



BAPTIST PRESS

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79-36

Commission Presents
Abe Lincoln Awards

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The two top Abe Lincoln Awards were presented by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission to George Ann Victor, creative services director, KHOW Radio in Denver, and David Nelson, former vice president, WBBM, Chicago, and now vice president for station services, television stations division, CBS, New York.

Victor and Nelson vied for the top honors against six other outstanding broadcasters who were among a number of persons honored by the commission at the 10th annual Abe Lincoln Awards in Fort Worth's Tarrant County Convention Center.

Special guest was comedian Bob Hope, who received the Distinguished Communications Medal from the commission. Paul M. Stevens, president of the Radio and Television Commission, received a surprise Distinguished Communications Medal.

Stevens, whom the commission's trustees relieved of administrative control in early February and will retire on Oct. 31, also received the Golden Radio Award from WBAP Radio, Fort Worth, and a resolution from the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.

Stevens, 63, was cited in the awards for his 26 years of service to the commission. He is the first religious broadcaster to receive the Golden Radio Award.

Victor received the Abe Lincoln Award in radio for her work in helping raise funds for the mentally handicapped. Nelson received the top award in television for his efforts in developing "Project Parenting," a program designed to encourage parents to better understand their children.

Both broadcasters were lauded for their "exemplary personal concern for their communities."

The six broadcasters who competed for the top honors received Abe Lincoln Merit Awards. They are Leta Powell Drake, producer, KOLN/KGIN-TV in Lincoln, Neb.; Brian Jennings, news director, KXL Radio in Portland, Ore.; Sandra M. Johnson, community affairs director, WJKW-TV in Cleveland; William C. O'Donnell, vice president, general manager, WBBM Radio in Chicago; Terry K. Shockley, president, WKOW-TV in Madison, Wis.; and Fred Williams, director, public affairs, WAHT Radio in Lebanon, Pa.

Several special awards presented at the Abe Lincoln banquet included a Christian Service Award to Tom Landry, coach of the Dallas Cowboys; two Distinguished Communications Recognition Awards jointly to The Grand Ole Opry and WSM (which broadcast The Opry) and to Doris Ann, manager of religious programming, NBC; a Vincent T. Wasilewski Award to J. Leonard Reinsch of Cox Broadcasting Corp., in Atlanta; and a Railsplitter Award to John Fetzer of Fetzer Broadcasting Company in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Porter W. Routh, who will retire July 31, received an Award of Appreciation for his 28 years as executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee and his support for the commission's efforts over the years.

Commenting on Bob Hope's award, James Holcomb, awards coordinator, said, "Bob Hope is a world figure who is unique in his compassion for the American serviceman and in his ability to make the world laugh even in its darkest hours. For four generations his humor and personality have bridged the gap between every segment of American life." Hope is the first entertainer to receive the medal.

Guests and honorees at the banquet were entertained by country singer Larry Gatlin of The Grand Ole Opry. A video history of Bob Hope's early television appearances and an overview of The Grand Ole Opry were also special events of the program.

Top broadcasting executives who attended the banquet included Vincent T. Wasilewski, president of the National Association of Broadcasters; Robert E. Lee, of the Federal Communications Commission; and Julian Goodman, chairman of NBC.

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Large February Increase
Marks Cooperative Program

Baptist Press
3/5/79

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A 17.7 percent increase in February's national Cooperative Program receipts raised the total after five months of the fiscal year to \$26,133,395.

Porter Routh, executive secretary-treasurer of the Executive Committee, called the increase "encouraging." He added that a computer problem in a large state prevented Cooperative Program funds from arriving in February, or the increase would have reached nearly 27 percent and pushed a single month's receipts over \$6 million for only the second time ever. The first \$6 million month was January 1979.

February's \$5,592,262 put 1978-79 totals \$2.6 million or 11.1 percent ahead of last year's receipts. The \$64 million operating and capital needs goals of SBC agencies require an 11.5 percent increase over 1977-78.

Designated giving, which Routh said was largely represented by the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, totaled \$17,780,440 or 14.7 percent ahead of the same month last year.

Designated giving for the year totals \$25,991,799, or 7.61 percent ahead of last year.

Gifts received in the Nashville office, both undesignated through the Cooperative Program and designated funds, total \$52,125,194, which is \$4,443,169 or 9.32 percent ahead of the same time last year.

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Southern Baptists Launch
Disaster Training Program

Baptist Press
3/5/79

KINGSTON, Okla. (BP)--Southern Baptists launched a national training program for disaster relief specialists with a two-day conference for 82 persons from seven states at Lake Texoma State Park.

Seven disaster relief experts oriented half of the men on how to work effectively in meeting disaster needs as part of a state response team while training the others to organize and train associational teams to respond meaningfully following disasters.

The goal is to organize disaster response teams in every association of Baptist churches in 1979, said Norman Godfrey of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, co-sponsor of the conference with the Home Mission Board and state Baptist Brotherhood departments.

About 4,000 Southern Baptist men responded to disaster relief needs for tornadoes, flash floods, ice, and hurricanes in 1978, Godfrey estimated.

Besides specialized training, the men from Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee heard presentations on Southern Baptists' response to disaster relief. They also learned about the disaster relief roles of the American Red Cross, Federal Disaster Assistance Administration and volunteer organizations.

