

She Saw Men Made by God
On a Ship Made by Men

OLYMPIA, Wash. (BP)--The Russian sailor poked through the barn, even the hay loft; walked around the fields; petted the horse and examined the farm equipment.

He ate at the family dinner table; watched television in the comfortable, homey old family room. And now it was time to return to his ship.

As he stooped to enter the car, he stopped, turned and walked back to Fern Powers.

A middle-aged man with a pleasant, lined face and graying hair, he put his hands on Mrs. Powers' shoulders, looked her in the eye. In halting English, he said: "I love you."

Fern Powers--wife/mother-of-five/grandmother-of-one/ career woman--has been working in ministries to international seaman since 1971. She and other members of First Baptist Church in Lacey, Wash., have made contact with more than 1,000 seamen, many of whom return to port every two or three months.

She speaks no foreign languages. Yet with a Berlitz dictionary, a parallel Bible, or no words at all, she, friend Carole Rodgers, and several others articulate love that cuts through cultural mores and penetrates Eastern theology and Iron Curtain atheism.

Many sailors have, as one Chinese said, "made the march for the Christ" as a result of contacts made by Lacey church members and fellowship offered by the Powers family.

Their home is an open door and it isn't unusual to see a Japanese man curled up on the Powers' couch, watching television or drawing, Chinese sailors playing games in her living room or South Koreans taking turns riding the Powers' palomino.

A Vietnamese young man, homeless in the United States, lives in the Powers' basement. Fern also sponsors, along with the church, a Vietnamese and a Cambodian family, both living in the area.

"Do you ever have anything stolen?" people often ask her. "No," she replies, "What do I have that's valuable? What do I have that's as important as telling these seamen about Christ?"

"I think," says Harold Hitt, a friend and advisor who directs language missions for the Northwest Baptist Convention, "this ministry has the potential of being the greatest tool for evangelizing the world that we have.

"The seamen are coming from all over the world. They are going all over the world. If we could reach enough of them with the gospel, we could have several thousand free missionaries."

He's convinced enough of the ministry's merit, he says, to have encouraged the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to contribute about \$50 a month to help defray expenses. "In terms of dollars and cents," he feels, "it's probably the best money we've spent, overall."

Mrs. Powers who works full-time as an assistant accountant for the county, became interested in the seamen ministry several years ago when the 600-foot "Kenryu Maru," the "world's largest logging ship" docked in Port Olympia.

"We went aboard to see a ship made by men," Mrs. Powers recalls. "Instead, we saw men, made by God, in need of the story of Christ."

Her early attempts to invite Japanese sailors into her home were met with blank looks and the resounding answer: "No speakee English. No speakee English."

Undaunted, she returned several times, until finally locating a translator. The first meeting with the seamen bordered on a fiasco. Miss Rodgers recalls that they "sat in a circle--and smiled. Everybody was nervous. The next attempt was more successful, she adds. "We played records, drank tea and looked at maps until midnight."

One of the most compelling--and difficult--ministries is to Russian seamen.

Once, when her dining room was surrounded by Russians, Mrs. Powers bowed her head for prayer. After the amen, she looked up to see Boris, the political officer, staring angrily. As the others began eating, Boris continued to stare. Since then, she has been careful not to offend the men.

Communication with the Russians, and others who do not speak English fluently, is an exercise in patience and persistence. When she attempted to invite a group of Russians for a trip to snowy Mt. Rainier, her simple invitation was implemented by hand motions, hand scrawled maps and continual references to the dictionary.

With strong support from Lacey pastor Harry Hannah, Mrs. Powers has enlisted a number of church members who provide cars and food--such as turkey and dressing, sandwiches, pies, fresh breads and cakes--for the outing.

The group picks up the sailors--Russians, Koreans, Japanese, depending on the ships in port--and drives to craggy Mt. Rainier, where they eat. Often, they enjoy the thrill of sliding down the snowy mountainside on tractor-size, rubber inner-tubes and large plastic sheets.

One of Mrs. Powers' favorite memories is of a Russian officer, who had been "excitingly open in their conversations" being playfully pulled and pushed by his men to an inner-tube. Then, laughing, his furry hat pulled tight on his head, he was launched downward, boots extended and earflaps flying in the wind.

Several months after that trip, the Russian ship returned to port. The officer and half-dozen seamen again visited the Powers' farm, but this time he also requested a tour in town, including the railroad station. Mrs. Powers also took him by the church but couldn't take him in. The door was locked.

