



BAPTIST PRESS

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Giant Missions Rally To Follow 1978 SBC

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--A missions rally for 16,500 Southern Baptist lay persons, with President Jimmy Carter invited to make the major address, will be held in Atlanta on June 16 under the auspices of the Brotherhood Commission.

Glendon McCullough, executive director of the Memphis-based missions agency for Southern Baptist men and boys, announced the giant missions meeting at the final session of the week-long Bold Mission Leadership Conference for 1,600 persons at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

The lay meeting will be held the day following the three-day 121st Southern Baptist Convention (SEC).

McCullough said President Carter, a former trustee of the commission, has personally agreed to consider an invitation to address the lay people and will respond officially to the invitation a few months before the meeting.

Announcement of the national missions meeting came three weeks after President Carter challenged Southern Baptists at their annual meeting in Kansas City, Mo., to put another short-term, volunteer 5,000 missionaries on the field for one and two-year terms within the next five years.

At the 120th meeting of the denomination, the messengers accepted the challenge by expanding the Cooperative Program giving goal and asking a denominational committee, which has already met, to plan and launch the effort.

McCullough said the meeting is one of a series of projects to provide Bold Mission opportunities for Baptist lay people at the national level during the next two years.

The commission also is providing 35,000 Southern Baptist churches with materials for conducting other Bold Mission projects in the areas of mission study, prayer, stewardship, and mission action.

Preliminary plans for the large lay rally call for up to 15 breakfast groups at the major Atlanta hotel the morning of June 16.

McCullough said the theme of the prayer breakfast will be "Ministry Through Lay People."

The groups will consider ministry opportunities in such areas as medicine, government, law enforcement, art, retirement, legal professions, agriculture, technical skills, education, communications, sports, military, sales, management, and clerical work.

McCullough said nationally known Christian leaders in every profession will lead the discussion.

In connection with the lay rally, McCullough said he will push for lay representation at the 1978 SBC in Atlanta of at least 30 percent, almost double that of previous years.

SBC President Jimmy Allen, who gave the closing address at the Brotherhood and Woman's Missionary Union leadership conference here, enthusiastically endorsed the lay rally as a Bold Mission step.

He said, "One of the exciting developments in Southern Baptist life is the discovery of the mission of men within their professions and finding ways to serve God with their skills.

"I am excited about the fact we have the massive opportunity for men of different professions to come together, to know each other in their Christian family and to understand the kind of opportunities they have to share their faith in their daily responsibilities.

"This is also the time we are calling on lay people to dedicate themselves as never before to short-term mission service. I believe that this rally will be a significant part of the kickoff and enlistment of people of various skills to give themselves for one year to two years in the mission service corps.

"Therefore, I'm looking forward to participating in this rally. I feel it can be a tremendous instrument of God to claim people for Christ."

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Abortion Not The Answer,
Says Adoption Center Director

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GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--Abortion is not the answer to problem pregnancies, a maternity and adoption center director told 1,600 Southern Baptists attending the Bold Mission Leadership Conference here.

Mary Dan Kuhnle, director of Sellers Home, New Orleans, called abortion "a nasty business, something real, not something you just read about in a newspaper.

"Every child born in Sellers could have been aborted. It is with courage and faith that a girl chooses not to have an abortion and to carry that child, to carry that social stigma that still exists, to carry some of the non-acceptance from her church."

Currently 26 girls, mostly Southern Baptists, live at Sellers, Mrs. Kuhnle said.

The maternity and adoption center, operated by Southern Baptists through their Home Mission Board, has a three-year list of couples waiting to adopt white babies, the director said.

In explaining the ministry through Sellers, Miss Kuhnle said she teaches the young girls that "capacity once acted upon calls for responsibility--once reproduction is underway they have a responsibility to plan for that child.

"Strong, healthy decisions can be made only when a girl is emotionally supported in an atmosphere of positive acceptance," the director explained. Miss Kuhnle was one of 12 home and foreign missionaries who addressed the church and associational WMU and Brotherhood leaders at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

The Bold Mission conference was sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union.

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Multi-Ethnic Ministry An
Increasing Trend, Smith Says

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GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--A black home missionary commended Southern Baptists for their progress in ministering to multi-ethnic groups but indicated the denomination still has a distance to go.

Sidney Smith, a Southern Baptist missionary to Watts community in Los Angeles, said he was thankful it was no longer possible to identify a Southern Baptist by the color of his skin.