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The state response teams were drilled in how to prepare for response, on-site and public communications, mass feeding, relating to volunteers, shelter management, and damage assessment.

Associational trainees learned how to organize volunteers, determine needs and resources, conduct church and manpower surveys and develop training resources.

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Robison Cancelled By WFAA
For Homosexuality Remarks

By Helen Parmley

Baptist Press
3/5/79

DALLAS (BP)--A weekly television program of James Robison, Southern Baptist evangelist from Hurst, Texas, has been cancelled by WFAA-TV (Channel 8) in Dallas because of remarks he made about homosexuality on his program.

At a news conference, the 35-year-old Robison, who expressed shock, recalled the program and said, "I pointed out the fact that homosexuality is a sin, and I also stated that we must love those who are guilty of sin, including homosexuality. I was told by the management at WFAA that this went against their policy."

WFAA-TV station manager Dave Lane said the syndicated program, which for several years has been aired from 8:30 to 9 a.m. on Sundays, was cancelled because of a "continuing problem" with Robison making statements "about other religious organizations and community groups."

Lane said, "These statements subject Channel 8 to the personal attack and controversial public issue provision of the (Federal Communications Commission's) 'Fairness Doctrine.' In these cases, we have made time available to the groups and organizations attacked by Robison."

After Robison's program aired, Lane said the station received a call from the Dallas Gay Caucus demanding equal time to respond to the evangelist's charges. Lane explained the transcript of the show was evaluated by the station's law firm, which "concurred that the homosexual community had been attacked and should be given free time to respond."

"We believe our religious programs should not deal with such matters," Lane said. "We cover these type controversies in our news and public affairs shows where we can balance both sides of the issues. Our position has nothing to do with our own religious beliefs and does not reflect a lack of respect for Robison."

Robison said his sermonette was based on the Romans 1 Scripture, and the Bible, he said, "does indicate that homosexuality is a sin."

"It's a controversial issue," he said, "and many people treat it as a political issue. It is a moral issue. It is a Biblical issue. It is a Christian principle, and I feel that as a preacher I have the privilege as well as the responsibility to preach what the Bible said and, frankly, it's breaking my heart."

He also insisted, "The gay community has no right to demand equal time any more than I have a right to demand equal time on prime time because 'Soap' (an ABC weekly television show) has a tendency to gain sympathy for gay activists." (WFAA-TV is an ABC affiliate.)

Robison's show was cancelled by WFAA-TV three years ago after a church in Fort Worth demanded equal time and again in 1977 for his attacks on homosexuals and Playboy magazine. Each time it was reinstated, but Lane said this time the cancellation is "permanent."

Since Robison produces his show in WFAA's studios, he "asked why we don't monitor his program as it is being taped and throw out objectionable material," Lane said. "But that would place us in the position of censoring his programs."

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Robison estimated he spends about \$100,000 a year at Channel 8. Through his nationwide crusades and television program, broadcast in 70 cities throughout the country, he has gained a large following.

"I will seek to get time on another station (in the Dallas area)." Robison said. "We are gearing up to reach the nation. I love Channel 8 and the people there. I think they made a mistake. I believe our country was founded on the desire for religion, spiritual expression, and now--suddenly--I can't express what the Bible says. I'm silenced here. I think I should be able to say what's on my heart and, certainly, what's in the Bible."

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Brazilian Baptists Launch Promising Amazon Project

CURITIBA, Brazil (BP)--The Brazilian Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board has launched one of its most promising evangelistic projects in the Amazon jungle area.

Project Transitaipu will reach more than 22,000 people in the residential area of the expansive hydroelectric Itaipu Dam, being built on the Parana River, the eighth longest river in the world.

"These people can be readily reached with the gospel because they have not put down roots," said William Morgan, Southern Baptist Missionary helping in the project. "They're seeking friendships and want to find their place in the new area."

Transitaipu is part of the Transtotal series of evangelistic projects begun in 1974, in the transamazon area where workers are slicing a highway through the Brazilian jungle.

The series' name means spanning the Amazon area with total evangelism.

In phase one, 29 students in teams from five Brazilian Baptist seminaries surveyed the Itaipu Dam area for six weeks, conducted Bible studies, did personal witnessing, held open air group activities and weekly meetings. The team was encouraged when a woman accepted Christ as Savior on the second day of their trip.

"By the end of 1979 we hope to have a strong mission established and possibly be organized into a church as a result of the work we are doing now," said James Loyd Moon, recent graduate of South Brazil Baptist Theological Seminary, who led the first phase. Most of the students have returned to seminary, but Moon and four others plan to stay for a year to consolidate the team's work.

Transitaipu will cost almost \$40,000, including the expense of supporting the permanent team for a year or until the Brazilian Baptist Home Mission Board can send permanent missionaries to the area.

During the last five years of Transtotal, 10 churches have been organized and about 700 people baptized. Several new Christians are preparing for the ministry.

"I feel more fulfilled now because of having the opportunity to help plant churches and do pioneer work," said Morgan, a 15-year veteran missionary from Tennessee. "It never gets old. We're always moving into new areas."

"The experiences the young people are having are giving them a new concept of missions that just can't be learned in the class room."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond Bureau of Baptist Press.