

**(BP)****BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**'Living Proof' Reached  
Half of Texas Adults**

DALLAS (BP)--The Living Proof media campaign, designed by Texas Baptists to reach every Texan with a gospel message at least 40 times during a four-week period this spring, probably was seen or heard by more than half of all Texas adults.

And nine out of 10 of them said what they experienced--the testimonies of widely known persons in television and radio commercials--was "believable" and the message they heard was encouragement to "turn to God" and "accept Jesus Christ."

Those findings were among things revealed in a survey by Louis, Bowles and Grove, Inc., Dallas research and management consultants.

The Dallas firm conducted a telephone survey this spring the week after each four-week media campaign closed in the west, north and south regions. A similar survey was made in January before the media campaign began.

Both surveys were conducted by telephone in random samplings of 400 households. The questions were asked of 200 men and 200 women, 18 and older.

Among the more significant results:

--60 percent recalled seeing or hearing "religious advertising" after the media campaign versus 30 percent before the Living Proof campaign.

--45 percent recalled, without aid, specific or related themes of the campaign and another 11 percent recalled them when they were mentioned, indicating more than half, 56 percent, of all Texas adults are likely to have seen the campaign.

--Among those who recalled religious advertising, 63 percent remembered the themes or the Living Proof slogan without prompting.

--Half of those interviewed after the campaign remembered it was sponsored by Texas Baptists. Only half of the Baptists surveyed also knew it was sponsored by their own denomination.

--Nine out of 10 who recalled personalities used in the testimonies said they were "believable" and 66 percent said they were "very believable."

--Most often the purpose of the advertising was perceived as encouraging people to "turn to God" and "accept Jesus Christ."

--Eight out of 10 persons said they are favorable toward religious advertising in general--up 10 percent from the pre-test survey--and a third of those surveyed said their attitudes toward religion had been changed.

Lloyd Elder, director of the media--Living Proof--portion of Good News Texas for Texas Baptists, said it is estimated \$1.4 million was spent in the campaign by the Baptist General Convention of Texas and by local churches and associations.

If half of the Texas adult population was reached by the campaign, the expenditure was less than \$1 per person, he said.

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But the campaign received national publicity as well, and some of the testimonies were aired on network television at prime time at no cost.

Louis, Bowles and Grove, Inc., the survey firm, concludes that it is a "substantial achievement" to reach half the adult population and affect the opinions of a third of them.

"But did anything happen as a result of the effort? That question may be the same one asked by Baptist pastors all over Texas after they conclude their weekly sermons," the survey concludes.

"Perhaps it is still too early to conclude whether the advertising achieved what are perhaps a variety of objectives . . . If local pastors experience increased rates of baptisms, new members and new vigor in the commitment of their old members, they may choose to give some credit to the campaign which they worked to support.

"For others it may simply be enough to have made the effort."

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Opelika Lady Gives Baptist  
'Bump and Grind' in K. C.

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By Jack U. Harwell

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--"I can see the headlines now: 'Baptist Lady Bumps and Grinds On Mission Tour.'"

That was Mrs. Shelby Ward's gleeful reaction to an unusual experience in a dinner theater in Kansas City.

Jim Nabors, famed star of television's Gomer Pyle series and a talented singer, was in North Kansas City on tour while the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was in session. Hundreds of SBC messengers missed at least one convention session to catch his dinner show.

One evening, Nabors called for four female volunteers to come out of the audience and help him with a production number. He was to sing a popular novelty song about a man whose wife is a "bump and grind dancer," a stripteaser.

Nabors, who is from Sylacauga, Ala., instructed the four women to move across the stage in amateuristic little bump and grind stunts while he sang stanzas of the song. Mrs. Ward was one of the volunteers.

After the song, Nabors introduced each of the ladies to the crowd of about 2,500 theatergoers and asked for applause.

Mrs. Ward got the loudest applause of all, probably because the other three were young, slim girls while she was an older lady, "pleasingly plump," the roly-poly type whom the crowd loved.

When Nabors introduced Mrs. Ward, she told him and the crowd that she was from Opelika, Ala., just a few miles from Nabors' hometown of Sylcauga, and that her husband was his second cousin. They engaged in a little "down home" chat.

Then she told the TV star and his audience: "I bet you will never guess why I am in Kansas City tonight."

He asked her why and she responded: "I am leading a group of 37 Baptist young people to Casper, Wyoming, to help start a Baptist mission church."

