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Modern Jonah
Runs No More

By Jim Newton

LUSAKA, ZAMBIA (BP)--Boyd Hensley leaned against the concrete mixer outside the Baptist Building construction site in Lusaka, Zambia, and compared his own life to the experience of Jonah and the whale.

"When I was 25, the Lord called me to preach, but like Jonah, I ran," the wiry, deeply-tanned 54-year-old mechanic and builder said.

For 20 years, Hensley ran from God, refusing to go to church and drifting further from his Christian commitment.

But about four years ago, he and his wife, Edith dedicated themselves to serving the Lord in whatever way He directed.

"We came to the conclusion we had wasted a lot of our life, and we'd better put what years we have left to a good cause," he recalled.

Hensley, however, didn't feel he could preach, and felt he was too old to go to seminary to learn.

Two years ago he took early retirement as a mechanic at a paper mill in Rock Hill, S.C., and moved to Burnsville, N.C., where he opened up an auto repair garage.

Though the Hensleys tried to help in various ministries, nothing seemed to work out.

Boyd heard about an opportunity for laymen to go to Guatemala for a special mission project, and prayed that if the Lord didn't want him to do that, to let him know somehow. The next night, he was injured in a motorcycle accident, with leg injuries that prevented a trip to Guatemala or anywhere else.

"So we prayed, 'Lord, we've tried to do it on our own, and it hasn't worked. So we'll just turn it over to you and you work it out. We'll go anywhere you want us to go, and do anything you want us to do,'" he said.

In January, they learned of the laymen overseas volunteer program of the Foreign Mission Board.

A phone call to board headquarters in Richmond, Va. revealed that for two years the Baptist Mission in Zambia had been requesting a builder to help construct an addition on the Baptist Building in Lusaka and help with other construction projects in the country.

"I'm a better mechanic than I am a builder, but the choice was not mine," Hensley said. "I told the board that wherever they needed me, I'd serve."

By June, the Hensleys were in Zambia, serving at their own expense for one year.

There have been some frustrations with the difference in building codes and procedures between Zambia and America, and some bouts with homesickness for the lush, green hillsides of the Blue Ridge Mountains. But the Hensleys

are happy, for they are no longer "running" from God's call.

"As long as we're working for the Lord, it doesn't matter where we live," said Edith.

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Adapted from Dec. 1977 issue of World Mission Journal

Kans.-Neb. Baptists
Celebrate New Beginning

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TOPEKA, Kans.(BP)--The Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists welcomed a new executive director and a new business administrator-comptroller, elected a new president, and celebrated dedication services for its new convention headquarters building here.

In a meeting one messenger said was "more like a spiritual emphasis than an annual convention," messengers rejected a motion to "create immediately" a Brotherhood Department for work with men and boys that would have been on equal footing and funding with the state's Woman's Missionary Union and would have had a fulltime director.

Messengers also adopted several resolutions, one dealing with moral decay, homosexuality, and support for Anita Bryant, and approved a record 1978 budget of \$1,476,000, of which 20 percent will go to national Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) causes.

R. Rex ("Peck") Lindsay, elected as the bi-state convention's executive director, Oct. 22, was officially presented to the messengers. He succeeds Pat McDaniel, who resigned to accept a post with the SBC Annuity Board, Dallas. The convention's executive committee, in a special called meeting just hours before the annual meeting, voted unanimously to call Harold Crumley, 44, of Great Bend, Kans., as business administrator-comptroller. Crumley will resign a position as comptroller with a paint company in Great Bend to accept the job with the convention.

Messengers also elected Gene Hawkins, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Topeka, as president, and spent an afternoon celebrating the dedication of the bi-state convention building at 5410 W. 7th, Topeka, Kans., 66606. The convention offices recently moved from Wichita, Kans.

After messengers defeated the motion on the convention's Brotherhood Department, they passed a substitute motion that the executive board appoint a personnel committee to work with the new executive director to study the total personnel needs of the bi-state area and make recommendations as soon as possible.

Resolutions dealt with only one controversial area--homosexuality. The resolution opened by decrying "the continued decline of morality in American society." It moved to encourage churches and individuals to support the leadership of the SBC Christian Life Commission and Radio and Television Commission in protesting "television's use of illicit sex, perversion, violence, alcoholic promotion, vulgarity and profanity."

The resolution also called for "prayerful support for the courageous tack that Anita Bryant has taken in expressing her Christian conviction towards sin in general and the homosexual issue in particular."

The 1978 annual meeting will be Nov. 13-15, Olivet Baptist Church, Wichita, Kans.

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Situation Improves
For Romanian Baptists

By Michael Dudit

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Romanian Baptists are experiencing a time of unprecedented freedom from government interference, according to recent reports coming from that Eastern European nation.

