

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Baptists and Buddhists
Hold Dialogue in Hawaii**

HONOLULU (BP)--The first dialogue between Southern Baptists and Buddhists was held here under joint sponsorship of the Hawaii Baptist Convention and the Honpa Hongwanji (Buddhist) Mission.

The dialogue drew about 60 participants--half Baptist half Buddhist--to the day-and-a-half meeting, held in one of the temples of the Buddhist Mission and in Nuuanu Baptist Church in Honolulu.

"The purpose of the dialogue was to bring representative Buddhists together with representative Baptists to discuss our representative faiths," said Glenn Igleheart, head of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department.

"We have had dialogues with Catholics, with Jews and with Moslems, but never with representatives of an oriental religion," he said. "The experience was interesting, because with Jews and Moslems we start with the same premise, Jews don't believe God came in the person of Jesus Christ and Moslems don't believe Jesus was the last of the prophets, but at least we are talking about the same God.

"With Buddhists, we are talking with people with a totally different world view."

Igleheart said the dialogue centered on the practical aspects of the two faiths, rather than the theological and theoretical.

C. Brownlow Hastings, assistant director of the interfaith witness department, commented: "One of the things which came through to me was that what we already knew about Buddhism before the dialogues had to do with its origins and history. We had not learned about the developments which have taken place in the versions of Buddhism which have come into contact with western culture."

Igleheart explained that Buddhism--at least the particular "denomination" of Buddhism involved in the dialogues--adopted the Methodist versions of church organization and structure when it arrived in Hawaii. Honpa Hongwanji Buddhism has a bishop, assigns its ministers--not priests--to temples and has the Episcopal structure.

Bishop Yohaiki Fujitani participated in the discussions, as did Edmund Walker, executive secretary for Hawaii Baptists.

"There has been considerable adaptation on the part of the Buddhists," Hastings continued. "I was surprised at their stress on religious education. All of their children are more or less born into Buddhism, but they emphasize religious education, particularly for the teenagers."

Igleheart said the Buddhist leaders were very interested in learning methods and materials used by Baptists in religious education.

One of the results of the dialogue, he said, was that "we learned. We gained information about each other that we did not have. One of the purposes of such dialogue is to help people talk to each other . . . to understand each other."

He noted two Baptist ministers and two Buddhist ministers came from the island of Maui to participate. Although one of the Baptists and one of the Buddhists have parking lots adjacent to each other, neither had ever talked about their faith before the dialogue.

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"This was not a conversion-oriented situation, Igleheart said. "But it was an occasion to provide an opportunity to present a clear witness to our faith."

He added that the Baptists involved "received training for future engagements. We did not see any conversions here but the pastor of one of our Southern Baptist churches here will see more than 100 Buddhists in the next few weeks. He will be better equipped to talk to them than he was."

Dorothy Pryor, executive secretary for Georgia Woman's Missionary Union, participated in the dialogue as an observer.

"This was the first such experience I have had," she said. I've met with international students before. But these were leaders of their faith.

"I was surprised to see how satisfied they appear to be with their faith . . . how deeply satisfied and committed and peaceful.

"I think we have to present a more positive witness about what we have: that its something they don't have."

The dialogue was presented in an ornate temple and in the Baptist church. One participant was a woman Buddhist minister.

Igleheart said the Buddhists were very interested in the water baptism ceremony, and pastor Joe Sanders of the church host church demonstrated for them.

Kate Gruver, assistant director of the interfaith witness department, noted: "I think it was most effective, for a first effort. I think we opened doors--doors that had not been open before--and that the stage is now set for further conversation and dialogue at a local level."

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

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Citizen Participation Urged
On Community Task Forces

Baptist Press
9/30/76

By Jim Newton

MEMPHIS (BP)--A plea for Christian citizens to actively study new federal regulations affecting social issues was issued during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Social Service Association (SBSSA).

David L. Levine, professor of social work at the University of Georgia in Athens, told the social workers from Baptist churches, associations, conventions and institutions that Christians have a tremendous obligation to participate in community task forces reviewing new legislation.

Levine asked how many of the 65 registered participants from 16 states had served on any government task force or attended hearings on legislation affecting social issues. Not a single participant raised his or her hand.

Levine explained that whenever Congress enacts legislation changing laws on social welfare programs, public hearings and local task forces are created in each community to help draft regulations applying the legislation to the local situation. He used as his prime example the new Title 20 law on the Social Security Act, which calls for citizen participation in applying the regulations.