The 6'2", 225-pound, bearded director of Christian social ministries spoke on "boldness in California" at the Bold Mission Leadership Conference sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) and the Brotherhood Commission.

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About 1,600 Brotherhood and WMU leaders from throughout the United States attended the week-long event at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Reminding that California today is America tomorrow, Smith said the trend in religious activities in California is multi-racial ministries.

"In California the multi-ethnic church has arrived. It's estimated that 90 percent of our congregation are mutli-ethnic. Multi-ethnic ministries must be the name of the game.

"California experience teaches that we can boldly announce that multi-ethnic churches can and do work, and that we wouldn't have it any other way."

In some ways, Southern Baptists already are a multi-ethnic denomination, Smith declared. "Thousands of our churches minister to all people and segregation is going out of style.

"Ethnic minorities head departments in our convention and minorities have been elevated to high positions on association, state and national levels.

"Our denominational leaders are committed to progressive multi-racial involvement and ministry. Some churches are calling pastors without regard to race."

Smith called Southern Baptists "growing people, beautiful people, people of good will. We have come a long way, but the challenge before us is to boldly go on."

Churches interested in the multi-ethnic approach should be willing to struggle to adjust to transition, Smith cautioned.

The home missionary said it may mean re-thinking philosophies of ministry, re-interpreting theology as it relates to healthy, multi-ethnic churches; treading on unfamiliar social grounds, and learning to deal with social taboos, such as inter-marriage.

"It may mean being open to the possibility of the Lord giving us some pastors and denominational leaders who don't look like us.

"What we are saying in California is that white people and black people and red people and brown people and yellow people are embracing together in the name of Jesus Christ, saying to a lost world we love you and we want to help you if you will let us.

"We want everyone to join together in saying let Jesus reign over the steaming boroughs of New York, the scintilating lakes of Michigan, the muddy swamps of Louisiana, the wide prairies of Texas, the cavernous canyons of Arizona, the high, towering mountains of Montana, the palatial mountains of California, the hot, humid jungles of Africa, the rice fields of Asia, the ancient palaces of Europe, and until every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

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Kendall First American
Pastor of Westminster Chapel

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LONDON (BP)--Following a six-month interim arrangement, R. T. Kendall has accepted an invitation to become minister of London's Westminster Chapel.

Kendall, a Southern Baptist pastor and theologian, is the first American pastor in the 112-year history of Westminster Chapel. His predecessors in this century were J. H. Jowett, G. Campbell Morgan, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and the J. Glyn Owen.

The Ashland, Ky., native is a graduate of the University of Louisville and of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He recently received the doctor of philosophy degree from Oxford University, where he was affiliated with Regent's Park College. He has held pastorates in Kentucky and Tennessee.

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Bible Misused, Misunderstood,
Translator Tells Pastors, Rabbis

GREENVILLE, S. C. (BP)--The Bible is the most misunderstood and misused book of all time, Bible translator Robert G. Bratcher told an ecumenical group of church pastors and rabbis meeting here.

Bratcher, chief translator of "Good News for Modern Man" and chairman of the team which translated "Today's English Version" of the Bible, is a former Southern Baptist foreign missionary.

Speaking to the Furman University Pastors School, a week-long seminar in continuing theological education, Bratcher said, "Although the Bible is the best seller of all time and has been translated into 1,306 languages and is available to 96 percent of the world population if they could read, it is also the most misunderstood and misused book of all time."

The Bible has been used, Bratcher said, to condemn blacks to eternal inferiority, to doom and damn homosexuals and to announce the end of the world "just around the corner."

Bratcher was one of five lecturers at the seminar, which also included an address by renowned preacher and theologian George Buttrick.

In one of four lectures on the relevance of the Bible, Bratcher explained that misuse of the Bible occurs because it is not understood.

"Without understanding its history, we cannot understand its message," Bratcher said. "Its message comes from definite times and circumstances, involving places and people, reflecting concepts and presuppositions, all of which is expressed in cultural and linguistic forms. To take the Bible seriously is to try to understand its historical, cultural and literary origins."

The Bible is relevant, Bratcher said, because "the lessons of the past can be adapted and re-adapted to current situations."

He decried any neglect of the Old Testament for Christians. "For many Christians today the Old Testament is meaningless," he said, "but to neglect the Old Testament is to strip Jesus of His race and culture. It is to dehumanize Christ."

