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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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August 18, 1978

Renewal Movement  
Reaches Crossroads

78-136

By Adon Taft

MIAMI (BP)--The lay renewal movement is at a crossroads, one of the key men in its development believes.

Findley Edge, author of such renewal books as "The Greening of the Church" and "The Quest for Vitality," says that on one hand the 20-year-old movement is both fragmenting into small groups with different approaches, and being swallowed by the institutional church--which at first feared but now has "de-fanged" the renewal process within its ranks; but on the other hand, is beginning to take root in some congregations which have accepted the idea in its totality and is spurring action toward dealing with problems such as poverty and war.

The key to which way renewal goes, says the professor of religious education at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., is whether people "really understand what the Bible says about what it means to be God's people in today's world."

His assessment of the movement, which has its roots in the concept of personal commitment stressed in the World War II era thinking of such men as German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, is shared at the Institute for Church Renewal in Atlanta.

"Two years ago, we thought the renewal movement had cooled off," notes Mrs. Ellen Parry, associate director of that interdenominational agency.

It had become a full-fledged movement in the '60s when a number of ideas blossomed from Bonhoeffer's concept as it was developed in this country by such men as D. Elton Trueblood, the Quaker philosopher at Earlham College.

Elaborating on the "I--Thou" thesis of Jewish theologian Martin Buber, Bruce Larson and Ralph Osborne began developing the relational theology which focused on the need to build deep and meaningful relationships among those with a deep personal commitment to God.

From there, Lyman Coleman and Keith Miller went on to teach that to be fully human beings begins with liking yourself as the handiwork of God. They employed the transactional psychology of Thomas A. Harris in the small group setting to develop the concept.

Meanwhile, a string of Quaker pietists and Christian mystics--John Woolman, Rufus Jones, Thomas Kelley and Douglas Steere--were stressing that the starting point for renewal is at a deepened devotional life.

To that idea, Gordon Cosby and Elizabeth O'Connor, at the Washington, D. C., Church of the Savior, combined what they termed the "critical minimum" for balancing the "journey outward" (a life lived in mission in society) with the "journey inward" (a life lived out of the deep center of relationship with God).

Other parallel developments included the kind of renewal of ecclesiastical structures as took place at the Second Vatican Council in Rome, the liturgical renewal evident in folk musicals and guitar masses, and the renewed interest in social issues typified in the civil rights movement.

Nearly all of these aspects of renewal--including the emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit which marked the "charismatic" segment--became a part of the lay witness movement that grew out of the ministry of Ben Campbell Johnson, a United Methodist clergyman who now is director of the Lay Renewal Institute.

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"I would estimate that 10 million laymen in more than 50,000 churches have had their lives touched by the renewal movement," he reports. "Ten years ago, no layman talked about his ministry. Now, we're seeing an era of lay religion and that's not always healthy. But if laymen see themselves as ministers through their jobs, then their faith can have an impact on society."

Johnson believes the movement has matured in the last two years and is stronger than ever in every major denomination because its thrust has been organized into the regular structures of the church.

Like Edge, Johnson sees Bible study as the key to the future of lay renewal. But, partly because of their background in denominations which have had different attitudes toward the Bible, they disagree over the direction that study should take.

"Lyle Schaller, the former Detroit city planner who became a United Methodist minister and is one of the best students of trends, says the greatest demand in the church today is for study of Bible content rather than for principles which apply to social situations," says Johnson. His denomination has stressed the study of the Bible for principles for social action in recent years, he explains. So his institute has developed a Bible study program and recommends some others like the Bethel Bible Series.

Edge, on the other hand, insists that "one of the problems we have in the church is that people really do not understand the depth of what it means to be the people of God. They think that if they are moral, good, kind and go to church they are doing what they are supposed to do."

He believes that "God called a people who would join with Him in the mission of redeeming the world. And in redeeming the world, I think He means not only individually, but socially."

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Faculty/Staff Changes  
Noted At Golden Gate

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MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary will welcome six new members to its teaching and staff ranks this fall.

Newcomers include Mrs. Nancy Giddens, who will assume full-time responsibilities as circulation and reference librarian, and Janie Jones, who will serve as part-time instructor in church music.

Mrs. Giddens, who is also the instructor in dactylology (deaf sign language) at Golden Gate, is a graduate of California Baptist College, Riverside, where she earned the bachelor of arts degree. She also holds master of library science and master of education degrees from the University of Hawaii.