Indications are that the pressure on evangelicals has been "eased off" in recent months, Alan Scarfe of the Center for the Study of Religion and Communism at England's Keston College said in an interview while on the campus of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

"A number of meetings are more free than they have been in years. The authorities have been allowing foreign people to come to the churches... and approximately 10,000 Bibles have been imported in recent months," Scarfe notes.

That view is supported by Ronald Goulding, associate secretary for evangelism and education of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), who says information just received indicates that Baptists and other evangelicals in Romania will soon be able to import some 200,000 Bibles.

In a letter received in recent months, Goulding explains, "Josif Ton said they long now for a period of peace from outside interference so that they may be able to continue their ministry in Romania."

Ton, a Baptist pastor and unofficial leader of a religious protest movement in the Communist-controlled country, was the center of a wave of persecution this Spring. The government pressure followed broadcast by Radio Free Europe of a document, prepared by Ton and his associates, listing instances of discrimination against evangelicals in Romania.

Actions against Ton and other pastors in that period included searchings of their homes, confiscation of some possessions, daily interrogations for weeks at a time and occasional beatings, Scarfe asserts.

Since then, however, reports from Romania have grown increasingly optimistic, Goulding indicates. "There is a definite movement of the Holy Spirit among our people there. They're having baptisms and conversions all the time and are free to do it," the BWA official says.

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Court, In Effect, Awards
Baptist Church \$120,000

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Calvary Baptist Church of Washington, D. C., is entitled to collect one third of the estate of a long-time church member who died five years ago, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled in effect.

In a highly unusual decision, the high court voted 5-4 that the attorney for the family heirs of Saliye Lipscomb French used the wrong method of appeal. The refusal to review the case on its merits surprised all parties, since oral arguments had already been presented and justices normally dispose of routine jurisdictional arguments before that stage.

Calvary Baptist, a congregation with ties to both the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches in the USA, stands to receive between \$120,000 and \$130,000 of the more than \$350,000 estate, according to the pastor, George W. Hill.

Another one third is earmarked for St. Matthews Cathedral, a local Roman Catholic parish, and the final one third will go to the natural heirs.

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An attorney for the church told Baptist Press that his opponent, attorney Floyd Willis III, of Rockville, Md., chose to appeal directly to the Supreme Court rather than petition it for a writ of certiorari. The direct appeal route is usually taken when judicial remedies have been exhausted in state courts. Meanwhile, the 90-day time limitation to petition for a writ of certiorari has expired.

Confusion over the proper means to appeal decisions of courts in the District of Columbia has intensified since 1970, when Congress enacted legislation substantially modifying the structure and jurisdiction of local D. C. courts. The high court's decision emphasized, however, that Congress had no intention of enlarging the right of direct appeal from local courts within the District of Columbia.

The family of Mrs. French brought suit under the D. C. "mortmain" statute, a law designed to discourage churches and ministers from using unethical means to extract funds from a dying parishioner. The law declares that any will made less than 30 days before the testator's death is invalid if churches and/or ministers were listed as the beneficiaries. Mrs. French executed her final will on Oct. 13, 1972, and died the following Nov. 2.

Hill, pastor of Calvary Baptist for the past seven years, said that neither he nor anyone else connected with the church brought any pressure upon Mrs. French to include the church in her will. Only Mrs. French and her attorney knew the will's contents, Hill said.

He had been pastor of the downtown church for less than a year when Mrs. French, a member of the church since 1918, died. He said a nephew called him to conduct the funeral and that he did so with no knowledge of the will's contents. He said Mrs. French was not well known in the congregation, was very quiet, and was a regular but modest giver.

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Indianans Support Missions,
Oppose Gays, TV Programs

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. (BP)--The State Convention of Baptists in Indiana emphasized the Southern Baptist Bold Mission Thrust, voted a record \$1.3 million budget and passed resolutions opposing homosexual lifestyles and condemning trends in television programming.

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Jimmy Allen told registered "messengers" to the 19th annual convention that "a breakthrough of God is coming in the form of Bold Mission Thrust and Mission Service Corps." BMT is the SBC plan to proclaim the message of Christ to the entire world and MSC is a plan which seeks 5,000 volunteers for missions at home or abroad for one to two years of service in missions at home or abroad.

The messengers commended Anita Bryant "for her efforts to protect the morals of our nation and our children" (in her stand against homosexual role models for children) and urged "our people to pray for her and to write to the Department of Citrus in (Lakeland), Fla." which reports indicate may phase Miss Bryant out of her orange juice commercials.

An additional resolution reaffirmed support of resolutions the SBC passed in 1976 in Norfolk and 1977 in Kansas City. They label homosexuality as a sin, commend Miss Bryant, urge churches and agencies not to give homosexuality approval through employment, ordination or other designations that it is a normal lifestyle but call for compassion for all persons regardless of lifestyle, and reaffirm the belief that all may be saved from sin through the power of Jesus Christ.