Bratcher said the Old Testament, representing the history of Israel, and the New Testament, representing the history of the church, are held together by the person of Jesus Christ

Buttrick, in an interview just before his address, commented that "one good pastor is worth 10 revivalists."

Buttrick, who has devoted nearly half a century to teaching in American seminaries, is recognized as one of the outstanding preachers of the 20th Century. At 85, he is still strong in voice, intellect and preaching power.

The pastor "is the key man in the community," Buttrick said. A good pastor, he explained, lives with the joys and sorrows of his people, studies Scripture and imparts deep truths to his people, celebrates the Eucharist and shares the faith.

According to Buttrick, the pastor's task is to lead people to what he calls "man's highest art--the worship of God." Man's spiritual life is nurtured with corporate prayer and worship, he said, and "the only way to prevent worship of oneself is to worship God."

A pitfall for the modern pastor is concern with quantity rather than quality, Buttrick warned. He said aiming for a hundred new members on Easter Sunday could be blasphemous.

"The important question is whether they are literate in the faith," he said. "The church, if it is faithful, may shrink. I hope the church will never shrink into itself, but it can aim for quality, not quantity. The church must tighten its standards while never forsaking missionary zeal. It must build bridges toward the culture without yielding to secularism."

According to Buttrick, increasing secularism and what he calls "money madness" are difficulties pastors face in trying to keep the faith today.

"Money madness has not yet run its course," Buttrick said. "Wealthy men try to dictate what the pastor should say from the pulpit. You're not supposed to talk about politics and you can't talk about hunger all over the place. We are living in the midst of a secular culture and secularism in our time will probably increase."

More than 500 pastors from a dozen states and as many denominations attended the annual four-day seminar, the largest ecumenical school of its kind in the nation.

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'Steeple Chase' Ends
In Vegetable Garden

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DENVER, Colo. (BP)--There was the church, but where was the steeple?

The mystery has been solved. A steeple stolen from the yard of Denver's Alameda Hills Baptist Church was found in a residential vegetable garden after the church's pastor received a 2:30 a.m. phone call.

The steeple, now atop the newly organized Ken Caryl Baptist Chapel, was installed in time for the mission's dedication on Sunday, July 10.

Police and the Denver news media followed the 'steeple chase' after the 800-pound spire disappeared on Wednesday, July 5.

Following area-wide news coverage of the theft, a man called Alameda Hills Pastor Gene Parrott at home, at 2:30 one morning to say where the steeple could be found.

The caller apologized for the theft, explaining that he had thought the church was through with the steeple. Alameda Hills has installed a new steeple and had intended the old one to go to Ken Caryl Chapel.

Before he hung up, the caller told Parrott, "See you in church."

Teams Go Into Villages
To Share God's Message

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FENI, Bangladesh (BP)--The two men walk into the strange village calling, "Are there any men or boys at home? We want to talk to a man of your village."

The two men, Southern Baptist Missionary James E. Young and Bangladeshi co-worker David Biswas, are part of an extensive rural evangelism effort being carried out by missionaries and nationals here.

In Bangladesh about 98 percent of the population of 80 million lives in villages.

To bring the gospel to these people, missionaries team up with nationals and go from village to village. After making initial contact with one of the men in the community, they then ask to see the village leader.

When the leader comes, Young tells him who the two visitors are and why they have come.

The men give the leader the book, "The Man Who Gave His Life," with the suggestion that each night when the villagers' work is completed that they gather to hear the book read.

In some instances the leader replies that he cannot read, but a son or nephew can.

Young says that is fine and suggests how the reading can be done each evening. Shouting for everyone to come, the village leader draws a crowd of men and boys at the front, and women toward the back.

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They are all barefoot and in their daily work clothes. The women come close enough to hear, but far enough back not to be easily noticed. Women traditionally play a secondary role in this country.

Their chosen reader begins the book by reading the events leading up to the birth of Christ. Young then gives the leader a card with two column headings, one for the date and one for the attendance. He lists the date of the first reading and the leader tells him there are 43 present.

As the two men leave, they promise to come back in a week or two to see how the village is progressing.

When they return, Biswas will answer questions, and perhaps preach.

In the meantime they will have visited still more villages, leaving books with the leaders.

The purpose of it all is the birth of new churches, according to Young. He and the other missionaries involved in the project hope to see Christian fellowships formed in the rural setting where the people live.