



BAPTIST PRESS

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September 22, 1978

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Prayer Urged That PLO
Won't Carry Out Threats

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists are being asked to pray that the Palestine Liberation Organization will not carry out its threat of attacks on American or western targets.

The call to specific prayer for the PLO leaders was issued by R. Keith Parks, director of the mission support division of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"As we continue to pray for President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin," Parks said, "we will want also to remember the Christians in that area as well as the missionaries and other Americans that are living there."

Intercessory prayer, Parks noted, "may be the most important thing that can be done to enable the carrying out of the Camp David agreements."

A high ranking guerrilla official of the PLO was quoted Sept. 21 as saying that a decision had been made to strike against the United States and other western targets in reprisal against American leadership of the Camp David efforts for Middle East peace. No specific targets were identified.

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Jaroy Weber Takes
Early Retirement

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LUBBOCK, Texas (BP)--Jaroy Weber, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has resigned from the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas, on the advice of his physician.

Weber, 57, said he will take early retirement because of three severe coronaries a year ago which caused extended hospitalization at that time.

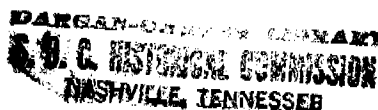
During his five years as pastor of the large Lubbock church, he has continued an emphasis on evangelism and church growth which has resulted in 3,732 additions to the membership, expanded facilities and a \$1.6 million annual increase in budget.

Before coming to Lubbock, Weber was pastor of churches in Alabama, Texas and Louisiana, including the Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., and the First Baptist Church, Beaumont, Texas. Before accepting the Beaumont pastorate he was evangelism secretary of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

A native of Louisiana, Weber has served in numerous denominational responsibilities on the local, associational, state and national levels. He was president of the Southern Baptist Convention for two years, 1975-1976, and is also a former president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference. He currently serves on the General Council of the Baptist World Alliance.

Weber will continue to live in the church parsonage and maintain an office at the church for six months. During that time he will decide on a place of permanent residence.

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Vitality of Church Depends
On Preaching, Says Professor

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--The health and vigor of a church is directly related to the health and vigor of its preaching, a Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary professor told 300 students, faculty and area religious leaders at the Mill Valley, Calif. campus.

"Statistics show that about five million sermons are preached each year in this country to people from all walks of life," said John H. Parrott, professor of preaching. "They're everyday folks who spend their weeks working and then go to church on Sunday for the one time they feel they can get closest to God. If the gospel is delivered to them in the proper manner, they will thrive spiritually and so will the church."

The former pastor outlined ways to test a sermon.

"The ideas and themes you are trying to get across must be narrow enough to be sharp; your sermon must be expanding; it must be true, and it must be loaded with the realities of the human heart," he said.

"But there's one other important standard that must be met," he added. "It must be based on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Church audiences deserve this type of preaching," he declared.

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Sexual Identity Problems
Hamper Women Ministers

By Mary Ann Ward

Baptist Press
9/22/78

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--"Men have almost no experience relating to women in the role of minister, which creates problems concerning normal sexual attraction," Andrew Lester, associate professor of psychology of religion at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, told 300 people attending the Consultation on Women in Church-Related Vocations.

"Men are not surprised to find themselves sexually attracted to the females who teach their children, greet them in offices, pour their coffee, or nurse them in hospitals...but to feel sexual attraction to someone who is a minister seems somewhat shameful, even sacrilegious," Lester said. He attributes this to "the anti-sexual stance of the church in past centuries" which still affects people.

"Some still believe that religious professionals--those closest to God--do not, or at least should not, have sexual thoughts and feelings," he continued. Therefore, to experience a minister as sexual and, furthermore, to be attracted to one can be a disturbing experience."

"Many males have unconsciously thought that ministry was asexual or neuter," he said. "Since all ministers have been male, they have rarely had to think otherwise. However, when they run into a female minister, they must encounter this largely unconscious assumption, and that can be threatening."

Lester also dealt with the psychological areas of competition and authority.

"For any person to function effectively in ministry, that person must be seen by others as a person both possessing and deserving authority. This creates an immediate problem for the woman who is attempting to minister. She has been raised in a predominantly patriarchal society where the people with power and authority are almost always male. This, of course, is even more true in the church."

He said the cultural myth that women are inferior affects parishioners' willingness to view the woman as an authority and the willingness of the woman in ministry to claim it."

Lester said the current interest in submissiveness of women is another barrier to women assuming authority in ministry.

Woman must deal with the issue of competing with both men and women, Lester also explained. He said some competition "results from the sheer fact that the job market in ministry is tight and some males feel that women, whether single or married, have no right

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to jobs which men need in order to feed their families."

He also noted that women experience competition from other women such as wives of male colleagues, women committed to traditional roles, and other women in ministry.

