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March 29, 1979

79-52

Oklahoma Board
 Member Killed

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Mrs. Marjorie L. Bartlett, 62, member of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma board of directors, died March 13 after being attacked and beaten March 12 by burglars she surprised inside her home.

Police said the Bartlett neighborhood in south Oklahoma City had been plagued by a series of breakins recently.

Mrs. Bartlett, a longtime Woman's Missionary Union worker, directed the WMU at Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Oklahoma City.

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Wrapup

American Family Troubled, But Faith
 Can Provide Hope, Seminar Concludes

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--The American family is in deep trouble.

That appeared to be the conclusion, if not the general assumption, expressed by a parade of speakers at a national Southern Baptist seminar on family life.

Yet despite some ominous forecasts, strongly-worded warnings, sharp criticism, and occasional disagreement, all of the speakers agreed that the family will survive and that the church can help--if it is willing to get its hands dirty.

First Lady Rosalynn Carter voiced that opinion in the opening session of the conference sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention and attended by over 750 persons from 25 states.

Quoting Ralph Waldo Emerson's statement that "the lesson of life is to believe what the years and the centuries say against the hours," Mrs. Carter said that while "the hours say the family is in trouble, the centuries say that the family will survive."

Mrs. Carter, scheduled to make a personal appearance at the seminar, spoke via telephone so she could be present at the signing of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty in Washington on the same day. She claimed that in an age of drastic, rapid change, "the family alone provides the basic place to stand."

Pollster George Gallup Jr. and family specialist Wallace Denton of Purdue University sounded similar positive notes in their addresses.

Gallup, whose organization has done extensive research on trends in the American family, cited statistics from recent surveys as evidence that the family is here to stay. "Three women in four in the United States say marriage and children are among the important elements that would provide the ideal life for them," Gallup noted, pointing out that the survey results defy popular stereotypes.

He added that surveys show that "91 percent of the American people--including the overwhelming majority of young adults--say they would welcome more emphasis on traditional family ties in the years ahead."

Gallup urged a "team effort between parents and clergy to deepen spiritual values in the home and deal specifically with certain problems such as alcohol abuse, which call for immediate attention."

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Denton outlined possible future trends for families, predicting a decrease in the next 20 years in "traditional families comprised of the mother, father and their dependent children" and increases in the divorce rate and the number of cohabitating couples, solo parents and term marriages. The church, he said, must address itself to these anticipated changes if it is to help families in the future.

The family studies professor and author also predicted that the present women's liberation movement will be followed by a "men's liberation movement" which he hopes will bring new understandings of what it means to be masculine.

"A two-fisted world has never appreciated the compassionate, gentle, patient, weeping, Jesus," he claimed. "Somehow he comes across as weak and effeminate... Perhaps this new and liberated generation of men will achieve a level of masculinity that Jesus had achieved two thousand years ago."

Denton and sociology professor Sarah Frances Anders of Louisiana College, Pineville, La., pleaded for the church to consider singleness as much a "family" as the traditional, nuclear family. Anders, noting that society has historically considered non-marriage a deviancy equated with "a harelip, retardation, or leprosy," urged the church toward a broader acceptance of singleness.

Divergent opinions were presented in a "dialogue" between anti-Equal Rights Amendment leader Phyllis Schlafly and Harvard theologian Harvey Cox on the impact of the women's movement on family life.

Schlafly proclaimed that the fruits of ERA would have "devastating effects on moral, legal and economic integrity of the family unit." Schlafly, who was given a courteous but mixed response by the seminar participants, declared that the women's liberation movement "inculcates women with an inferiority complex" by destroying their self-esteem and casts men in the role of the "enemy."

Cox, on the other hand, expressed support for the ERA, but admitted some disillusionment with the "distortions" in the women's movement. He said the women's movement "is too timid, not quite cosmic enough, not sufficiently sweeping in its goals" and called for a broader view of liberation of women than ERA.

Basing his observations on the Bible, Cox declared, "I believe God created men and women to live in mutual submission. We see around us distortion and alienation which results from sin... We don't have to opt out of being male or female to savor the original concept of God's plan for mutuality between the sexes."

Meanwhile, two prominent Southern Baptists strongly chided Southern Baptist ministry to families and then collided over their view on whether government can implement the Judeo-Christian ethic in serving families.

Kenneth Chafin, pastor of Houston's South Main Baptist Church, said Charles Petty of Raleigh, N. C., who declared Baptists should turn to the resources of government to help troubled families, may still be "at first blush in the governor's mansion" by making that assertion. Six months earlier, Petty left his position with the North Carolina Baptist Christian Life and Public Affairs Council to direct N. C. Gov. James Hunt's office of citizen affairs.

Responding to his former professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Petty, who actively supports ministry of the local church and said he does not view government as the solution to all family problems, declared: "Government, left to itself, is demonic," but it is "ordained by God." Baptists, he said, have often left the arena of politics and government to others.