Miss Jones has been an instructor in piano in the Conservatory of Music at California State University, Dominguez Hills and Palos Verdes. She holds the bachelor of music education degree from Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, and the master of music degree from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

James L. Barber, assistant director of Christian Social Ministries for the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board, Atlanta, Ga., will join the faculty to teach one class and provide counseling to students and seminary families.

Mrs. Eddie L. Bunton, who has served for 20 years as supervisor of music of grades 1-12 for the Wichita Falls, Tex., public school system, will join the church music faculty to teach two courses. She has taught for 34 years.

Rudolph M. Wood, Southern Baptist missionary to Belgium since 1967, will serve as the seminary's visiting professor of missions, replacing Richard Plampin, who returned to service in Brazil. Formerly stationed in Luxembourg, Wood will teach three courses and assist in conducting a doctor of ministry seminar in January 1979.

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And, as previously reported, William L. Hendricks will join the Golden Gate faculty as professor of systematic theology and philosophy of religion. He has been serving on the faculty of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex.

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Baptists Follow Tears,  
Help After Texas Flood

By Mike Livingston

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8/18/78

KERRVILLE, Texas (BP)--Bursts of conversation erupted like the flash floods that brought a nightmare yesterday.

"God was with me in that tree last night; there's no way I could have held on through that flood without him," said a young woman, biting at the fingernails on one hand.

"Everything I had was in that trailer and it's gone," mumbled a middle-aged man, sifting through the debris where his home had stood.

"When I saw my apartment after the flood, I just went to pieces and cried," said the resident of a senior citizens' housing complex.

Others couldn't talk at all about the early August flood in west Texas that took 30 lives. And the look on their faces was a strange mixture of pain and relief. At least, the ordeal was over, the look said.

The young couple being attended by Red Cross workers in Kerrville Municipal Auditorium were among those who couldn't talk about the flood. They had clung first to a rooftop and then to higher ground for three days with only enough food for their 4-month-old baby.

A 32-year-old widow, working two jobs to support herself and her four children, had rushed home from her night job and had been able to drive the kids in the car to the auditorium in a blinding rain. Then she had to be taken to the hospital.

Early unofficial reports were that more than 500 homes in West Texas' hill country had been affected by the floods when 30 inches of rain fell in two days. More than 400 homes were washed away or completely destroyed, according to estimates of officials with the Texas Baptist Disaster Relief Unit.

Members of the organization had just returned less than two weeks earlier from Minnesota where 500 homes also had been flooded there. However, in Minnesota less than 30 homes were destroyed. Such was the force of flood waters that swept through an area approximately 60 miles wide by 150 miles long.

"The crying need right now," said Robert Dixon who headed the Texas Baptist disaster relief crews, "is for contractors to provide damage estimates so the flood victims can receive grants and low interest loans from the federal government." Texas Baptist Men flew three contractors to Albany, but more are needed. Lloyd Henderson, Baptist General Convention of Texas missions support section and a member of the disaster relief task force, reported that the black community of Albany appeared "wiped out" by the flood. Local relief committees decided to send each family \$100 with a letter from pastor Lamb explaining that the money is provided by the Baptist General Convention of Texas to help with immediate needs.

In addition, \$40,000 will be used from the convention's emergency relief fund.

An 18-wheel disaster relief mobile unit was the hub around which 650 volunteers from Texas Baptist churches worked for two weeks in Kerrville and Graham. The tractor trailer, equipped with emergency supplies, a large generator and communications facilities, was used to feed thousands of meals to homeless flood victims and disaster relief workers. Its generator provided power for a children's home in Medina until electricity was restored.

Kerrville Baptists cooked food at Trinity and First Baptist Churches which was taken in trucks to homeless flood victims in nearby Bandera, Center Point, Comfort, Medina, Ingram and Hunt. HEB food stores donated groceries for Kerrville and two days supply for the mobile unit to take to Graham.

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Tales of the flood's fury were endless.

A Kerrville man stood shaking his head as he told of his pickup truck being found in the Medina River, seven miles downstream from his home.

Until last week, the Rev. Richard Porche of First Baptist Church, Center Point, had only had one double funeral in the 29 years of his ministry. Saturday he had two.

