



FEATURES
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**Singapore Church Doesn't
Want a Full-time Pastor**

By Jim Newton

SINGAPORE (BP)--Grace Baptist Church here doesn't have a full-time pastor, and they don't want one.

Instead, they have nine lay pastors who share responsibility for leading four different congregations, all part of the same church.

The church puts stress on talents and gifts among the laity. It wasn't always that way. Organized in 1957, Grace depended on Ernie Poulson, dean of the interdenominational Singapore Bible College to do most of the preaching for a number of years.

But in 1974, Poulson issued a call for laymen to "come forward," offer their services to the church and preach the gospel.

"Nobody came for two weeks," he recalled. "Then one-by-one, they came until eight men responded to the call." Recently, a ninth lay preacher joined the group, and three others are taking training on preaching techniques.

Grace church's nine lay pastors have a wide spectrum of backgrounds--teacher, banker, computer expert, accountants, salesmen, government food inspector.

Two of the men, Lawrence Khong and Joshua Lam, quit their secular jobs and are working full-time on the church staff as assistant pastors.

Poulson sees his role as that of equipper but not as pastor or preacher. "I don't do any of the preaching, except in case of emergency," he said.

He refuses to allow the church to call him pastor. "I'm just a church counselor. I work full-time at the Bible college. The laymen have to do it, there is no choice. And if there is ever one pastor, it will be one of our own people," he said.

He does help the nine lay pastors, however, in sermon preparation and in dealing with difficult problems.

On Monday evenings, the lay pastors and their wives gather in a home for prayer, Bible study and sharing. They evaluate the previous Sunday's preaching and worship services, discuss mistakes and how to correct them, and make plans for the following Sunday's services.

Sundays are busy at Grace Baptist. The church's main worship center is in a former shop house (a place of business in a shopping center). Grace holds four worship services each Sunday, and three Sunday School programs--two in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Although the church has more than 300 active members, only 160 can squeeze into the building for worship. Services are in Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese dialects, and in English.

Two worship services are held each Sunday in English and Cantonese in the shop house location, one in Mandarin at a high-rise flat owned by the church, and one in English at the YMCA

Much of the Sunday evening services are devoted to a testimony period when people share what God is doing in their lives, Poulson said.

The shop house location, near a major university and medical center, attracts students, faculty and physicians, but many church members are poor people from the neighborhood.

The church is concerned not only with the gifts of lay preachers but equipping all its members for ministry by using God-given gifts.

There are now 12 sharing groups within the congregation. Although the groups take different forms, Poulson said, they are not just Bible study groups but also "care groups."

The small group approach, where sharing and caring occur on a deep and personal level, is the heart of the Singapore urban strategy developed by Southern Baptist missionary Ralph Neighbour

A basic training course for laymen involved in the urban strategy's small group approach, puts intense emphasis on discovery of gifts. A corresponding emphasis on the role of the pastor as the equipper of the laity is stressed.

Most Singapore Baptist pastors have accepted this concept and are moving to implement it, said missionary Sid Schmidt, whose responsibilities include Theological Education by Extension (TEE).

May 16, 1977

77-89

Radio Program Was A Spark
To Recorded Religious Music

By Mike Bailey and Orville Scott

DALLAS (BP)--A popular gospel music radio program that was an early spark to the spread of recorded religious music celebrated its 25th anniversary and its 1,810th broadcast here in May.

Thousands of Texans can hardly remember when they couldn't wake up Sunday morning to "Hymns We Love," with host Norvell Slater playing their favorite hymns and gospel songs over WFAA-Radio.

Slater, a Southern Baptist layman, greets his 7:06-8:30 a.m. audience with a hearty "Good morning" and encourages them to "attend church today with your family."

What began as a 15-minute program has become the highest rated radio broadcast in Dallas-Fort Worth, the nation's 10th largest media market, according to reports. Some believe the program is radio's oldest sponsored religious music program.

"Hymns We Love" is heard within a 250-mile radius of Dallas. A measure of the show's audience rating came at one point through a 60-second offering of a free book by Baptist Book Stores to the first 600 listeners who wrote in. Letters poured in from 1,745 people in more than 200 towns and cities.

"I just want to provide music to set the mood for Sunday," Slater said, "and I want to remind listeners that this is the Lord's day."

To do this he arrives at WFAA's studio by 5:30 a.m. The program requires that he run two record turntables, tape players, check the news room for weather reports, coordinate church news and prepare commercial spots.

"It's just a one-man operation," he noted, "not like the old days in radio when we would broadcast from a studio with a full crew."

Slater, a native of Richmond, Mo., has been in radio almost 48 years. He began his radio career while a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. While working on a diploma in sacred music, he worked part-time at Fort Worth's WBAP-Radio. After graduation from Southwestern in 1927, he went back to Missouri to work in broadcasting.

