

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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78-120

Allen's Church Leads
With Action, Not Words

By Norman Jameson

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (BP)--Like a whirling dervish, Jimmy Allen has kicked up sand across the country preaching missions during his 14 months as Southern Baptist Convention president.

His hasn't been the extra-nickel-in-the-plate-amen-Sunday-dinner-at-Shoney's message but admonitions that if the SBC is serious about its goal to evangelize the entire world by the year 2000, individuals will have to get with it.

And, if he wished, he could say, "like my church is doing." Members of his church have rolled into Syracuse, typical of their style over the years of launching a wide range of ministries, to establish University Baptist Chapel near Syracuse University.

Setting a prime model for "participation missions," the church sent four of its 11 ministers to Syracuse last winter to design a plan of approach. The 9,000-member church then sent and supported its own Mission Service Corps couple, Steven and Sally Cosgrove, both school teachers, to head the work.

This summer, four Vacation Bible School teams each spent a week there, helped by the ministry of their "Game Wagon," a mobile recreation unit that creates an instant children's park wherever it stops. Prayer partners at home in San Antonio receive daily telephone reports of the progress and needs.

Allen spent three days in Syracuse himself, rallying local Baptists around the effort to establish the new work. North Side Baptist Church of Liverpool in Syracuse is the local sponsoring church.

It was Allen's presence, as president of the huge 13.1 million-member Southern Baptist Convention, that most impressed both local Baptists and non-Baptist observers.

"It said something to them that the president of the convention--with all our large churches and millions of members, and his own large church--would take a week out of his very busy schedule to be here himself," said Jack Lowndes, executive secretary-treasurer of the Baptist Convention of New York.

"For the first time" according to Lowndes, Baptist work in the area got good exposure through television, radio and newspapers as the local media took their chance to interview the national newsmaker.

In September, First Baptist will send Bible study leaders, followed by leadership training people, thus overcoming one of the primary problems in new work--lack of trained leadership.

"You can't go in with a brief program and do lasting good," Allen says of his church's "Venture Missions." First Baptist used to send small groups several places during the summer. One year, teams went to four countries and 11 states. But in the last two years they have concentrated all their resources on a single effort.

Lowndes said that Allen's church, besides starting a new work, also "saved" 10-year-old Central Baptist Church which was without a pastor approaching the vital summer months in the inner city. Over 100 children romped around the game wagon and enrolled in a Vacation Bible School there.

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Allen says any church that has even a single full-time staff member can be involved in participation missions if it selects its target with its resources in mind. That will mean a project closer to home for many but the needs there are just as vital.

"Participation missions," says Allen who started using the term about a year ago, "means I actually go to help with missions. I don't just send my money--I give myself."

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Texans Help Flood
Victims in Minnesota

By Orville Scott

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AUSTIN, Minn. (BP)--Texas Baptists, who have carried out disaster relief activities as far south as Honduras, have joined flood relief efforts in Minnesota.

In the wake of what was labeled "a hundred year flood" in Austin, Minn., Texas Baptists approved use of disaster funds of up to \$5,000 to help many of the 200 displaced families.

Austin, a city of 26,000 people, suffered \$50 million in flood damage less than two weeks after a major flood struck Rochester to the south.

A relief task force was sent from the Baptist General Convention of Texas, which has sponsored pioneer mission work in Minnesota-Wisconsin since 1956. Summer missionaries helped feed the people and conducted day camps for children of flood victims while the parents were involved in clean up operations.

The Baptist disaster relief effort had headquarters in the building where three families have been meeting to begin a church under sponsorship of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Rochester, Minn.

"We believe this caring ministry by Baptists will help to launch the first Southern Baptist church in Austin," said Otha Winningham, Minnesota-Wisconsin missions coordinator. The number of SBC churches and missions in the two-state area has grown to about 75 with the addition of a dozen new works this year. The goal for 1978 is 19 new churches.

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House Supports Indian
Freedom Of Religion

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WASHINGTON (BP)--American Indian religious freedom received a boost from a bill passed by the House of Representatives while Indians were demonstrating in the capital against several other bills which have been introduced in Congress.

The bill, approved earlier by the Senate, would preserve and protect traditional Indian religious freedoms. These include access to sacred sites, use and possession of sacred objects and substances, and the freedom to worship through traditional ceremonies. Rights of American Indians, Eskimos, Aleuts and native Hawaiians are protected by the measure.

The bills, which drew Indians to Washington from across the nation on a six-month trek, would terminate all treaties with Indian nations and tribes as well as place most hunting and fishing activities of Indians under the jurisdiction of the states.

The Longest Walk, as the Indian trek is called, began on Alcatraz Island in California on February 11 as a spiritual and educational effort. About 1,800 Indians and their supporters entered Washington to smoke a sacred pipe carried across the country and to begin a week of protests and religious services.

Leaders of the protest object to the abrogation of the treaties which have governed Indians for generations on the grounds that they are sovereign nations within the United States. They also charge that this "anti-Indian" legislation would take away the responsibility to control their own lives.

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Rep. Jack E. Cunningham, R.-Wash., prime sponsor of three of the bills to which the Indians object, counters that the legislation would place responsibility squarely on the Indians and get the federal government out of the business of managing their affairs.

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Illinois Baptists Offer
Alternative to Abortion

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CARMI, Ill. (BP)--Southern Baptists in Illinois have opened a facility on the campus of the Baptist Children's Home, Carmi, Ill., to care for unwed mothers, including hospitalization and delivery, to give an alternative to abortion.

