

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 24, 1978

78-83

Deacon Ministry
Growing Rapidly

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--More than 7,740 Southern Baptist churches, or 20 percent of the total number, have adopted the Baptist Sunday School Board's Deacon Family Ministry Plan as a means to improve the overall ministry to church families.

Charles Treadway, national consultant in deacon ministry at the Sunday School Board, said the plan is a relatively new effort, in which local churches divide congregations into equal groups and assign deacons for personal ministry.

In the Deacon Family Ministry Plan, deacons minister to families in hospitals, during family difficulties and at other times of special need. Sometimes deacons refer members to someone else in the church, such as the pastor, Sunday School director or church training leader for more specialized consultation.

The 1977 Uniform Church Letter was the first time churches have been asked to indicate whether or not they had a Deacon Family Ministry Plan. Of churches reporting use of the plan, nearly half in medium or large cities and in churches with 300 members assign deacons specific families for a personal ministry.

"Every church, regardless of size or location, can profit from the plan," Treadway said. "In the family ministry plan, deacons are concerned about people more than things."

Treadway said several pastors had expressed support for the plan, saying the fellowship in churches is stronger and members receive a more thorough ministry as a result of it.

"As deacons seek to minister to families, their own spiritual lives are strengthened and they have a clearer concept of the mission of the church and their personal relationship with Christ," he continued.

Through the Deacon Family Ministry Plan, he said, the "Deacons grow in their own Christian experience and have the satisfaction of seeing their church become a more meaningful institution in the community."

Treadway said churches using the plan experience a "strengthened fellowship and encouragement of members to minister to one another, plus a pastor, church staff and deacons who become a ministry team and are drawn into a more meaningful fellowship."

National deacon ministry conferences are scheduled regularly around the country and supportive materials are produced by the church administration department of the Sunday School Board.

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President Carter Confirms
Address to Baptist Men

Baptist Press
5/24/78

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Jimmy Carter has accepted an invitation to address the National Conference of Baptist Men on June 16 in Atlanta, the White House announced.

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The address by one of the Southern Baptist Convention's leading laymen in the 16,500 seat Omni Coliseum will climax a rally closing out the conference.

The rally was moved up an hour to 9:30 a.m. to permit President Carter to continue on schedule to Panama where he will participate in Panama Canal Treaty ceremonies.

Glendon McCullough, executive director of the Brotherhood Commission at Memphis, said he invited President Carter to the conference as part of a long range effort to involve more Southern Baptist lay people in denominational activities, particularly the annual meeting of the SBC, which closes a three-day run on June 15.

President Carter was the Georgia Baptist representative on the board of directors of the Brotherhood Commission for six years, resigning after his election as president.

Prior to the president's speech, several thousand Southern Baptist laymen, women and pastors are expected to attend 19 vocational breakfasts in Atlanta hotels.

During a two-hour period, starting at 7 a.m., prominent Southern Baptists will relate how they use their vocations to share their Christian faith.

Among the breakfast program personalities are Skylab 3 astronaut William Pogue, a country comedian, Jerry Clower, Metropolitan Opera soprano Irene Jordan, General Charles W. Bagnal of West Point, N.Y., former Alabama governor Albert Brewer, U. S. representative Claude Pepper (D-Fla.), Liberian ambassador Francis A. Dennis, and SBC president Jimmy Allen.

Breakfast groups are planned for Baptists in agriculture, arts, business and professional positions, church related vocations, communications, education, engineering, government, health services, law enforcement, legal professions, management, military, retirement, sales, technical skills, sports, transportation, and young adults in search of a vocation.

Conference registration is \$12.50, which includes admission to a vocational breakfast and the rally. The conference is open to women.

Tickets are available from the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn., 38104, and at two booths in the Georgia World Congress Center during SBC sessions. Persons should identify the breakfast they want to attend and enclose a check when ordering by mail.

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Powdered Alcohol Product
Poses New Drinking Threat

Baptist Press
5/24/78

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Thanks to a combination of American and Japanese ingenuity, a new alcohol product will soon hit the market which promises to worsen the national hangover of alcohol abuse, particularly among young people, according to a spokesman on alcohol-related issues for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Powdered alcohol, an "all you add is water" product, is now being test marketed on the west coast, and Americans can anticipate an onslaught of advertising, says John A. Wood, director of program development for the Christian Life Commission.

Developed by the Japanese, the first powdered alcohol products are being introduced by Global Marketing Services, which is hoping for nationwide distribution by the end of the year.

The final obstacle keeping powdered alcohol from entering the market was removed recently when the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms reached a decision on how to tax the product.