At 10 o'clock he led services for Ritchie and Bonnie Bridges, an 11- and 12-year-old brother and sister. The Bridges family had moved to Center Point only two days before the flood. Mrs. Bridges had attended church services Sunday with Ritchie, Bonnie and her 8-year-old son, Billy. They planned to join the church when Mr. Bridges, an oil rigger in the Gulf of Mexico, returned home from work.

Neighbors said Verde Creek, running 40 feet behind the Bridges' home, was dry the day they moved in. Sunday night it crested at 23 feet and exploded the two-story house hurling Mrs. Bridges and Billy out through the top.

At 1 o'clock Porche led the services for Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Pickett, an elderly couple who had lived alone in a mobile home.

The flood took its toll, in isolated and low lying areas along streams, creeks and river beds. Many in elevated areas were uneffected.

Evidently there were others unaffected by the disaster. In the town of Comfort that afternoon, sightseers began honking their car horns to motion rescue workers out of their way.

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International Publications  
Center Proposed For Africa

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8/18/78

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--A new international publications center has been proposed as part of a plan to give a Bold Mission Thrust impetus to literature evangelism in eastern and southern Africa.

The proposal was made by approximately 60 Africans and missionaries from 10 countries in Africa who met at Limuru, Kenya, for a two-week international literature conference. It was the first time African Baptists had participated in such a meeting, although similar conferences had been held in 1970 and 1974.

Representatives of five Baptist publishing houses in eastern and southern Africa were elected as a committee to set up the new publications center by Dec. 31, 1979.

They are B. M. Likatho of Malawi, G. W. Morcum of South Africa and three Southern Baptist missionaries--Gary L. Baldrige of Zambia, Horace F. Burns of Rhodesia, and R. J. Stewart of Kenya, who was named interim coordinator.

The committee will work out details to establish the international center and also will plan and conduct a special international literature saturation campaign in keeping with the goals of Bold Mission Thrust, the Southern Baptist program which seeks ultimately to share the gospel with all people by the year 2000.

Most of the literature saturation will be done before the center is established. It will include starting a quarterly outreach magazine with a youth-family life focus; securing and distributing two million copies of two-color evangelistic tracts; publishing of prize-winning short stories written by Africans; and extension of the Bible Way correspondence school curriculum. African and missionary co-editors were recommended for all levels of materials.

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## Highest Baptism Rate In Smaller, Newer Churches

RIDGECREST, N. C. (BP)--Smaller, newer churches are the most effective evangelistic organizations in the Southern Baptist Convention, according to a report released by SBC Home Mission Board researchers Phil Jones and Clay Price.

Their report shows that while such small, new churches account for only about 10 percent of the total SBC baptisms, they have the highest ratio of baptisms per 100 resident members.

"The data reveals that the younger the church and the smaller the church, the higher the baptism rate," the report said. "Churches less than 11 years old with fewer than 50 resident members had a baptism rate of 11.4 per 100 members; the baptism for all churches of the Southern Baptist Convention was 4.7 per 100."

Simply stated, the report said, "the older the church, the lower the baptism rate."

The survey compared baptisms--by numbers and percentages--of 32,970 churches as reported in the 1976 uniform church letters. Some of the 35,277 churches of the convention either did not submit the report or turned in incomplete statistical data, Jones said.

"The bulk of the baptisms come from churches over 40 years old simply because 60 percent of all SBC churches are in this category," the report said, revealing that those older, larger churches had a baptism rate of 3.7 per 100 resident members, making them the least effective organizations of the SBC.

In presenting the report to directors of missions during Home Missions Week at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, Nelson Tilton, associate director of the Home Mission Board department of church extension said: "Consider, if the baptism rate for all our churches was the same as the rate for churches less than 11 years old, the total number of recorded baptisms in 1976 would have been 889,000 or double the number of baptisms actually reported."

The 345,000 baptisms reported by SBC churches in 1976 were the lowest in 27 years. "By the year 2000, at our present rate of growth, the SBC will hardly be larger than 22 million members," Tilton said. "However, if the SBC accepted a challenge of increasing the baptism rate--winning 10 converts per 100 resident members, or a 10 to 1 ratio--the SBC could have over 100 million members by the year 2000."

Tilton added that there would need to be 210,000 Southern Baptist churches--175,000 more than the current number--for that many members.