"We want unmarried youth (of any race or religion) in Illinois to know there's an alternative to abortion, that we will care for them during their pregnancy, and that also, if desired by the mother, will place the baby with adoptive parents," said Leon Talley, director of social services for the home.

There's no charge for the service, although Talley said the home hopes to recover basic costs, when the mother, her parents, or the father, can afford to pay.

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Mrs. W. E. McKenney
Dies At Home July 21

Baptist Press
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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Lillie Belle McKenney, wife of Southern Baptist Executive Committee member William Earl McKenney, died at home July 21 after a long illness. She was 69.

She is survived by her husband; one daughter, Mrs. Don Tison, Winterhaven, Fla.; two brothers, one sister and three grandchildren.

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R. G. Lee Eulogized
In Memorial Service

Baptist Press
7/24/78

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Pay day arrived for R. G. Lee on July 20.

The 91-year-old pastor emeritus of Bellevue Baptist Church, who gained international fame for his sermon "Pay Day Someday," was eulogized during memorial services at the church he pastored for 33 years.

Six Baptist preachers praised Lee's ministry, describing him as "the greatest orator and pulpiteer of all time," the "peerless prince of preachers," "the greatest master of the English language of all time," "a preacher's preacher and a pastor's pastor," "a legend in his time," "a defender of the faith," and "a giant among us."

"What William Shakespeare was to English prose, Robert G. Lee was to the pulpit," said Padgett C. Cope, pastor of Ruhama Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. Describing his sermons as "painted canvases" preached with a "pictorial style" filled with life and color, Cope said Lee's sermons were equal to any sermons by such greats as Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Dwight L. Moody, Jonathan Edwards, or Charles Fuller.

Describing Lee as a prolific writer and author of 56 books, E. J. Daniels, an evangelist and publisher from Orlando, Fla., called Lee "the greatest master of the English language of all time."

Adrian Rogers, pastor of the Bellevue church, read a telegram from evangelist Billy Graham, expressing regret that he could not be present and describing Lee as "one of the towering spiritual giants of this century."

Both Daniels and Rogers quoted Lee's sermon and book on "The Place Called Heaven," in which he sought to describe the beauty of heaven. Rogers said that in the last few days of his life, Lee longed for heaven and "saw a vision of heaven."

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Rogers said that as Lee lay on his death bed he lifted his hands and told his daughter, Hildred Phillips, "I see a bright light. It's heaven. I see Jesus. "

"I tried to describe heaven," he told his daughter, "but my words were so woefully inadequate. I wish I could tell the people how beautiful it really is." Then Lee said he saw another figure beside Jesus. "It's mother," he said. "She's beautiful."

Rogers said that although his sight was failing, Lee had a clear glimpse into another world during those last few days. "And now he is there in heaven, which he described so beautifully for us all."

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'Miracle 25' Project
Sees 18 Church Starts

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
7/24/78

PORTLAND, Ore. (BP)--Portland area Southern Baptists began 18 new mission congregations in a single day July 23.

The congregations were started as part of the "Miracle 25" project, a plan, formulated early in 1977, to launch at least 25 mission churches. The 18 congregations started July 23 joined seven others which were started in the early weeks of July and one planned to begin Sunday, July 30.

To aid the effort, 207 volunteers from the Union Baptist Association in Houston, Texas, and about 50 others from Texas, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Georgia, conducted Backyard Bible Clubs, surveys and ACTION Sunday School enlistment campaigns.

Darrell Evenson, director of missions for the Interstate Baptist Association, a group of 50 churches in Portland and Vancouver, Wash., enlisted sponsoring churches. Most are small, and more than half have less than 100 persons in average attendance.

Tabulations of attendance at the 26 new congregations started indicated two did not have services and two more had only church workers and other volunteers present for the inaugural effort. Others reported only marginal success, from one to 28 persons present for worship services. Most ranged, however, from two through the teens in attendance.

The massive effort by volunteers and church leaders from the Portland area resulted in two professions of faith Sunday, but several church leaders said they recorded decisions during Vacation Bible Schools and Backyard Bible Clubs.

In evaluating the project, Baptist Sunday School Board contract worker Bill Bumpass said: "We can't measure what was done in numbers. The effect of starting the new churches will be felt in the weeks and months and years ahead. I feel the next few days are important for the people in the sponsoring churches and missions. Now that they have put feet in the water, they've got to go ahead and take the plunge."

Royce Shoemate, pastor of Parkrose Baptist Church of Portland which sponsored Troutdale Baptist Mission, and other pastors felt the week-long volunteer effort was just a starting point. They weren't discouraged. Although 50 of the 52 present for Troutdale's first service were from Richmond Plaza Baptist Church in Houston, Shoemate said, "I don't feel badly about it."

"In fact, I'm encouraged," he said. "I think we uncovered some good prospects who will require some intensive cultivation. Reaching them will take some work. We will not grow fast. We will reach them one family at a time. We will add a family, and they will strengthen us. Then, we will reach out and add another family."

Analyzing the effort, Bumpass added: "If I had it to do over again, I don't think we should set a certain day that we will begin "x" number of churches. I think we should aim to start 25 or 50 churches within a given year rather than centering on one specific day. Some of the churches were ready to go before July 23 and some still aren't ready."

Evenson noted he is pleased with the results of "Miracle 25." "It has shown us we can start missions if we want to," he said. "We have broken that old apathy about starting new missions."

"I think the results are good...but I don't think we live up to our potential. I think all of the missions can survive if we want them to. I know we are on shaky ground with some of them, but I think they can all live if we will try."

Evenson hopes "some retired pastors or bi-vocational men" will come to Portland to take over leadership of the fledgling congregations.

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