The "instant cocktails," which follow the introduction of the six percent alcohol candy bar and the alcohol milkshake, are further evidence of a trend in the alcohol industry to make alcohol "as acceptable and accessible as possible," Wood claims.

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"Once again we are faced with the basic problem of regulating alcohol," he says. "Powdered alcohol is another idea whose time hasn't come. It should never have been placed on the market. Even the social drinker should recognize the enormous potential for abuse in this product. It is a product aimed at getting the new drinker and getting the present drinker to drink more. And it is tailor made for abuse among young people."

Wood said that concerned persons who are interested in how the new product will be controlled in their state should contact the state's alcohol control agency, which is responsible for regulating where alcohol may be sold. The only way to keep the product off the market in a state, he explained, is through legislative action.

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Black Eyes and Watermelon:
Just Another Rachel Sims Day

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press
5/24/78

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Trying to explain how an 11-year-old girl gave him two black eyes seemed to be a slight embarrassment to Richard Wilson, director of the Rachel Sims Mission in New Orleans.

But the end result of the two black eyes was worth it--three new baptized believers in Jesus Christ.

It happened last summer during a watermelon feed when Wilson stepped in to break up a fight and the girl, Pat, retaliated with a left hook that smashed Wilson right between the eyes. The next day he had two black shiners.

After the fight, Wilson talked to Pat's mother and asked the pastor of a nearby church to visit the family. Within a few weeks, most of the kids involved in the fight were going to church regularly.

As a result, three of the youngsters later made professions of faith in Christ and were baptised.

Rachel Sims Mission, where the incident took place, is one of three Baptist centers in New Orleans, and one of the oldest Baptist centers in the United States. It was founded in 1919.

The mission is located only a few blocks from the Second Street docks and warehouses on the Mississippi River in an area of New Orleans called the "Irish Channel" because of the once-dense Irish population. The area shifted to a predominantly black population and is now changing again as wealthy whites move back to the inner city. Residents' incomes vary from poverty levels to \$150,000 annually.

To meet these polarized needs, the Rachel Sims Mission has the typical Baptist center approach of clubs for various age groups, with a strong emphasis on Bible study, recreation, crafts, children's activities, puppets, food and clothing distribution, counseling and referral programs.

Wilson, who ran five furniture stores and a funeral home in Buford, Ga., before going into mission work, uses his background and experience to augment the center's financial resources with twice-annual rummage sales at the center.

In addition, the center has a clothing sale every Thursday, with the help of women from Metairie Baptist Church who volunteer to direct that aspect of the work. They got involved when a Sunday School class was looking for a way to use old clothing of church members in an effective ministry to people.

They have become so involved at Rachel Sims that the women have built shelves themselves to better display the clothing, organized the clothes according to size, and built warm and loving relationships with the regulars at Rachel Sims.

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The clothing used to be given away, but Wilson said one time a woman told him she wanted to buy some clothes. When he told her to pick out what she wanted from the free clothing, the woman repeated herself. "You don't understand," she said. "I want to buy some clothes for my children."

"It dawned on me that she didn't have much money, but she had a lot of pride, and she didn't want a handout," Wilson said.

Free food, however, is given to people facing emergencies through the center's participation in the Community Food Bank program. A three-day supply of non-perishable canned goods, beans, rice, cereal, etc., is given to needy people whose homes are burned, or whose Social Security or welfare check has not arrived.

"The main thing we do is just to relate to the people and try to help them in every way we can," Wilson said. "That's why we're here."

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Elsie Taylor Named
Illinois Editorial Assistant

Baptist Press
5/24/78

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)--Elsie Taylor, a secretary in the Illinois Baptist state office of communications for the past seven years, has been named editorial assistant for "The Illinois Baptist" news publication.

The new post was created following the resignation of John M. Whitman as managing editor, according to editor Robert J. Hastings.

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Day of Prayer for Peace
Called on Memorial Day

By Carol Franklin

Baptist Press
5/24/78

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Jimmy Carter has designated Memorial Day, May 29, as a Day of Prayer for Peace according to a proclamation released here.

Carter has called for all Americans to set aside 11 a.m. on the morning of Memorial Day as a time for prayer for lasting peace. He has also asked that the flag be flown at half-mast until noon on that day.

In proclaiming this day of prayer, Carter said, "The highest tribute we can pay those who fought and sometimes died for our country is to strengthen in time of peace those values for which they struggled in time of war."

He continued, "Let us pray for peace, but let us also vow that, if the test of unavoidable combat should ever come again, we will meet it with courage, and devotion to our country."

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