He came back to Dallas in 1941 as manager of public services for WFAA. One of his assignments was to serve as announcer for the long-running "Early Bird Show." On the program Slater began sharing the gospel by singing a favorite hymn each day.

Slater and WFAA program manager the late Earl Lambertz tried a 15-minute semi-weekly gospel music format back in 1942. The live weekday program featured Slater as soloist and Hugh Waddill at the organ and piano but was discontinued in 1944.

At WFAA, the first week in May 1952, a quiet revolution took place that would eventually explode recorded religious music across Texas and the country.

It was made possible, Slater noted, by the pioneering efforts of Gerald McCracken, founder of Word Records, Inc., in Waco, Tex., a year earlier. Until then, Slater said, "recording companies didn't acknowledge the existence of religious music."

"Hymns We Love" was launched as a 15-minute program with Slater as host. By the second Sunday, Lambertz noted that the program was so ideal for Sunday morning it should be expanded to 30 minutes. Eventually, it evolved to its present 1 1/2 hours.

Slater, a Southern Baptist deacon and member of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, insists that his show not be geared to one denomination. He emphasizes that the program is a form of worship service, as he helps listeners to prepare for and be on time for Sunday School and church.

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Audience response, he observed, shows that "hymns, gospel music and a few sacred classics reach the hearts of people." The program includes two 3-minute segments called "News of What's Happening in the Churches," offered to "encourage all people to attend church to find out what the Bible teaches concerning living in today's world."

The rising popularity of "Hymns We Love" eventually began attracting commercials, and this initially caused concern for Slater.

"I was afraid at first of mixing commercials with sacred music. I wondered whether this could be done with good taste and dignity."

Now he encounters no problems, especially since "most of the sponsors are active Christians." The commercials are usually "short and soft sell." They are usually "cushioned" with the time of day, temperature, or by back announcing, "You have just heard 'The Holy City'..."

Slater was once urged by Word Records to make an album of hymns, but he declined since he didn't like to hear his voice on tape. "My ability lies more in directing music--encouraging singers who do have God-given talent."

Even with his WFAA and church responsibilities, Slater has served in other ways with his broadcast talents.

When the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission in Fort Worth launched MasterControl*, a syndicated 30-minute weekly program of music and interviews about the good things of life, they looked to Slater. He produced MasterControl* for three years interviewing Bill Moyers, Vivian Vance, Basil Rathbone and many other famous people.

In 1970, the Radio-TV Commission honored Slater with its first annual Abe Lincoln broadcaster's award, given to broadcasters who distinguish themselves in religious programming and civic responsibility.

In 1971, he was honored with the annual Communications Award of the 2 million-member Baptist General Convention of Texas, given for "significant contribution to Christianity through the communications media."

Slater retired from full-time service with the WFAA staff in 1972, after more than 30 years as announcer, entertainer and public service director of the station.

But, because "Hymns We Love" bore his distinctive trademark, the management asked him to continue the Sunday morning broadcasts.

His original working agreement with the station was that he would not work on Sunday--at a regular staff job. He views "Hymns We Love" as a ministry.

The program offers him the "most visible opportunity" to communicate his faith through music, informal conversation and announcements.

Slater works constantly to improve the quality and appeal of the program. His late wife, Lois, used to record the programs at home so he could analyze them away from the pressure of operating recorders, turntables and other equipment, while keeping up the "live" portion of the show.

After Lois was struck by an automobile in downtown Dallas and died two years ago, listeners received a magnificent personal testimony of living faith in Christ the following Sunday.

Despite his anguish, Norvell shared with thousands of concerned listeners how Lois' compassion and love for people had helped to make the world a better place.

A listener compared the program to "being bathed in the love of Christ." For Norvell Slater and thousands of listeners, "Hymns We Love" is many things. But for him the essence of the program's spirit is captured by one of his favorite hymns: "He taught me how to watch and pray and live rejoicing every day..."

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May 16, 1977

77-89

**SBC Leaders Urge Alliance
Between Pulpit and Pew**

WASHINGTON (BP)--Two national Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders issued a call for an alliance between the pulpit and the pew at a meeting of SBC Brotherhood Commission trustees at the Capital Hilton here.

James Sullivan, SBC president, and Glendon McCullough, executive director of the commission, also challenged lay people to become involved in the denomination's "Bold Mission" effort to evangelize the world by the close of the Twentieth Century.

"I want to find some way to get more lay people at the annual sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention," Sullivan added.

With pastors already making up 85 percent of the messengers who register at the SBC, these additional lay persons will lead to a better cross fertilization of ideas, he said.

McCullough said Baptist mission boards and mission volunteers also need to form an alliance to make the denomination's Bold Mission as effective as it can be.

"This effort cannot be accomplished from the 'top' down. It must begin with the believer (in the pew)," McCullough said.