When they got back to the car, the political officer told her, "I don't go to church...I'm a Communist."

After dinner, on the way back to the ship, the political officer told Mrs. Powers he didn't think she could be a Communist. "You go to church," he told her. Later, when he had told the Americans goodbye and had turned toward his ship, he hesitated and then came back. "I love you," he said haltingly to Mrs. Powers.

Confusion over language and customs occurred once when Mrs. Powers invited three Buddhists--David, Albert and Alex--to church on Sunday evening, and afterward to her home for dinner.

The three could not understand much of the service, and to her surprise, it concluded with a Lord's Supper observance. Looking hungrily at the meager fare of grape juice and crackers, which he thought was the long-awaited meal, Albert got tickled. Soon all three Chinese seamen were laughing.

When Mrs. Powers explained the significance, Albert was horrified at his earlier actions. "Have I offended your God?" he asked. "No," Mrs. Powers replied. "Ours is a God of Love."

Albert responded: "Then I want to be a Christian."

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Accentuate the 'Visible' In
Giving, Sullivan Urges

NASHVILLE (BP)--The president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) challenged its leadership to enhance the visibility of what the denomination's Cooperative Program unified budget does in the lives of individuals and institutions.

James L. Sullivan of Nashville, addressing a Cooperative Program Fellowship Luncheon attended by state and national SBC leadership, said the Cooperative Program is "an invisible vehicle" through which Southern Baptists finance a worldwide program of missions to win people to Christ and minister to their spiritual and physical needs.

"It's difficult to promote giving in a visible way . . . Our dilemma is dealing with the visibles of our program of giving," he said, challenging his listeners to keep their communications about the Cooperative Program "visible and simple" by conveying its "heartbeat" and humanizing and personalizing the "finished products" of the ministries it finances.

"We must teach others to give . . . show them a vision of a state, a nation and a world in need," he declared. "Tithing is not man's scheme for getting money but God's plan for saving men from the deadly sin of covetousness."

And, he declared, giving must be conveyed as a systematic process--not a hit and miss, spasmodic effort. "When you do something spasmodically, the spasms get fewer and fewer."

Sullivan added that giving must be something more than only "giving until it hurts . . . When a person gives only to when it hurts, it's not enough," he said. "I know some athletes who practice only enough to stay sore. You need to give until you can experience its joy."

Citing the SBC's plan of "Bold Mission" advance, which seeks to evangelize the world in the closing years of the 20th Century, the retired head of the denomination's Sunday School Board called for Baptists to develop a joyful spirit of giving which will make the Bold Mission advance a success.

Porter Routh, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, who also addressed the luncheon sponsored by the SBC Stewardship Commission, reported that 22 of the 33 state Baptist conventions, meeting last year in annual session, responded to the Bold Mission challenge by increasing the percentage of the state Cooperative Program receipts they give to the national Cooperative Program.

Routh also expressed appreciation for giving through the Cooperative Program in January, which became the first month in SBC history to record more than \$5 million in national Cooperative Program receipts.

Earlier the denomination's Executive Committee voted to recommend a \$63.4 million total national Cooperative Program budget for 1977-78, subject to approval at the SBC annual meeting in June in Kansas City.

The budget includes \$55,080,000 in basic operating and capital funds needs of SBC agencies and another \$8,320,000 in "bold advance" funds to finance unmet needs of the SBC's worldwide missions program beyond the basic budget.

Baptists Urged to Support
Good Camp Standards

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists were urged here to support the development of good and reasonable health and safety regulations for church and youth camps in their states.

Bob Banks, director of the program section of the denomination's Brotherhood Commission, also called upon Southern Baptists to become involved in developing health and safety regulations to help insure good and reasonable standards.

Banks suggested the stance on youth camp legislation at a meeting of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee in response to request from a messenger at the 1976 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting for the denomination to work for reasonable camp safety standards.

Through churches, associations, state Baptist conventions and national agencies, Southern Baptists operate hundreds of camps throughout the nation.

Legislation which would strongly affect these camps has been introduced in the House of Representatives and Senate in Washington.

The position on camp standards for Southern Baptists was proposed jointly by representatives of the Brotherhood Commission, Woman's Missionary Union, and Sunday School Board.

Banks said Southern Baptists also should inform themselves of existing regulations and good camp safety practices available from state health agencies, camping organizations, and federal agencies.