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"The resolution on homosexuality was meaningful to this convention," a spokesman in Indiana said, "because of recent television coverage of a pastor of the Metropolis Church, an Indianapolis gay church, who claims Southern Baptist ordination."

In resolutions on television, the messengers commended the SBC Christian Life Commission for its stand against the controversial ABC-TV series, "Soap," and condemned other television trends, committing themselves to withstand "the rising tide of evil portrayed as desirable on television."

In other actions, the convention re-elected Don Moore, pastor of the First Southern Baptist Church, Evansville, Ind., as president and adopted a plan of finance for its Highland Lakes Campground in Monrovia, Ind. A special called convention in 1976 rejected a fund raising plan. The new plan, which passed without debate, was the work of the convention's executive board.

The 1978 convention will meet at Northeast Park Baptist Church, Evansville, Nov. 14-16.

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Golden Gate Signs 1963
Faith Statement, Hears Hobbs

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MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--In a public signing ceremony here, the faculty of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary reaffirmed their commitment to the statement of Baptist Faith and Message adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in 1963.

During the occasion, attended by students, faculty and area religious leaders, faculty members signed a document certifying that they would teach "in accord with and not contrary to the 1963 statement." Golden Gate Seminary had previously subscribed to the 1925 statement, forerunner of the 1963 statement. The decision to change to the 1963 statement came by vote of the trustees and faculty.

Herschel H. Hobbs, former SBC president and chairman of the 23-member task force appointed in 1962 in San Francisco to draft the Baptist Faith and Message statement, delivered a major address on the formulation of the statement.

"We were careful to keep in mind that we were drawing up a statement for Southern Baptists in general, not just for certain groups within the denomination," he told the audience. "It is not a creed, but an effort on the part of one generation of Southern Baptists to express their belief. And my prayer is that it will serve our generation and others as well, and keep Southern Baptists in the center, where they have always been."

Hobbs, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, said that the statement was not meant to replace the Bible. He said the best defense of the Bible is to "declare it, not defend it." But he believes the things that have anchored Southern Baptists more than anything else, with exception of the Bible, have been the Baptist Faith and Message statements of 1925 and 1963.

He reminded the audience that the preamble to the statement was the part that dealt with soul competency, a Southern Baptist distinctive. He stated that without the preamble, the statement would only be a creed, which it was never intended to be.

The maroon and gold, hand-caligraphed document, signed by seminary president William M. Pinson Jr. and the faculty, will be publicly displayed on the campus.

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Producer Overcomes Strikes
And His Dream Comes True

By Bonita Sparrow

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--When John C. Stevens joined the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission 15 years ago with dreams of being a television producer, he had three strikes against him.

He was young, just having graduated from Baylor University; he had no experience; and he was the boss's son. But those strikes didn't count him out.

Now after paying his learning dues in every part of film making, from cleaning film to gripping, Stevens produces films for television. He is good at his job.

He is so good, in fact, that he is listed as writer, director, and/or producer for most of the half-hour dramas and documentaries released through the Radio and Television Commission's "The Human Dimension" series for television.

He also writes, directs, and produces all the action documentaries for the Commission's exciting new "The Athletes" series.

"The Human Dimension" is aired around the country on 77 stations. "The Athletes," released the first of this year, is on 25.

ABC, CBS, and NBC have aired numerous documentaries on art and history produced in cooperation with the Radio and Television Commission. Much of it has been Stevens' work.

In addition to his other projects, Stevens wrote and produced this year's United Way film, "Our Way." Those who've seen it have commented on its remarkable handling of sensitive subjects, its positive approach to giving. (Stevens also produced last year's acclaimed United Way film, "Sharing.")

"Before I did the United Way film I viewed several of that genre," Stevens said. "I felt some of them appealed to guilt--you know, if we didn't give someone else would suffer.

"Then I looked at Fort Worth and all the good things it offers. I wanted to say, 'Hey, the reason we have such a good city is because Fort Worth people have always worked together, and they've always helped each other and given their fair share, so this time let's just say thanks.' We had a lot of favorable comments."

Compliments on his work are not unusual for Stevens. Recently, the Radio and Television Commission entered four films he had produced in several awards programs and film festivals.

All four films won awards. One earned two. Nor were they the first awards to Stevens' credit. Over the years there have been many.

"I'm always thrilled to win," he acknowledged. "Awards are important to the Commission's work and its image. After all, we're producing religious films for the secular marketplace and they must be exceptional to compete with other films in that marketplace. So, when we go head to head with other film makers and come out a winner, that's good."

In the years that Stevens has been with the Radio and Television Commission, he's lost track of the number of films he's done. "Somewhere in the neighborhood of 65-70," he guessed.

