



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
480 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2000
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

September 1, 1977

77-154

Churches Beginning To
Understand Whole Person

By Jennifer Bryon

NASHVILLE (BP)--The organized church is beginning to open up and understand the healing of the whole person, says Ruth Carter Stapleton.

"So many churches' theology has been based on Hell-fire do's and don't's" that they overlook love, Mrs. Stapleton, a minister (not ordained) and sister of the President of the United States, declared here.

"Jesus' ministry was based on love," continued Mrs. Stapleton, who came to Nashville to promote her latest book, *The Experience of Inner Healing*. "So many churches don't give people the cushion of love so they can show their negative side. In church, we hide our true feelings."

Mrs. Stapleton, a Southern Baptist from Fayetteville, N. C., bases her ministry of healing on ridding the person of negative feelings, many of which are formed in early childhood.

"Until the deep hurts of life are healed," she explained, "we can only try--try to be loving, try to be patient."

Inner healing, she said, involves a process of emotional reconstruction, experienced under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

"Inner healing differs from faith healing in several ways," she explained. "In faith healing, the divine power flows through the person, usually causing an instantaneous change."

"Inner healing deals with the emotions and tries to instill an attitude of forgiveness for early wrongs. It's a slow, evolving process. The basic healing process is to communicate unconditional love to that person."

Mrs. Stapleton frequently visits the White House because the First Lady Rosalyn Carter is her best friend, and she makes a point to change planes in Washington when traveling so they can spend time together.

"I think I'm about in control now of being Jimmy's sister. No one knows how hard it was for me," said Mrs. Stapleton, whose accent and manner of speaking readily identify her as a member of the Carter family.

She says she suddenly had to start being aware of what she said and how she said it because she was no longer just a minister, she was the President's sister. People began attending her conferences around the country, not to get help from her but to see the President's sister.

Although she usually makes two trips into poverty areas in foreign countries each year, Mrs. Stapleton had to cancel all of her overseas travel because people would no longer see her as just a minister, but as the sister of the President of the United States. However, she has just been cleared by the White House to resume her travel and will leave in September for her first foreign trip since her brother's inauguration.

"It's difficult to be one person one day and not be that person the next day," she said. "However, I took some time off and re-evaluated the whole situation. I decided my theology had not changed, my ministry had not changed."

-more-

She said she also had to decide whether to continue her ministry or to spend time doing things people asked of her because of the sudden spotlight.

"Many of these things--charities, benefits--were good things, but I just can't divide my time. I decided to continue to devote it to my ministry which I've had for 12 years."

Mrs. Stapleton says, contrary to many reports, that she wasn't the one who led her brother through his spiritual recommitment several years ago after he lost the Georgia governor's race. The two had a conversation about the change in her life but it was only one thing in his process of recommitment.

She said she hasn't explored all her brother's beliefs and isn't aware of all of them. "I haven't really talked with Jim about it in a long time," she said. "However, my sister Gloria and I believe almost identically."

Mrs. Stapleton said that she and her brother Billy have a very close relationship.

"He says that he and I believe just alike. I accept that," she said with a Carter smile.

Mrs. Stapleton's first book, *The Gift of Inner Healing*, sold 50,000 copies before her other brother--Jimmy--became the Democratic nominee for President. That book and her new one now have a combined sales of 250,000.

She's now writing another more detailed and complicated book on her inner healing ministry. And she's also writing a biography of her brother--Billy.

-30-

(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

#

Trilingual Crusade Results
In 500 Decisions for Christ

Baptist Press
9/1/77

PEDRO JUAN CABALLERO, Paraguay (BP)--Five hundred decisions for Christ were recorded here during a week-long trilingual crusade supported by Paraguayan and Brazilian Baptists and others in this small town on the Paraguayan and Brazilian borders.

The crusade, led by Jose Missena, a Baptist pastor, was conducted in Spanish, Portuguese and Guarani, and accented by solos in Portuguese by Brazilian Baptist singer Luis de Carvalho.

Southern Baptist missionary physician Dr. Tom Kent, director of the mobile clinic of Baptist Hospital in Asuncion, also gave medical consultations in the local parsonage, according to Judi (Mrs. Tom) Kent, Southern Baptist missionary press representative for Paraguay.

-30-

Vocational Evangelists'
Retirement Plan Operational

Baptist Press
9/1/77

ATLANTA (BP)--The retirement plan for vocational evangelists, introduced before the 1976 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Norfolk, is "operative and in force," reported Harold Bailey of the SBC's Annuity Board in Dallas.

Although no available statistics reveal the exact number of evangelists participating in this special retirement program, Bailey said he receives frequent inquiries about the plan.

Until the retirement program for Southern Baptist Vocational Evangelists was approved, vocational evangelists usually could not qualify for or participate in the Annuity Board's retirement program.

Bailey explained "that the legal charter granted the Annuity Board prohibited us from providing protection coverage for anybody not directly Southern Baptist related." Vocational evangelists not employed by a SBC church or institution were ineligible.

-more-

With the new program, a Southern Baptist vocational evangelist may enroll in the retirement plan through "certification" arranged by the pastor of the local Southern Baptist church of which he is a member and by the state convention office," said Bailey.

The retirement program, announced during "the Evangelists' Seminar" sponsored by the Home Mission Board's mass evangelism department, outlined a need among evangelists, said Bobby Sunderland, department director.

Sunderland was a vocational evangelist himself for three years. As a pastor he participated in the SBC's annuity program for pastors. But when he became a vocational evangelist he lost eligibility to participate in the state convention Plan A program through the Annuity Board. "For years I blamed the Annuity Board. They weren't to blame, but they got the blame in my heart," he said.