The report on standards leaned toward state rather than federal regulations because of "the problem of federal inspections, proliferation of regulations and the difference in camping needs from state to state."

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Southeastern Seminary
Enlarges, Renovates Library

Baptist Press
2/23/77

WAKE FOREST, N. C. (BP)--Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary here will dedicate an enlarged and renovated library facility March 15 as part of the Founders' Day observance at the seminary.

Librarian H. Eugene McLeod said the new facility "offers numerous functional improvements as well as an increase of 60 percent in usable space to a capacity of 200,000 volumes."

Commenting on the financing of the library construction, seminary president, W. Randall Lolley, said, "No extremely large gift made it possible, but through their gifts to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program, church members all over America had a part in its completion. Alumni have given more than \$50,000 in special drives over the last two years."

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Louisiana College Given
240 Acre Tract of Land

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PINEVILLE, La. (BP)--A Louisiana man has donated 240 acres of land to Louisiana College, according to Robert L. Lynn, president of the Baptist school.

James L. Polson of DeRidder made the presentation of the tract of timber land in Vernon Parish reportedly because one of his former school teachers, a graduate of Louisiana College, "was very kind and helpful" to him during his early education.

Polson, a bachelor, also made a similar gift to Mississippi State University.

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The land given to Louisiana College is presently being leased by Calcasieu Paper Company, Inc. for collection and sale of timber.

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Students, Instructor
Cited for Heroism

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FORT WORTH (BP)--Two Dallas Baptist College ROTC students and their instructor have been cited for heroism here after they landed a helicopter and rushed into a burning trailer home to save a man's life.

Tony Nowak and John Crynes and their commandant, Capt. John Ross, were returning to the campus in a helicopter when they spotted the fire. They landed and pulled the unconscious man to safety. Adolph Perthius, an ROTC staff member at the college, assisted in the rescue.

After administering treatment for burns and shock they flew him to John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth.

The men will receive a "Valorous Civil Action Award" from the city of Fort Worth. The two students have been put in for an "Act of Heroism Award" from the U. S. Department of Army, according to David A. Risinger, former press representative for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, who joined the college Feb. 1 as director of public relations.

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Wrapup

Exec. Committee Sets
Budget, Conducts Business

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NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Executive Committee recommended a 1977-78 national Cooperative Program unified budget of more than \$63 million and conducted a large volume of business during the committee's February meeting here.

The Cooperative Program goal of \$63.4 million, which includes \$55,080,000 in basic operating and capital needs of SBC agencies and another \$8,320,000 in "bold advance" funds, will be presented to the 1977 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) meeting in June in Kansas City.

The committee also recommended a Convention Operating Budget of \$986,500, which includes operating budgets of the Executive Committee, the annual SBC meeting, contributions to the Baptist World Alliance and other items.

In a series of other actions, the Executive Committee:

--Recommended to the Convention

a change in procedures to release ballot tabulations on issues voted on at the annual SBC meetings but not on election of officers unless requested by "a majority of the messengers voting." The action came in response to a request by a messenger to the 1976 SBC meeting that all vote totals be released.

--Voted to refer back the Executive Committee's response to a study Committee of Seven on Executive Committee operation for further study and presentation at the committee's June meeting in Kansas City.

--Voted to recommend changes in language in convention constitution and bylaws, subject to SBC approval, to alter gender designations to conform to practice that men and women are eligible to serve as officers and board members and benefit from SBC programs.

--Approved a recommendation that SBC Bylaw 20, which sets membership totals a state must have before being eligible to seat representatives on denominational boards, not be changed. But the action called for the Executive Committee to "invite fraternal representatives from the state conventions not large enough to qualify under Bylaw 20 to attend the two major meetings each year." It encouraged SBC agencies to either consider or continue in the same practice.

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--Voted to change the names of Executive Committee subcommittees to reflect their duties more accurately--Program Subcommittee to Program-Budget Subcommittee, Finance Subcommittee to Business and Finance Subcommittee and Administrative Subcommittee to Administrative and Convention Arrangements Subcommittee.

--Voted in response to the now defunct study Committee of 15, concerned with vesting and portability of denominational retirement plans, to suggest guidelines to SBC agencies based on wording of the Employment Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). Guidelines urge full vesting after 10 years of continuous denominational service in a Southern Baptist church, association, state convention, agency, auxiliary or Executive Committee--except for agencies (mainly the Sunday School Board) bound by law to a different retirement plan. That would include 10 continuous years at one or more Southern Baptist organizations.