"We haven't even begun to imagine in those kinds of terms, much less to think in those kinds of terms," he said. "Yet, if we are going to win our nation to Christ, we must become more effective evangelistically."

The report also reflected a 30 year decline in beginning new works. "Between 1947 and 1956, some 4,646 SBC churches were organized. The number dropped to 3,796 between 1957 and 1966, and between 1967 and 1976 only 2,356 churches were organized," the report said.

"Older and larger churches need to examine their current emphasis on evangelism," wrote Jones. "Certainly, evangelism is a broader outreach effort than is reflected in sheer number of baptisms. However, numbers of baptisms and baptism rates are measurable results of evangelism efforts."

Jones suggested two approaches to utilize the results of the survey. The first priority, he said, "is for Southern Baptists to increase the evangelistic effectiveness of the older churches." Second, "older churches might increase their evangelistic effectiveness through mission outreach (starting new units of work).

"Both of these major implications are clearly in line with the Southern Baptist Convention theme of Bold Mission Thrust: 'to let every person in our land have an opportunity to hear and accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and to let every person in our land have an opportunity to share in the witness and ministry of a New Testament fellowship of believers.'"

"I believe that for Southern Baptists--with all our people, resources and ability--to be content with 22 million members when 100 million is possible, is very nearly criminal, if we consider it in the light of the great commission," Tilton added.

"If we intend to evangelize the world by the year 2000, we can't accept the ratio of less than 10 to 1. And, if we accept the challenge of evangelizing and congregationalizing our land, we must be prepared to start at least 10,000 new churches a year.

"Last year, we started only 750."

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Carter Renews Pledge To  
Veto Tuition Tax Credits

By Stan Hasteley

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WASHINGTON (BP)--President Carter declared that he will "have no hesitancy" to veto a tuition tax credit bill if such a measure reaches his desk for signature.

At a nationally televised news conference, the president reiterated his opposition to tuition tax credits as a means of providing relief for college tuition costs or for tuition paid by parents of nonpublic school pupils.

"I do not favor the tuition tax credit approach," the president said. He went on to declare that he opposes such aid at the elementary and secondary levels "even more strongly" for constitutional reasons of separation of church and state.

Carter took advantage of the question regarding his possible veto of such a bill to express generally his views on the presidential option of vetoing legislation. In a statement read at the outset of the news conference, he announced his intention to veto the weapons procurement measure recently passed by Congress.

"A veto is a prerogative that a president is given under the constitution," he said, an option that should be seen as "routine" in the American system. He called exercise of the veto a "duty that falls on me."

Carter's threat to veto the tuition tax credit bill is only the latest in a long series of such statements both by the president and by HEW Secretary Joseph A. Califano, who often during the past months has been a presidential spokesman on the issue.

The administration has openly encouraged the new Coalition to Save Public Education, for example. That group, which includes the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, was formed earlier this year specifically to defeat tuition tax credit legislation.

On June 1, the House of Representatives, for the first time ever, passed a tax credit bill which would allow taxpayers to subtract from their tax forms up to \$250 by 1980 for college tuition and up to \$100 for tuition paid to private elementary and secondary schools.

The Senate passed a college tuition tax credit bill August 15 allowing a credit of up to \$500 by 1980 for college tuition, but disallowing the elementary-secondary tax credit.

The bill has been assigned to a conference committee composed of representatives from both chambers where differences between the two must be resolved. The final version would then go back for votes in both the House and Senate before going to the president.

Because of President Carter's firm indication that he would veto any such measure, chances appear dimmer that tuition tax credits will be enacted this year. A two-thirds majority in each house would be required to override the promised veto.

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Most Efforts Reach  
Just 1/3 of Population

By Dan Martin

RIDGECREST, N. C. (BP)--The vast majority of evangelical churches in the United States focus their attention on a minority of the population, church planning expert Lyle Schaller told a workshop for directors of missions at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

"At least 90 percent of the evangelistic churches are concentrating their evangelistic efforts--or their dream of evangelistic efforts, if they don't have any--on a third of the population and leaving the other two-thirds largely untouched," said Schaller, author and parish consultant with the Yokefellow Institute.

Schaller, speaking during Home Missions Week, said the focus of evangelistic effort is the young couple, husband, wife and children under 18 still living at home, that comprises only 34 percent of the population.