Later Sunderland discovered that three parties had contributed to his annuity when he was a pastor--the church, the state convention and himself. Individuals could not participate alone, unless the state conventions permitted vocational evangelists to be a part of their program, said Bailey.

Other state conventions could not "foot the bill" for evangelists in their states.

The new plan overcomes special problems for vocational evangelists, said Bailey. "It's not that we haven't been interested in the vocational evangelist before. We just had a lot of rough places to work through."

A year before approving the retirement plan, the Annuity Board opened the church insurance program to evangelists. In the insurance program, evangelists are eligible for term life insurance, as well as disability and medical programs.

The new program also has advantages over private (or government sponsored) retirement plans.

Bailey said Internal Revenue Service rulings affecting individual retirement programs are the overriding reason.

"Ordained persons are not able to participate under the Keogh Act (federal legislation dealing with tax shelter for self-employed persons), which means they are only eligible to participate in an Individual Retirement Account (IRA). These accounts are limited by the percentage of income that can be put into the program as well as a limit on the dollar amounts permitted.

"Our program, classified a 403-B program for churches, charities, educational institutions and scientific groups, permits a higher percentage of income to be tax deferred and has no dollar limit.

"There's a 20 percent limit in our plan rather than the 15 percent limit for the IRA," said Bailey.

"Also, we believe it helps the individual to be tied to the denomination. We think this is a psychological benefit to them and their church," Bailey suggested.

Since many vocational evangelists move from pastorate into evangelism or from evangelism to pastorate, the plan allows them to transfer funds without losing the tax shelter benefits, Bailey said. Payments into the retirement plan may be made by the individual or the evangelistic association if there is one.

-30-

State Suit Seeks To Remove
Ky. Baptist Tax Exemption

Baptist Press
9/1/77

FRANKFORT, Ky. (BP)--Kentucky's department of revenue has filed suit in circuit court to reverse an order of the Kentucky Board of Tax Appeals which grants exemption from state sales tax to the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

-more-

In 1976 the department of revenue, re-evaluating the convention's 1970 exemption from the sales tax, decided it no longer qualified as an exempt institution. But the board of tax appeals upheld the convention's appeal of the decision on grounds that it is a religion, educational and charitable institution and, as such, is exempt from paying taxes under the Kentucky constitution.

But the department of revenue, declaring the board of tax appeals "erred in allowing the exemption," alleges in its suit that the convention's "nature is administrative rather than charitable, educational or religious."

Kentucky Baptist executive secretary, Franklin Owen, expressed amazement at the second effort to tax the mission gifts of more than 2,209 Kentucky Southern Baptists churches of which support the convention's mission endeavors and its instructional programs among churches.

He said the suit "clearly discriminates against our denomination on the basis of our polity (form of church government). We do not regard our denomination (convention) as 'church' as other large denominations tend to do. Baptist polity sees the local congregation as the church. Our convention, whether in session or not, is our sense of larger corporate being."

Calling the convention set up "voluntary, cooperative and non-authoritative but fulfilling all the mechanical functions of what others might call 'church headquarters,'" Owen declared:

"The convention budget treasury (Cooperative Program) supports our instructional program among the churches and is the conduit through which church gifts flow to Christian institutions and world missions. It follows then that when the convention is taxed the missions gifts of its churches are being taxed," he said.

"We seem to be singled out as the one denomination (in Kentucky) to pay sales tax," he continued. "This is amazing in view of our convention's 2,209 churches, with 700,000 members, twice as many as the next largest denomination."

However, Franklin added: "I do not believe the main goal is just to discriminate against us. I conjecture that it is simply part of the closer and closer search of the last nook and cranny in our society from which another tax dollar might be extracted, even from church gifts.

"Apparently, our system of polity makes us look technically like the easiest church treasury to invade. If the gifts of funds from this largest Kentucky religious body could indeed be taxed, then the case would be greatly strengthened to make the same extraction from every other religious group in the state. All church denominations then are placed in jeopardy by this rifle shot at Kentucky Baptists."

Owen said the "strong tradition" of separation of church and state in the United States "means no preferential treatment of any particular religion or sex" and that it also "means no discrimination."

"America has traditionally respected religious faith and practice and seen it as a source of moral strength in the nation. Our country has traditionally upheld maximum religious freedom and has maintained a climate that encourages religious and moral endeavor.

"If departments of revenue should eventually crush our churches, then in what soil might we grow our future moral fiber."

Cooperative Program
10.15% Ahead of 1975-76

-30-

Baptist Press
9/1/77

NASHVILLE (BP)--With one month remaining in the 1976-77 fiscal year, giving to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) national Cooperative Program unified budget is running 10.15 percent ahead of the same point last year. SBC state conventions, which receive contributions from more than 35,000 Southern Baptist churches across the nation, have channeled \$47,452,817 in undesignated gifts through the SBC Executive Committee for use in the denomination's worldwide missions program. That exceeds last year's total by \$4,374,381.

Another \$41,988,286 in designated gifts exceeds the 1975-76 total by \$2,998,664, or 7.69 percent, according to the office of Billy D. Malesovas, the Executive Committee's director of financial planning and assistant to the treasurer. Total year-to-date contributions, including designated and undesignated contributions, amount to \$89,441,104, an 8.98 percent increase over last year. August Cooperative Program contributions totaled \$4,298,926--11.33 percent above August of last year. Designated contributions totaled another \$532,403, a decrease of .52 percent over the previous August.

-30-