District Court Judge Oswin Chrisman of Dallas, Texas, a member of the same panel featuring Petty and Chafin, entered the discussion, declaring that Baptists "are inhibited by a silent pulpit" in the area of family life.

Chrisman, a Baptist layman, also chided fellow Baptist laymen and pastors for sending their children to private religious schools to avoid the problems of public schools, including desegregation. The time has come for "pastors to stop leading the backward retreat and come into the 20th Century."

Both Chafin and Petty spoke bluntly about their perceived failure of individual Baptists, Baptist organizations and churches to come to grips with an effective ministry to the beleaguered family.

Seminar coordinator W. David Sapp, of the Christian Life Commission, and commission executive secretary Foy D. Valentine said the national meeting was to stimulate thinking and future action in the crucial area of family life.

"Help for families does not often happen in bannered ballrooms," said Sapp of the meeting in Orlando's Sheraton Twin Towers. "It happens in churches and homes and counseling sessions and pulpits and even in the halls of business and government. It happens everywhere that love finds its way into action."

Action in developing worthwhile marriage relationships was the subject of four of the speakers.

David Edens, who directs the marriage and family program at Stephens College, Columbus, Mo., identified communication, companionship, domesticity, vocational compatibility, celebration and sexual satisfaction as key ingredients to a happy marriage.

Internationally-known marriage and family expert David Mace of Winston-Salem, N. C., joined Edens in urging that married couples learn to handle anger positively.

In fact, Mace asserted that the failure of marriage always takes place because husband and wife "have been unable to achieve mutual love and intimacy" and that failure to achieve that "is almost always due to the inability of the persons concerned to deal creatively with anger."

He gave a prescription for dealing with anger, which involves "dissolving it" in a loving team approach, rather than venting it or suppressing it in a way which will cause "the inner core of love to wither."

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Entertainment Not
Worship Substitute

By Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Worship services that entertain--or attempt to please--have become commonplace, according to David Matthews, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greenville, S. C.

Matthews told pastors and music directors attending a congregational worship seminar at the Baptist Sunday School Board that worship is essentially entertainment in many settings, particularly those that are televised.

"Unconsciously, it is easy for worship to fall into competition with culture," Matthews said. "People think they can find the answer to the transcendent search for true meaning through the search for pleasure."

He said the average person continually confuses the two searches, because everything today is pleasure oriented. "As worship leaders, we must begin to rescue worship from show business," where the sole goals are to keep attendance up and the room full, Matthews said. "The test of worship is not the degree of emotional expression or the number of people there."

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"Worship begins with the need of man for God," he continued. "The two chief components of worship are the need of man and the holiness of God, who is not only the One high and lifted up, but the One who has come to us. God is utterly distinct from man and with man.

"Worship is the otherness and the nearness of God. We have almost lost our sense of the otherness of God that gives us our sense of awe. We have to be in the business of re-ordering the priorities of worship."

Matthews called for more congregational involvement in worship, but added, "If worship is to live again, we have to change the concept of worship first, changes in form and style will follow."

He said congregational worship must include an awareness of the holiness of God, confession of sin, and a liberating sense of forgiveness.

"Worship also demands a sense of calling, or commitment," he said. "We are not to merely enjoy God, but to serve him. We must be prepared for worship, there is no substitute for this.

"In worship, you do what you can do with integrity; what is appropriate to your situation; and what you believe is a worthy offering to God. When you do that, God can receive and bless it."

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Self Traces Deadness In Churches To Preaching

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--William L. Self, pastor of Wieuca Road Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga., told Founders Day participants at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, that any deadness in the church today is in the pulpit.

Self, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, said four aspects of contemporary church life conspire against good preaching.

He said many pastors display a scorn for preaching; others become booking agents for a kind of religious vaudevillism in which "every converted halfback becomes a theologian;" some become caught up in compulsive activism in an effort to convince their church members that they really do work for a living; while others attribute their poor preaching to a lack of freedom.

Self insisted that "a lack of freedom in the pulpit indicates a lack of freedom in the soul."

Self said that preaching is not God-talk or talk about God, but preaching is God talking to his people. "The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God," he said.

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CORRECTION: In Baptist Press story mailed March 26 entitled "Louisiana Moves Quickly In Deaf Mission Ministry," please change the numbers in the lead to read "five of the first seven deaf missions."

In the second paragraph read: Lakeview Baptist Church, New Orleans; First Baptist Church, Shreveport; Sale Street etc.

In the third paragraph, add this sentence: Denver Temple, Denver, Colo., began a deaf mission in January.

In Baptist Press story mailed March 28 entitled "First Lady Declares Family Will Survive," please change "longing" in paragraph 10 to "belonging."

Thanks, Baptist Press