Nabors bust into laughter, the crowd burst into applause and Nabors responded: "Now, there's a lady with guts!" And the crowd gave Mrs. Ward a standing ovation while Nabors kissed her on the cheek.

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The loudest applause of all came from the 37 young people and five other chaperones from First Baptist Church in Opelika.

Interviewed later by a Baptist editor, Mrs. Ward said her group was going to Casper to lead Vacation Bible Schools, conduct night evangelistic rallies and do religious surveys.

And she confided that she is a truly versatile lady. She is a Sunday School teacher, youth committee member, finance committee member, building and grounds committee member and "all-around flunky" at the First Baptist Church in Opelika.

She added: "And I beat my pastor, Robert T. Baggott Jr., every time we play tennis."

And just one month earlier she had been elected a member of the Alabama House of Representatives from her district. Her husband chimed in: "And she beat two male opponents on the first ballot."

Mrs. Ward is versatile, but her 37 young people will likely remember her best for her "bump and grind" night with Jim Nabors.

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Michigan Baptists Report  
2,500 Decisions in Crusades

Baptist Press  
6/22/77

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. (BP)--Michigan Southern Baptists report 2,500 public decisions--including some 600 professions of faith in Jesus Christ--were registered during what is being termed the most successful evangelistic event in the state convention's 20-year history. The crusades were led by evangelistic teams from Florida, Kentucky, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

State Evangelism Director James O. Coldiron said some 21,315 people attended the two-week emphasis which began with central area crusades in key metropolitan cities the first week and concluded with simultaneous revivals in 140 churches the second week. Some 200 churches with approximately 45,000 members are affiliated with the Baptist State Convention.

Estimates indicate approximately 300 Baptists paid their way to Michigan during the crusades to assist in the churches. Several laypersons took time off from work to come to Michigan. The Sonshine Ensemble from the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., and the Amason Twins from Richmond, Va., and other youth music groups financed their trips to help in the meetings. Other personalities who participated in the crusades included Ann Marie Fairchild, Austin Brown, Paul Anderson, and Marilyn Ford.

The crusades were part of the convention's 20th anniversary celebration and focused on Southern Baptists' Bold Mission goal of reaching every person with the Gospel. Michigan Baptists proclaimed 1977 as the "Year of Evangelism."

Coldiron and Robert Wilson, state executive director-treasurer, extended an invitation to the four Southern states two years ago to participate in the crusades and Coldiron worked with the state evangelism secretaries in enlisting evangelistic teams and host churches. "More churches and people were involved and reached during the spring crusades than in any other Baptist gathering in Michigan's history," Coldiron said.

Counseling rooms were filled with stories of conversions. One school's Spanish maid was brought to the service by the janitor. After the invitation to accept Christ, she approached the evangelist and, in broken English, said, "Tell me more about this change Jesus makes."

Another of those who came forward was a medical doctor from Jackson. He made his public decision for Christ on Sunday night and on Monday night when the evangelist called on those who wanted to help reach unconverted persons to come to the front of the auditorium, he was found kneeling with his pastor at the altar.

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Evangelists for the central crusades were James Ponder, Florida evangelism director; Tal Bonham, Oklahoma evangelism director; Jack Stanton, professor of evangelism at Southwest Baptist College in Bolivar, Mo.; Bailey Smith, pastor, First Baptist, Del City, Okla.; and Sam Cathy, evangelist from Owasso, Okla.

Michigan Baptists are already involved in planning crusades in conjunction with crusades to be conducted in 1979 across the North Central United States. Coldiron and Ohio Executive Secretary Ray Roberts are Coordinating that missions thrust.

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Hollaway Joins Seminary  
Extension Department

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6/22/77

NASHVILLE (BP)--Ernest Lee Hollaway III of Memphis has been named associate director in charge of communications of the Seminary Extension Department of the six Southern Baptist seminaries here, effective July 1.

Hollaway, 34, has served as editor of Crusader magazine for Royal Ambassador (RA) boys at the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission since 1970. He joined the commission in 1968 as an assistant editor of RA materials.

A native of Georgia, Hollaway was reared in Japan, where his parents formerly were missionaries.

Before coming to Memphis, Hollaway served as an editorial assistant at All-Church Press in Fort Worth, while attending seminary, and as a summer intern on the Arkansas Democrat.

He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., and earned a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and a master's degree in religious education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

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(BP) Photos mailed to Baptist state papers.