Levine pointed out that Christians who have a concern for social issues have a special stake in these community hearings and task forces, and that they should seek at the earliest possible moment to become involved in process. The law requires that the public media (newspapers, radio-TV) announce in advance the dates of such hearings and creation of such task forces.

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In another speech to the Social Service Association, James Basden, secretary of the Texas Baptist Human Welfare Commission, offered practical suggestions on "What To Do Until the Government Leaves Us Alone."

Basden warned against taking a defensive stance, suggesting instead that Christians attempt to influence development of legislation, codes and standards at the earliest stages in the process.

"We are in a day when a Christian cannot be preoccupied with his own immediate ministry and his institution only," Basden said. "Therefore, early action and input are required."

"Timing is of extreme importance," he added. "Once the machinery of a new (government) system or program is set in motion, there will be little patience or consideration for the reaction of those who observed passively during the formative stages."

Basden also suggested that Christians should not wait for the government to be the change agent in society.

"All changes do not have to come from the force of the government regulatory process, and to wait for this process to compel us to effect changes is a first class cop-out," Basden declared.

In the association's closing address, Clovis Brantley, associate in the department of Christian social ministries for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, urged the Baptist social workers to be bold in their relationships with government agencies and leaders who make key decisions regarding social programs.

Some Baptists feel the best approach is to "go in the back door" by talking to some Baptist layman who personally knows the key government leader, Brantley said.

"But that's the wrong approach. You ought to go in the front door, as a concerned, professional Christian social worker, and tell the government leader what Baptists are doing, and what our concerns are.

"They will welcome you when you go in boldly through the front door and let them know your concerns and what you are trying to do to help them," said Brantley.

In its annual business session, the association voted to create two task forces.

One would study the possibility of developing standards of competency for individual social work positions in Southern Baptist agencies.

The other would study the possibility of establishing a social service placement program for members of the association.

Elected president of the association was Bob Brackney, pastor-director of Jefferson Street Baptist Chapel in Louisville. He succeeds Darrel Watkins, professor of social work at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

Ann Daniel, a social worker at Sellers Baptist Home and Adoption Center in New Orleans, was elected vice-president. And Beverly Hammack, associate in the department of Christian social ministries for the Home Mission Board, was elected secretary.

SBSSA is a fellowship organization for persons involved and/or interested in social ministry and related education in Southern Baptist life. The association, which met in the Center for Continuing Education at Memphis State University, will meet next year in New Orleans, Sept. 25-28.

'Screaming Demon'
Became 'Lamplighter'

By Theo Sommerkamp

ENGLEWOOD, Ohio (BP)--Screaming Demon changed his handle to Lamplighter after he modulated with Friar Tuck.

Friar Tuck is more orthodoxly known as Wayne Nelson, pastor, First Baptist Church, Englewood. The title adopted from the tales of Robin Hood, however, is the handle (or name) by which he is acknowledged on CB radio.

Screaming Demon is one of seven persons Friar Tuck has led to a saving faith in Christ after meeting them on the air waves.

Following his encounter with Christ, Screaming Demon felt the handle, Lamplighter, would be more appropriate.

Six of the seven converts have been baptized in the Englewood Church. Another baker's dozen have joined the church as an indirect result of the CB ministry of Friar Tuck. Most of them were members of converts' families.

Nelson regards CB as a vital extension of his outreach and visitation.

"I am meeting people in the church community via CB radio whom I would never have found otherwise," he declared.

Friar Tuck has counseled many more who either belong to churches of other denominations, or whom he hopes will join the Englewood church later on.

Nelson arranges over the CB channel to meet individuals in their homes or at a convenient coffee shop to talk about whatever problems they might have.

Personal problems are never discussed over the air, he says, since it has more or less replaced the party-line telephone as a medium for conversation (modulation).

Friar Tuck refers to the Lord as "my boss" in his air time encounters. "Those who know me already realize I mean the Lord when I say, 'boss,'" he says.

Immediate identification as a preacher would, he believes, spoil his opportunity to develop a rapport with new handles (or broadcasters).

"Remember me to your boss" is the way his CB contacts have of saying, "Pray for me."

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CORRECTION In the (BP) mailing of 9-29-76, headlined "Chile & the Junta," in graf 14, line 1, the Chilean Supreme Court President's full name is Jose Maria Eyzaguirre Echeverria, although he should still be referred to as Eyzaguirre in subsequent references. Thanks--Baptist Press.