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Bernice Elliott: New
Frontiers For A Pioneer

By Debbie Baird

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--Bernice Elliott is proof that missions pioneers never retire, they just find new frontiers.

From 1961 to 1977, Miss Elliott served as promotion associate for the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) in areas where Baptist work is new. Now retired from her joint position with WMU and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, her new frontier is volunteerism.

She will work for WMU for free, coordinating a cadre of volunteers to assist operations at the WMU building in Birmingham, Ala.

Miss Elliott has spent a lifetime in denominational work. Before coming to WMU as promotion associate, she was young people's secretary for New Mexico WMU from 1944-1960.

When she was very young, her pastor father moved the family from her native west Texas to Mexico, where, according to the book "History of New Mexico Baptists," they pioneered Southern Baptist work.

As WMU promotion associate, she traveled throughout the United States, working primarily in the "pioneer" areas of the Southern Baptist Convention--areas Southern Baptists have entered since 1940.

As a Baptist pioneer, Miss Elliott experienced many firsts, including the first prayer retreat in Alaska and Iowa, the first camp for the WMU's Girls in Action (GA) program in Montana and the first retreat for WMU's Acteens girls program in New England.

Under her guidance and leadership, WMU was organized on the state level in New York, West Virginia, Pennsylvania-South Jersey, Northern Plains.

"One of the most meaningful experiences I can remember was the Sunday I visited the Manhattan Baptist Church in New York when they lettered out 102 members to become the Bergen Baptist Church in New Jersey," Miss Elliott recalls.

"Actually, it would be impossible for me to pinpoint any one area to say I enjoyed it most or it taught me the most," she says. "In every section of our country people are working heroically to meet needs. All are volunteers, working simply because of their love and concern.

"My greatest joys have come from working alongside these people, meeting with women in churches and associations, establishing new organizations and encouraging others."

She remembers her conversations with pastors and their wives when she stayed in their homes. "It was during these visits that I received the greatest blessings," Miss Elliott recalls. "I was more able to understand the needs of the people as leaders shared their experiences."

One big project Miss Elliott has spearheaded is WMU's cooperation with the North Central Missions Thrust, an effort by Southern Baptists in seven North Central states to double the number of churches and missions by 1990.

In fact, she prepared a document outlining plans for WMU to help North Central Baptists accomplish that goal.

"As I travel the North Central states, it seems to me that Southern Baptists there are working as if there were no tomorrow," she declares.

For the next year Miss Elliott will test the involvement of volunteers in WMU headquarters operations. She will recruit volunteers through nearby associational and church WMUs and may retrieve names from the Volunteers in Missions computer bank at the Home Mission Board in Atlanta for special projects.

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The volunteers will augment the work of the employed WMU staff and initiate new areas of work not possible with employed staff. The first group will work with Miss Elliott on designing the program.

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(BP) Photo will be mailed to Baptist state papers upon request to the WMU office.

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Jameson Named Baptist
Press Feature Editor

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE (BP)--Norman Jameson, religion editor and reporter for the Gazette Telegraph, Colorado Springs, will become feature editor for Baptist Press, Nov. 1, according to Porter Routh, executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee.

Jameson, 25, will succeed James Lee Young, who resigned in June to become editor of the Rocky Mountain Baptist and director of public relations for the Colorado Baptist General Convention, Denver.

A native of Rio, Wisconsin, Jameson is a magna cum laude journalism graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, where he was editor of the OBU Bison, the school paper, and a staff writer in the school's public relations department.

Other experience includes service in the U. S. Army, where he received medic training and edited a weekly military publication. Before enrolling in Oklahoma Baptist University he attended Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. He made President's Honor Roll, served as news editor of the college newspaper, and worked for two Decorah weekly newspapers.

He also served for about a year as a mission volunteer at a Spanish Baptist church in New Mexico, preaching, working with youth, and driving the church bus.

The OBU Bison was named best small college paper in Oklahoma during Jameson's tenure as editor. He won first and second place writing awards in annual competitions of the Oklahoma Collegiate Press Association.

As feature editor of Baptist Press, the SBC news service, Jameson, a layman, will be responsible for feature and interpretive articles and will serve as feature/photography manager at annual meetings of the SBC.

"One of the most newsworthy aspects of the Christian gospel today is the way people are translating their faith into action. Norman Jameson will concentrate heavily on such stories," said W. C. Fields of Nashville, director of Baptist Press. "He is well qualified to handle the assignment, and we are happy to have him joining the staff."

Baptist Press, which circulates widely to religious and secular news media, is a cooperative news operation among Southern Baptists. It involves six bureaus, about 300 Baptist news and public relations personnel, numerous "stringers" or part-time correspondents, and press representatives in 38 countries around the world where Southern Baptists have missionaries.

Jameson married Sue Ellen Carver of Colorado Springs in 1975. They have no children.

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(BP) Photo. mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Education Commission Names
Communications Director

Baptist Press
10/18/77

NASHVILLE (BP)--Darrell W. Wood has joined the staff of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) here as director of communications.

The 38-year-old native of Seminole, Okla., has served since 1974 as editor of youth materials in the Sunday School department of the SBC Sunday School Board here.

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A former SBC foreign missionary to Hong Kong, where he did publications work, Wood has also done Baptist student work and has had a variety of communications experience.

