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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 6, 1978

78-50

**Women Serve As Biblical
Examples For Ministry**

By Robert O'Brien

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--Speaking against the background of a modern era in which the battle for women's rights has penetrated both religious and secular elements of society, Baptist theologian Dale Moody used women as biblical examples for men in fulfilling their worldwide Christian ministries.

Moody, professor of Christian theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., for 33 years, warned about 1,000 persons at the Second World Conference of Baptist Men in Indianapolis "to buckle your seat belts but don't turn off your minds" on the question of women serving in the church.

Basing his comments on biblical texts, Moody described the ministry of the Apostle Paul as "a period when women were being liberated from Jewish conservatism" and secular social influences which suppressed them.

Indicating that societal influences have affected Christian theological views of women, Moody recounted the names of eight women in the 16th chapter of the Book of Romans in the New Testament who showed great faith, determination and ability in assisting Paul in spreading the Christian faith.

"Phoebe, who is described as a deacon, was a patron of many Christians in those days, including Paul," he said. "She went as an advance agent to Rome for Paul. He instructed the Roman Christians to receive her and to do what she said."

The Baptist theologian recounted his own Phoebe--"a five-foot woman in a Model T"--who made it her business to transport him and other 12-year-old boys every week to her Sunday School class where she taught them the Bible and won them to Christ.

"It wasn't a great evangelist who touched my heart," he said. "It was a little woman in a Model T."

Elaborating in an interview later, Moody said, "It's Latin tradition which Protestants inherited which puts women down--not the New Testament."

He said the ancient theologians Jerome, who translated the Latin Bible, and Augustine, who shaped western religious thought, were mainly responsible for putting women in low esteem in Christian thought.

Although they were great theologians, Moody said, their extreme monasticism, hardened by their overreaction against their former sexual excesses, which history documents, caused them to read anti-feminine bias into their theology.

"After the Protestant Reformation, Calvinism, which inherited the influences of Augustine and Jerome and also of Tertullian, didn't do much better by women," he declared. "Besides, John Calvin and his wife were constantly at loggerheads."

"If the 16th chapter of Romans had prevailed," he said in the interview, "we'd have no problem today with women's protests. Biblical books, such as Luke, Acts, Romans and Corinthians, magnify women. They don't downgrade them and their place of service. Women and men are called by God to serve in the church. Paul allowed women to pray, to prophesy, to preach." In his address, Moody urged the men from 43 countries to show the faithfulness of the great men and women of the New Testament in spreading the Christian faith.

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"Christianity is far more than just great doctrine," he declared. "It's great witness for Christ; it's people."

Moody said the spread of ministry to the spiritual and physical needs of the biblical world was not just because of the faithfulness of Jesus' disciples.

It spread, he said, because merchants and working people, whose lives were changed by the power of Christ, took that life-changing message with them wherever they traveled--starting house churches, witnessing, influencing others by their lives, responding to human need.

"It makes no difference what your station in life is," he told the cross-section of men of many colors and from many cultural backgrounds. "But it does make a difference what you do in that station. Do you witness for Christ or not?"

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Preaching Primary
Participants Told

Baptist Press
4/6/78

SHREVEPORT, La. (BP)--"Preaching, more than any ministerial activity, sets the tone of congregational life," William Hull, pastor of Shreveport's First Baptist Church, told participants at the first National Conference of Preaching.

The importance and primacy of preaching in church life was emphasized by five Southern Baptist speakers addressing about 315 participants from 18 states at the first of two national preaching conferences sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Clyde Fant, pastor of First Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas, told preachers to carry out their responsibilities with zeal but not to have an overlay of enthusiasm. "No amount of technique can compensate for what is internal," he said.

After each conference session, participants divided into groups to analyze videotaped sermons provided by five Southern Baptist preachers. Taped sermons were supplied by Russell Dilday, president-elect of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; Gene Garrison, pastor of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City; Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church, Phoenix, Ariz.; Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.; and John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, La.

"Preaching is not a recital of what man has done for God, but what God has done for man," Hull said. "The preacher's utterance is not an informed opinion on spiritual issues, rather it is a divine occurrence in which the Christ-event actually happens all over again."

A second national preaching conference was to be held in Charlotte, N. C., April 10-12.

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Tanzanian Pastor
Confronts Traditions

By Roy Jennings

Baptist Press
4/6/78

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--What do you tell a man with 10 wives who embraces a religion that limits him to one?

That's one of the pressing questions Harry Ambonise Mwasanjala faces almost daily as pastor of Kibisi Baptist Church in Tukuyu, Tanzania. Mwasanjala, attending the five-day Second World Conference of Baptist Men in Indianapolis, explained that he "shows the man what the Bible says, then I leave the decision up to the man and Jesus."

Mwasanjala, 36, a product of Southern Baptist missions 18 years ago, also serves as chairman of the Baptist Convention of Tanzania, made up of 250 churches with 14,000 members.

As a youth Mwasanjala viewed a film shown by a missionary in his village and made a Christian commitment. After three years in Arusha Baptist Seminary, he returned to Tukuyu as pastor of a church with 5 members. It now has 150.

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Mwasanjala said his most difficult job was to lead his father, the chief of the village, to become a Christian.

"My father had five wives and didn't want to leave them," he said. "In a hospital, two days before he died, he called me and asked for the opportunity to hear more about Jesus. After pondering the issue a few minutes he said he felt Jesus was holding his hand."