Perhaps one of the secrets of his film success is that he approaches each film as if it were a miniature college course.

"You must cram and study in-depth for months preparing for a film," he said. "A film on Hiroshima, for example, was like taking a course and passing a college subject. But, unlike college, I wasn't fulfilling requirements. And most of the time I can choose the subjects I like. When you're interested in something, it's easier to study it."

Stevens recalled filming astronaut James Irwin who went into Christian evangelism after his Apollo 15 moon walk.

"Our film crew followed Irwin around for several weeks," he said. "One of the things we filmed was his annual physical check-up at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, about a year after the Apollo 15 flight.

"The physical was the most incredibly thorough examination I've ever seen. There were cardiologists and neurologists and the most highly sophisticated, modern, computerized equipment available.

"We filmed it all, including the doctor telling Jim, 'You're in better shape than you were when you went to the moon.' One week later Irwin had a massive heart attack and almost died."

Stevens has learned many things from the people he meets for "The Athletes."

"From Tom Landry I learned not to judge a book by its cover," he said. "I found Landry delightful, a warm human being with emotions and a quick sense of humor. But the media shows him on Sunday afternoons when he's concentrating harder on a football game than most people ever concentrate. He seems emotionless and unsmiling. But he's really not that way at all."

There are always some problems on location but they are minimized by as much as six months of meticulous advance preparation. "Still, sometimes things happen," Stevens shuddered.

He said, recalling a documentary planned in Alaska, "We had done everything we knew to do. Plans were as concrete as we could make them. We had our subject, we had our writer, we had our film crew. But when we arrived, the man we planned to feature just disappeared. We never did hear from him. And we were spending \$1,000 a day of somebody else's money.

"Fortunately, we were able to locate an old Eskimo who was a preacher. The writer was skilled enough to make adjustments and we built the documentary around the Eskimo." (The finished film, "The Hunt," was one of the recent prize winners.)

That was the exception. Film subjects usually are chosen after brainstorming sessions which Stevens participates in with Truett Myers, who heads the commission's television production department, and Paul M. Stevens, commission president. Sometimes several years elapse from the brainstorming sessions to the finished film.

The potential problem of being the boss's son doesn't bother Stevens. "When I first came to the commission I used to feel other people were judging me because I called Paul Stevens 'Dad'," he said candidly. "But, as time went by, I realized that as long as I was doing a good job it didn't matter.

"I can't control being his son, any more than I can control the color of my eyes. But I can control the kind of work I do. I am probably harder on myself than anyone else could be and harder probably than the people I work with would be. I do know Dad bends over backward to make it harder because he doesn't want to be accused of favoritism."

Stevens grinned. "I'm just waiting for the day we're on location and somebody innocently asks Dad, 'Aren't you John Stevens' father?'"



Pastor's Hobby Helps
Write Evangelistic Comic

By Tim Nicholas

COLUMBUS, Miss. (BP)--A cartooning hobby, a short-term mission service need, and the willingness of a Mississippi Baptist pastor to serve, are being parlayed into an evangelistic comic book for young people in Singapore.

Cartooning has been a longtime hobby of Joe McKeever, pastor of First Baptist Church, Columbus, Miss. So in March when he read that a cartoonist was needed in Singapore to help with the book, he jumped at the chance.

He got the "come-ahead" from Singapore by phone at 5 a.m. one morning. McKeever spent two weeks in Singapore preparing for the comic book which is now nearly ready for publication.

The 2.2 million population city is in the midst of an evangelistic effort headed by Southern Baptist missionaries, which includes development of small congregation house churches and a comic book for young people.

The comic book will be in English, the official language of Singapore, and will be sold in stores along with secular comics. McKeever worked in Singapore with a group of young people who helped him write the script. "They told me who the main characters were," said McKeever, who closeted himself for two days to write the dialogue and piece out the action.

He then put that script into the hands of about 20 Singapore youth who molded the dialogue into the way they would say things.

"I had one character saying 'You are really weird,'" said McKeever. "They changed it to 'You are really one kind.' For greetings they changed 'How are you?' to 'How-da?'"

When McKeever left, the whole comic was mapped out panel by panel. Since May, he's been drawing the comic and arranging for addition of color.

The basic plot of the comic is the interaction of three boys, one of whom begins acting strange--he no longer cheats and he shows concern for other people. He finally tells his friends he has become a Christian and they put him down, saying he's played into the hands of the Westerners.

One boy says "Jesus is a creation of moneyface rich people who use him to take advantage of other people." After the boy helps a girl who had planned suicide, they gradually see that he's really changed.

McKeever says he's changed some too. He's always been involved in missions. His church has a goal of \$45,000 this year for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, and McKeever, a member of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's directors, now says, "I'll probably go as a missionary someday."