It also suggested "joint and survivor annuity, provided the participant is married at retirement, and does not elect in writing to give up the survivor annuity." And it called for the survivor annuity to be not less than one-half the annuity payable to the participant while annuitant and spouse are both living.

--Recommended Los Angeles as the 1981 site of the SBC annual meeting, subject to approval of the SBC, and asked Executive Committee staff to develop, in cooperation with the SBC registration secretary, "a pre-registration procedure to be implemented for the convention in Kansas City in 1977, and in Atlanta in 1978, on a trial basis."

--Recommended that the Executive Committee authorize up to \$2,500 from the Convention Operating Reserve to use in presentation of the budget report to the convention in Kansas City; and that an amount up to \$1,000 be provided the SBC Committee on Order of Business for a special program at the Kansas City convention.

--Voted to expand the range in the Executive Committee's salary structure and make adjustments in its retirement program.

--Approved two requests of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary that it be allowed to transfer \$125,000 in capital needs funds, previously approved for student housing, to the refurbishing of Carey Hall, a residence for single women; and that the seminary's housing corporation be allowed to borrow up to \$1 million for construction of student and faculty housing and purchase adjacent property as it becomes available.

--Approved a request of the Sunday School Board to publish a new periodical, Living With Teenagers, to help parents and others in working with teenagers. It will appear in October, 1978.

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Baptists Urge Revitalized
Hungarian Mission Effort

Baptist Press
2/23/77

ATLANTA (BP)--Plans to revitalize Baptist mission work among Hungarians were made during a meeting at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board here.

"Work among Hungarian-speaking people has been going down every year," said Alexander Haraszti, chairman of the missions and literary committee of the Hungarian Baptist Union of America (HBUA).

Haraszti, a physician from Jonesboro, Ga., said there were 48 HBUA-affiliated churches in Canada, the United States and South America in 1956.

"Now, there are but 14," he said.

According to Jim Lewis, assistant director of the Home Mission Board's language missions department, an effort will be made April 4-7 to revitalize Baptist work among a large concentration of Hungarian-speaking people in St. Louis.

"There has been a church in East St. Louis, and we hope to use those contacts to begin the work there again," Lewis said, adding that the effort will be led by John Hunter, a Home Board missionary serving Hungarian congregations in San Jose and Alhambra, both in California.

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Eight of the HBUA churches are in the United States: Alhambra and San Jose, Calif.; Palm Bay, Fla.; Bridgeport, Conn.; New Brunswick, N. J.; and in New York City, Cleveland, and Detroit.

The other churches are in Toronto, Leask and Kipling, Saskatchewan, and Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Buenos Aires and Platanos, Argentina. Another affiliated church is in Victoria, Australia.

Haraszti said about 4,000 persons are members of the union. Not all of them, however, participate in a Hungarian language church because of distance and unavailability.

Haraszti, for instance, is a member of First Baptist Church of College Park, Ga., a suburb of Atlanta. He remains a member and an official of the union, however.

"One of the reasons we have gone from 48 member churches to 14 is because of a lack of trained ministers who speak Hungarian," Haraszti said.

Because of the shortage, Haraszti was able to work out an agreement with the government of Hungary for a "borrowing of ministers program."

Three of the ministers serving Hungarian congregations have been obtained through the program, which was worked out with the assistance of Fandor Talotay, president of the Council of Free Churches of Hungary, and Imre Mrklos, president of the State Office for Church Affairs in Hungary.

"Without them we could not have obtained ministers under this program," Haraszti said, adding that under the arrangements the ministers come for four years and then return to Hungary.

The three ministers currently serving through the "borrowing of ministers program" are Janos Viczian in Toronto; Lazlo Gerzsenyi in Cleveland and Andras Herjeczki in Detroit. Two others are being considered for pastorates here, but have not been able to come because of a misunderstanding, Haraszti said.

Haraszti, who came to the United States in 1956, said he has "spent countless hours of time, a large amount of money . . . (and) much energy . . ." in his effort to keep the program going.

As an emigre, himself, he says he understands the need for such ministry. "When persons come to a new country, they are like trees being transplanted. They need a set of new roots. That can be a devastating experience. They need pastoral care then more than anyone," he said. And, he added, even people who have lived in this country for many years, find it difficult to get needed spiritual nurture apart from their "mother tongue."

"Often," he said, "it is not the same."