Mwasanjala, oldest of 20 children, assumed his father's job as chief and now serves as chairman of the village.

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Baptist Men Reawaken
To Need For Involvement

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
4/6/78

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--Baptist men around the world are reawakening to the importance of the church and are expressing a willingness for involvement in God's work, says Stephen Steeves, chairman of the men's department of the Baptist World Alliance.

"Baptist men are discovering that being a spectator is not giving them the satisfaction of service for the Lord," he said during the Second World Conference of Baptist Men in Indianapolis. "And they are becoming involved when they realize they are wanted and needed."

Steeves, a Canadian layman from Moncton, New Brunswick, had a similar reawakening about the time the BWA men's department was established at the Baptist World Congress in Rio de Janeiro in 1960.

"I became convinced that we men have a responsibility that we have been shirking," he said. "We've adopted the philosophy that 'we pay the preacher, and it's his responsibility to look after Christianity in the church and community.'"

"For a number of years now I've been convicted that this is not New Testament teaching and that every man in the church has definite work to do. Men should be co-workers with their pastors, and this philosophy has motivated me to become active in men's work."

Chairman of the board of Modern Enterprises Ltd., a general construction firm in Moncton, Steeves began serving a five year term as secretary of the BWA men's department in 1965. In 1970, he became vice president of the department and in 1975 he began serving a five year term as chairman.

Steeves' involvement is not entirely international. A member of the 125-member Gunningsville church since 1942, he is chairman of the church's board of management, leader of a boy's group and teacher of adults in Sunday School. The Gunningsville church is affiliated with the Atlantic United Baptist Convention, a part of the Baptist Federation of Canada.

Steeves is encouraged by the growth of men's work as evidenced by the growth from the first world conference of men in 1974 in Hong Kong which had 482 participants from 25 countries, to the world conference in Indianapolis with nearly 1,000 participants from 43 countries.

Noting that many countries have no men's work and some countries do not allow men to organize, Steeves said the BWA men's department "has had to establish creditability with the denominational leaders and with churches with whom they represent" around the world.

While acknowledging linguistic and cultural differences among the conference participants, Steeves hastens to emphasize the feeling of brotherhood in Christ and the common needs of men.

"We're hoping to challenge the men to realize that every man is a minister and has a ministry," he said. "And his ministry should be expressed in every phase of his life--with his family, at work, in his community, in his church, and as a citizen of his country. We want to motivate men to a broader vision to the opportunities that face us."

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Retired Couple Hears Call,
Aids Struggling Churches

By Mark Smith

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Responding to a call to "get out of the Bible Belt" and help where Southern Baptist churches are struggling, retired couple Fred and Lillian Dea pulled up and headed west.

In September, 1977, they loaded everything they would need into their Oldsmobile and began an 1,800 mile journey from their home in Wichita Falls, Texas, to the San Francisco Bay area in California. They were heading for an area where no more than 10 percent of the 4.5 million people attend church.

Things went even better than expected for the Deas. They made arrangements to stay at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley until they could find an apartment and part time jobs to supplement their retirement income.

That didn't take long. The day following their arrival, Lillian took a job as a secretary to an area missionary in the small town of Vallejo about 40 miles north of San Francisco. Fred found an apartment the next day and two days later, without even looking for work, he was offered a job as an electrician's helper.

Dea began substitute teaching in Sunday School at North Hills Baptist Church and Lillian worked with the fourth, fifth and sixth grade children.

"Later the pastor at Hillcrest Baptist Church, which is nearby, asked if we would also help his church from time to time. So we began going to both churches, doing anything that was needed," Dea said. "At Hillcrest, Lillian taught married young people and I continued to substitute. We participated in their visitation programs and cooked the meals for some of their visitation suppers."

"We learned a lot about the people out here and about ourselves as well," Lillian confirmed. "In those two churches in Vallejo, we felt like the spirit of the people was just great and we found them to be more enthusiastic than most of the people back in Texas. They may be fewer in number, but we felt a more enthusiastic spirit than we felt at home."

"People out here seem to be more dedicated and take their religion more seriously. These churches are fighting to grow. I think our people back home have just gotten used to the big, powerful church as a way of life, something they have grown up with," Dea declared.

People involved in church work weren't the only ones that intrigued the Deas.

"People in general out here are very friendly," Dea said. "We came to California with the expectation of finding a resistance to the Christian movement. But in visiting with the churches and enlisting prospects, the worst thing we found was an indifference to Christians, not antagonism. People just simply don't care.

"I feel that the Christian folks out here must be extremely dedicated people, because it is so hard to enlist new members into the church from the community because of the indifference."

In December, the Deas quit their jobs in Vallejo and moved to Mill Valley to accept a temporary position as assistant managers in the women's dormitory and guest housing at the seminary. Their pay was their apartment plus \$125.00.

Golden Gate Seminary President William M. Pinson Jr., who used to be the Deas' pastor in Texas, sees their coming as the "front wave of a sea of people," part of the Missions Service Corps (which plans to put 5,000 volunteers besides missionaries at home and abroad by 1982) who will come out of the Bible Belt to help the people of the West.

The Deas are back home in Wichita Falls now, but somehow it isn't the same. They admit they will think often of the small California churches where they worked and will let others know of the need there. "I can certainly state the need," Dea said.

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APR. 10 1978