"The remaining two-thirds are largely ignored by evangelical churches," he said. "They are husband-wife couples without children at home and they are single families, divorced people, single adults a vast array of other people."

The church planning expert said that although recent United States labor department statistics indicate that only "6.8 percent of the population is in the category of husband, wife, children under 18 in a household where the wife does not work outside the home, most church evangelistic efforts are aimed at this stereotype of the typical American family."

In his survey of the American church scene, Schaller said evangelistic churches must reach out to single parent families, divorced persons, the never married and a "whole bundle" of other persons who are not in the ideal American stereotype.

In fact, he said, if Southern Baptists are to prevent decline, the denomination must reach this two-thirds of the population. But he felt "many Southern Baptist congregations are "pretty well entrenched in yesterday...their number one priority is to recreate 1953."

Schaller noted also that "a lot of Southern Baptist congregations are living in today and tomorrow. Many of them are now much more open to single parent families than they would have been 10 or 15 years ago. This has happened because a lot of adults, mature leaders, have a son or a daughter who is now a single parent. That changes the perspective a whole lot."

He said Southern Baptists as a whole are responding pretty well to change and that their Home Mission Board is one of two national home mission agencies which are living in today and tomorrow. The other is the division for mission in North America of the Lutheran Church of America.

Schaller was asked if he foresees decline within the SBC. "Somewhere around 1971 it looked like the SBC had peaked and was going to begin decline like the United Methodists did in 1964," he responded. "But some things began taking place and the HMB evangelism section made some changes which turned the decline around."

"That has kept the downward curve from materializing, but there are some cautions I would raise. First is that Southern Baptists have a kind of institutional inertia which will push you downward unless you keep resisting it. You have to fight to stay even."

"The second thing is that even though I have a lot of admiration for Southern Baptists' approach to new church development, that alone is not going to do it. You must have congregations expand their horizons; try to reach the two-thirds of the population which have been ignored."

"There are three issues I think are pivotal for the SBC. First, you must be able to start new congregations to reach ethnic groups, the new migrations. Second, and this is the most sensitive, is the SBC response to the charismatic movement. I think the SBC is going to have to learn to live with the charismatic movement and you haven't done that yet."

The third pivotal issue Schaller cited is the ability of Southern Baptists to reach what are now the young parents who were born in the 1940s and early 1950s, many of whom came out of the counterculture with a non-traditional value system.

"I think you will probably be able to establish new congregations," Schaller predicted. "I am not so optimistic about your ability to accommodate yourself to the charismatic movement. I am middle-of-the-road about whether you will reach the young people who were part of the counter culture.

"However, if you do not do these things, I believe you will plateau, and it is very hard to stay on a plateau."

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Deaf, Interpreters Meet,  
Elect Earwood, Porter

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RIDGECREST, N. C. (BP)--Carl Earwood of Irving, Texas, was re-elected president of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf as about 410 members met in annual session.

Participants represented the more than 600 Southern Baptist Convention churches which have ministries to the deaf. The conference featured workshops for the deaf, and for hearing interpreters who work with them, to improve communications skills, leadership, stewardship and others.

"The main purpose of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf is to learn and to share together ideas about ministries to the deaf," Earwood said through an interpreter. "We want to help people who attend learn how to be better Christians, and how to serve better and to send them back to the churches better equipped to serve the Lord."

During the meeting, the Workshop for Southern Baptist Interpreters also met and elected Van C. Porter of Columbia, S. C., as president. The groups for deaf and interpreters set their 1979 meeting for August 4-10 at Lake Yale, Fla., where Earwood said he expects 1,000 to attend. A special feature will be a sign language choir festival.

"We also voted to collect money to send a deaf foreign student to a school in the United States for training as a missionary pastor," Earwood said. The group also focused attention on the need to train deaf persons as pastors, missionaries and teachers in order to reach the unchurched deaf persons of America.

"The number of those who have accepted Christ is very low," he said. "Many of the deaf have never been witnessed to or even contacted. Many live in areas where there is no one to witness to them. The majority of the deaf in this country have not been reached."

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CORRECTION:

In (BP) story mailed Aug. 16, entitled "Excuses Hold No Water With Faithful Minnie," second paragraph should say the 83-year-old nursing home resident in Ironton, Mo., has not missed a Sunday in 60 years.

Ironton replaces Irontown (change it also in dateline). And not is inserted after has.

Thanks



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