and investor-owned hospitals in the United States may make patients the loser, a Baptist hospital chaplain charged here during a conference on biomedical ethics sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Chaplain William C. Mays of Baptist Hospital, Nashville, told the conferees that his comments may be very unpopular but that he was going to make them anyway.

"I'm getting more and more concerned about the conflict of interests that I see going on in the medical communities all across our nation. What I'm talking about is the investor-type hospitals, corporations that are springing up here and in other cities, that are building new hospitals and buying others.

"I think there is some very positive good that has come out of this movement," observed Mays. "This is an American free enterprise undertaking in the best sense of the term. And because these people want to turn a profit for their stockholders, they are going to learn the very best methods of delivering health care. From this point, I think it is very good, but I would raise one questionable issue with you which bothers me and that is physicians have become major stockholders in some of these corporations.

"I suggest to you," said the Nashville chaplain, "that it becomes a conflict of interests when a doctor must decide whether or not he should admit a patient to a hospital which he partially owns or to one in which he owns no stock.

"There comes the temptation as to where to send the patient--where he gets the best care, where the best equipment is available, where the best kinds of treatment are held--or whether you send the patient where ultimately you help yourself."

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W. Va. Baptists
Promote Walls

Baptist Press
8/30/76

ST. ALBANS, W. Va. (BP)--Jackson C. Walls has been promoted to the directorship of the division of religious education of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists.

Walls became an associate in the division on Nov. 1, 1975. When Tom Lang, division director, resigned to return to the pastorate January 1, 1976, Walls continued to serve in the associate position, but assumed all the duties of the entire division as well as the editorship of the West Virginia Southern Baptist, which Lang had also held.

An alumnus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, he was minister of education and youth in churches in Kentucky, Georgia and Ohio before joining the West Virginia Convention staff.

The Springfield, Ohio, native spent 12 years in business, including five years as district supervisor in the circulation department of Springfield Newspapers, Inc., before entering the ministry.

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E. H. Westmoreland
Dies in Houston

Baptist Press
8/30/76

HOUSTON (BP)--E. Hermond Westmoreland, a retired pastor and Southern Baptist denominational leader, died in Houston at the age of 70.

Westmoreland retired as pastor of South Main Church in Houston in 1971 after serving as pastor for almost 34 years. He served the church as minister at large after retirement.

During his pastorate there, he led the church from a membership of 2,334 to 5,665 and a budget of \$66,630 to \$927,747.

Denominational service included membership on the Foreign Mission Board, chairman of trustees for Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, vice president of Southern Baptist Convention and trustee for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Before going to the Houston church in 1938, he served churches in Monticello, Ark. and Leland, Miss. He was a native of Arkansas.

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