"We're coming into a day of the minister in the pew," McCullough added. "It's the 'in' thing to talk about the involvement of the pew minister.

"As a note of caution, let's be careful not to just use the layman solely for what we can get out of him. To use a man then drop him is wrong. Lay people are not the 'disposables' in our society."

McCullough told of efforts to work as a team with other agencies, such as Woman's Missionary Union, the Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board, Sunday School Board and Stewardship Commission.

Possible products of this team effort, he said, may include a national missions prayer network and a skills bank service of thousands of lay volunteers for missions.

McCullough said he is arranging conferences with the chief administrative officers of these agencies to improve the team effort.

In other business the commission approved a budget for the 1977-78 fiscal year of \$2,027,280, up 23 percent from the current budget.

Some of the increase will be used for expanded mission career discovery projects, mission opportunity fairs, a series of Royal Ambassador and Baptist Men training, mission education, and enlargement efforts, and a broad communications program.

The trustees also took these actions:

--Approved a 10 point capital needs program calling for a training center, missions media center and better conference facilities.

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--Okayed a national Royal Ambassador Congress for boys 12-17 during the summer of 1979 in Nashville, Tenn.

--Endorsed the development of a campcraft training program for leaders of Royal Ambassadors in churches and associations.

--Asked the commission staff to plan a national meeting the day following the Southern Baptist Convention in 1978 in Atlanta with a nationally-known Baptist headlining the program.

During the four-day meeting, the trustees from 26 states lunched with their congressmen at the Rayburn Building; visited President Jimmy Carter, a former commission trustee, at the White House, and heard presentations by the Baptist World Alliance and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Laymen Urged to Assume
New Testament Role

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Baptist Press
5/16/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--Leaders of two influential Southern Baptist organizations urged Baptist lay people to recognize the breadth of their Christian influence and to assume their responsibilities as "pastors, prophets, and priests," in the New Testament sense.

Jack Harwell of Atlanta, editor of the Christian Index, and James Landes of Dallas, executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, addressed trustees of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission during a four-day meeting at the Capital Hilton here.

Harwell is president of the Southern Baptist Press Association and Landes, president of the Baptist State Executive Secretaries Association.

The two presidents shared the program with representatives of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, who described the organization's assignments in Washington in behalf of Baptists.

Landes said the duty of the clergy is to coach, train and direct lay people so the church fellowship will become a ministering company.

"Too long, I suspect, we have been exclusive. We have erroneously thought the ordained person performed the ministry for and a ministry to the people.

"His (the ordained person's) task is to enable (lay) people to become pastors, prophets, and priests in the New Testament sense," said Landes a former pastor.

Landes decried the concept of lay people as sheep who are passive, silent, inactive, and recipients of service rather than givers of service.

In speaking to the value of influence, Harwell recalled the testimonies of two newly appointed missionaries who cited the mission education instruction of Harwell's mother and the preaching of his brother as major influences on their decisions to volunteer as career missionaries.

Harwell also challenged the trustees to lead lay people to emphasize the good qualities of others and to take Christian stands on Biblical truths which may conflict with social practice

Using the analogy of the doughnut and the hole, Harwell called on lay leaders to "stop telling people about the holes in their doughnuts and start telling them about the doughnuts around the holes . . ."

James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, traced the activities of his agency from its inception in 1939 as a reaction to the suppression of human rights in Europe to the present when Southern Baptists receive daily reports on issues affecting religious liberty.

In earlier activities, the Commission trustees visited President Jimmy Carter (a former commission trustee) at the White House, lunched with 13 Baptist congressmen at the Rayburn Office Building and heard addresses by James Sullivan, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, David Wong, president of the Baptist World Alliance, Francis Dennis, Liberian ambassador to the United States, and Glendon McCullough, executive director of the commission.

Wrapup**Lay Leaders Challenged
To Broaden Ministries**

WASHINGTON (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission were challenged by five presidents here to provide prayer, leadership, influence and cooperation in meeting needs locally, nationally, and around the world.

President Jimmy Carter asked for the prayer help while the trustees were visiting him in the Rose Garden of the White House.

A trustee of the commission for six years until his resignation last November, President Carter told the directors of the missions agency for men and boys:

"I not only need your prayers, I need your open criticisms when I make mistakes. We have a chance to make our country greater than in the past. But it depends not on the identity of the President, but on the common trust and strength of our people."

In introducing the President, Commission Executive Director Glendon McCullough said, "You've taken some good stands, and you've built a good image, and we're proud of you."

David Wong of Hong Kong, president of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), urged the agency on opening night of the four-day meeting at the Capital Hilton to supply Baptist men throughout the world with leadership, personnel and expertise.

"The people outside the United States look to the Brotherhood Commission for leadership, personnel and expertise to help the men in their spiritual life and general well being."