Lester, however, did say women have a positive psychological impact on both men and women to whom they minister. "Many women feel that men can't understand their situation," he said. It is also "difficult for many men to reveal themselves to other males at deeper, personal levels."

He concluded that some women in ministry have not responded to the sexual stereotypes about ministers negatively, but have organized their thoughts and feelings into a healthy theological and psychological framework which takes seriously several important points.

The first is that sexuality is a given part of the created order, a gift of God. Secondly, they realize that sexuality cannot be separated from personhood.

"Thirdly," said Lester, "these women are willing to take responsibility for their sexuality and expect males to take emotional, ethical, and theological responsibility for their sexual thoughts and feelings. They refuse to protect men from sexuality and refuse to perpetuate the myth that it is women who cause males to sin sexually."

Lester affirmed these women, believing they can make a contribution to the church's understanding of and handling of life's sexuality.

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Stagg: Paul, Not Jesus
Subordinates Female Role

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Frank Stagg worships Jesus Christ, not the Apostle Paul, he says, so his view of women is different from the majority of the male population.

The Apostle Paul's biblical writings are often used to limit the role of women. In a letter to specific churches he says females are subordinate to males, that they should not speak in church or hold positions of leadership over men.

But Stagg, senior professor of New Testament interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, feels Jesus liberated women when he liberated the human race.

"Jesus appeared first to women following the resurrection," said Stagg, co-author with his wife, Evelyn, of "Woman in the World of Jesus." "He gave Mary Magdalene the responsibility to inform the apostles, including Cephas, that he is not dead but alive. The risen Christ commissioned a woman to tell the basic tenet of the Christian faith that He is alive. Jesus had women instructing men."

The Staggs led daily studies on the biblical perspective of women at the Consultation on Women in Church-Related Vocations in Nashville. Eleven Southern Baptist agencies co-sponsored the event for 300 participants.

If it ever will become easier for women to take leadership roles in traditionally male dominated positions, Stagg believes it will be when Southern Baptists recognize the lordship of Jesus Christ over the church.

"We must interpret all Scripture in the light of Jesus Christ, and not vice versa," Stagg said. "We must reaffirm the lordship of Jesus, restudy the concept of Christ as we encounter him in the four gospels, and get a basic perspective on how he related to women, what he taught.

"When we do that, it will lead to a recognition that sexual distinctions are as irrelevant as racial distinctions when it comes to salvation or ministry."

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On ordination, which many considered the invisible bottom line of the consultation, Stagg said there is actually better biblical basis for the ordination of women than for ordination itself.

Many of the Old Testament prophets and religious figures were not ordained, he observed, saying they heard the word of God and acted on his instructions.

"There is no evidence that Charles Spurgeon (fiery English evangelist) was ever ordained," Stagg said. "And we do know that he scoffed at ordination."

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Allen Encourages Women:
Use Anger Constructively

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) - "Women have a legitimate right to feel anger against the prejudices that have held them back in Christian work," Southern Baptist Convention President Jimmy Allen told 300 participants in a Consultation on Women in Church-Related Vocations.

"However, I call on you to deal with your anger in a sense that does not spoil your work and calling to Jesus Christ," Allen told them.

Allen said nothing can keep anyone, neither their color nor their gender, from being successful if they are following the call of God. He said the key is to realize "you've got to go with what you've got."

"You may not get the outward affirmation you need from the world around you," Allen said. "But you will always be affirmed inwardly if you are in step with Jesus Christ."

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Seminary Students, Administrators
Urge Openness in Hiring Women

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9/22/78

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) -- Several seminary administrators, women students, and graduates called for stepped-up efforts by Southern Baptist churches and agencies to open employment doors to women during the Consultation on Women in Church-Related Vocations in Nashville.

"I have been called to be a minister, a pastor and a preacher," said Lynda Weaver-Williams, a Ph.D. candidate at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, who with her husband is co-pastor of a Presbyterian church. She said they had been unable to find a Baptist church to call them as co-pastors or to ordain her.

"It is due, at least in part, to Southern Baptists that I am able to step into the pulpit to preach," Weaver-Williams said. "If Southern Baptists are not ready to use the women God is calling to the ministry within Baptist churches, then you will have to start stopping us now."

Rachel Richardson Smith, a theology student at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, said she feels acceptance and support from the faculty but that male students generally do not take her seriously.

"How are we to dispel the fears and apprehensions of male students if they never see a wise and capable woman who is professionally in a position to teach them something?" she asked.

Ruth Harvey Charity, a black attorney from Danville, Va., told participants that American women and minorities often flounder in jobs with inferior pay and prestige because government policies that sound like open doors to equal opportunity in practice merely open the door just enough for a majority male to enter.

Charity said women have "power as a political force" to unite in causing the already written laws for equality to become a greater reality for women and minorities. "The vote still remains the most powerful political weapon," she said, reminding, "We've got the philosophy, but not the practice."

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