He was campus minister at Wichita State University, Wichita, Kans., and served as communications/promotion specialist for the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists.

During his school days, he was a reporter for several newspapers, directed international student work for the Missouri Baptist Convention, served as an information specialist and graduate teaching assistant (at the University of Missouri), and worked in advertising and design for several agencies.

Currently, he teaches journalism and communications design as a member of the adjunct faculty of the University of Tennessee at Nashville. He has also taught advertising and public relations at Hong Kong Baptist College.

Wood earned a bachelor of fine arts degree, with a major in information design, from the University of Oklahoma, Norman, and holds a master of arts degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

He is married to the former Priscilla Kelly of Missouri and has two children.

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Borders Accepts Palm Beach
Atlantic College Presidency

Baptist Press
10/18/77

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP)--George R. Borders, vice president for student affairs at Stetson University, DeLand, Fla., has been elected president of Palm Beach Atlantic College here. Both are Baptist schools.

He has been with Stetson nearly 20 years both as a student and in various administrative responsibilities. He will assume his responsibilities at Palm Beach Atlantic in January, succeeding Warren Fusselle, who resigned in May.

Borders, 38, served as chief administrative officer of Stetson during the interim period following the resignation of John E. Johns in 1976, and the election of Pope A. Duncan a year later.

A 1961 graduate of Stetson, Borders served as admissions counselor and church relations representative at the school before a tour in the U. S. Marine Corps and a period at Orlando Junior College as dean of men and psychology instructor. He rejoined Stetson in 1966 as dean of men and became vice president for student affairs in 1973.

Borders also has served the city of DeLand as a city commissioner and the area as a member of the board of directors of the Volusia County Drug Council and the advisory board of the West Volusia Hospital Authority.

He has earned a master of arts degree from East Carolina University in guidance and counseling and a doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Southern Mississippi in administration in higher education. He is a native of Russellville, Ky.

The election of Borders is the third instance in recent years when Stetson has provided a president to another institution of higher learning. Harold Schultz was named president of Bethel College in 1971 and Johns was elected president of Furman University in 1976.

Palm Beach Atlantic College, a four-year school, was founded in 1968 and achieved full accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1972. It is a member of the Florida Association of Colleges and Schools, the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida, and the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

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(BP) Photo will be mailed to Baptist state papers by Stetson University, 10/19/77.

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Church Dismissed For Ordaining Woman

PERRYVILLE, Ky. (BP)--A small Southern Baptist congregation in Gravel Switch, Ky., was removed from membership in its local Baptist association because it ordained a woman to the ministry earlier this year.

The 98-64 vote to dismiss the 130-member Beech Fork Baptist Church came during a session of the South District Baptist Association's annual convention, Oct. 17, at the Perryville Baptist Church here.

The action brought to a close nearly a year of contention between the 158-year old Gravel Switch Church and leaders of the South District Association, which includes about 25 Southern Baptist congregations in Central Kentucky.

The dismissal by the association does not affect the church's relationship to the Kentucky Baptist Convention or the Southern Baptist Convention.

The quarrel began last February when the Beech Fork congregation ordained Suzanne Coyle, a 25-year-old native of Lebanon, Ky. In April, the South District Association ordered the Gravel Switch Church to rescind the ordination or face the vote that would force it out of "fellowship."

That vote followed two hours of strongly-worded debate and parliamentary maneuvering that included a plea from the moderator of Beech Fork congregation, Wilson Hourgan: "We agonized over the decision to ordain Suzanne prayerfully," he said. "She is a God-called person. We don't ask that you agree with us, only that you understand us."

By tradition, Southern Baptist congregations are autonomous and are said to be "in fellowship" with local associations and state and national conventions. The constitutions of most Southern Baptist associations, including the South District in Kentucky, state that the association has no ecclesiastical authority over its member congregations.

In a telephone interview from her Philadelphia apartment, Miss Coyle told Bruce Buursma of the Louisville Courier-Journal that she feels "hurt and sadness" for her church.

"I grew up there, played the piano at the church for years and I love those people," said Miss Coyle, who for the last three years has been a missionary of Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"What can I say about the decision (to dismiss the Gravel Switch church)?" she added. "The association is doing something it strongly believes is right and which I believe is wrong."

Although complete records are not available, it is believed that about 30 women have been ordained in recent years by Southern Baptist congregations, most to serve as chaplains, counselors or religious educators. Most of the more than 35,000 Southern Baptist congregations would, observers feel, oppose ordination of women, an issue which has caused debate in other denominations.

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Southern Names Visiting Professor

Baptist Press
10/18/77

LOUISVILLE (BP)--G. Thomas Halbrooks has been named visiting professor of church history for 1977-78 at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

A former assistant professor of religion at Mercer University at Atlanta, Halbrooks is a graduate of Samford University, Southern Seminary and Emory University. He was a visiting scholar at Southern Seminary last year.

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Campbellsville College Given \$55,000

Baptist Press
10/18/77

CAMPBELLSVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Campbellsville College has been awarded two grants totaling \$55,000 by two Louisville based foundations.

A \$5,000 grant from the V. V. Cooke Foundation has been received, and a \$50,000 grant from the Brown Foundation is expected to arrive later in the semester. The money will be used for scholarships by the Southern Baptist-related senior liberal arts college.

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