James Sullivan of Nashville, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), told of the need for cooperation between lay people and the clergy.

"I want to find some way to get more lay people to annual sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention," he said.

With pastors already making up 85 percent of the messengers who register at the SBC, these additional lay people will lead to a better cross fertilization of ideas, Sullivan said.

Jack Harwell of Atlanta, president of the Southern Baptist Press Association, focused on the value of Christian influence.

The editor of Georgia Baptists' Christian Index challenged the trustees to lead lay people to emphasize the good qualities of others and to take Christian stands on Biblical truths which may conflict with social practice.

James Landis of Dallas, executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and president of the Baptist State Executive Secretaries Association, declared more lay people need to assume their responsibilities as pastors, prophets and priests.

The duty of the clergy is to coach, train and direct lay people so the fellowship will become a ministering company, Landis said.

"His (the ordained person's) task is to enable lay people to become pastors, prophets, and priests in the New Testament sense," declared the former pastor.

The trustees also heard presentations by Francis Dennis, Liberian ambassador to the United States; Robert Denny, general secretary of BWA, and representatives of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Besides the visit to the White House, the trustees also lunched with 13 Baptist congressmen on Capitol Hill.

In a report to the trustees, McCullough said the denomination needs an alliance between mission agencies and mission volunteers to make SBC bold mission efforts "as bold as they can be."

"We're coming into a day of the minister in the pew. It's the 'in thing' to talk about the involvement of the pew minister. Let's be careful not to just use the layman for what we can get out of him. Lay people are not the 'disposables' in our society."

Recounting efforts of SBC agency heads to work together as a team, McCullough said, future projects should include a national missions prayer network and a computerized skills bank service containing the names of thousands of lay volunteers for missions.

In business sessions, the trustees approved a 1977-78 operating budget of \$2,027,280, an increase of 23 percent.

Part of the increase was earmarked for mission career discovery projects, mission opportunity fairs, a series of training, mission education and enlargement efforts for Baptist Men and Royal Ambassadors, and a broad communications program.

The trustees also:

--Okayed a 10-point capital needs program calling for a training center, missions media center, and improved conference facilities.

--Agreed to sponsor a national Royal Ambassador Congress for boys 12-17 in Nashville, Tenn., during the summer of 1979.

--Agreed to develop a campcraft training program for leaders of Royal Ambassadors in churches and associations.

--Approved a proposal to sponsor a national meeting on missions and ministry in Atlanta the day following the SBC there in 1978 and to invite a nationally known Baptist to headline the program.

--Okayed a plan to participate in a skills bank service with three other Southern Baptist agencies.

--Agreed to meet November 9-11, 1977 in Memphis.

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Rogers Replaces Lee On
Pastors' Conference Program

Baptist Press
5/16/77

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., will preach at the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference here June 13 in place of R. G. Lee, who is recovering from a series of heart attacks.

The Pastors Conference is scheduled to get under way at 7 p.m., Sunday, June 12, at the Kansas City Municipal Auditorium Arena and run through Monday night, June 13. Rogers will speak at 7 p.m., Monday, preceding sermons by W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, and Stephen Olford of Holmes Beach, Fla.

Lee, pastor emeritus of Bellevue Church and a former Southern Baptist Convention president, has been recuperating in Memphis since a series of heart attacks in the first three days of April. He has officially cancelled his Pastors' Conference address.

SBC Pastors' Conference President Jerry Vines, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., told Baptist Press he had asked Rogers to serve as a backup for the 90-year-old Lee in case he became ill.

"Two days after I asked Dr. Rogers to serve as a backup, Dr. Lee had a heart attack," Vines said.

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SBC Pre-Registration
Tops 2,500

NASHVILLE (BP)--Messengers who have pre-registered for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting, June 14-16, have been advised to bring their booklet of computer ballots with them to Kansas City, Mo., because no others will be available.

SBC registration secretary, W. Fred Kendall, said, "It's expensive to print the ballots and we must limit them to one set to a messenger to maintain the security of the voting procedure and have a legitimate, well organized convention."

For the first time this year, messengers are registering in advance as part of an experimental pilot project, in response to a request at the convention last year in Norfolk.

Advance registration totals have topped 2,500, according to unofficial statistics compiled by the financial planning office of the SBC Executive Committee.

Billy D. Malesovas, director of financial planning and assistant to the treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, said the deadline has passed and no further pre-registrations are being accepted.

Malesovas' office is sending pre-registered messengers elected by Southern Baptist churches a messenger's badge and computer card ballots. About 1,600 advance copies of the SBC Book of Reports, which cost \$1 a copy, also are being sent to those requesting them.

More than 16,000 messengers are expected to register for the 120th annual session of the 132-year-old SBC, with more than 20,000 predicted total attendance. Last year in Norfolk, an all-time record 18,637 messengers registered.