



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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### 'Excitement In The Pew' Has To Come From Pulpit

By Jim Lowry

BATON ROUGE, La. (BP)--"Preaching is our first and highest calling," Harper Shannon told pastors attending the third annual National Conference on Preaching at Florida Boulevard Baptist Church.

More than 200 pastors listened to a long line of well-known preachers and teachers tell them how to preach the word of God more effectively and how to relate their preaching to the needs of their people.

Shannon, pastor of Huffman Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., said preachers must be academically and spiritually prepared. "With the extensive resources available today," he said, "there is absolutely no excuse to come to the pulpit unprepared."

Shannon said church members have a responsibility to come with an attitude conducive to worship--one of expectance, love, respect and a readiness and willingness to expose themselves to God's eye.

"However," he said, "there will be no excitement in the pew, if there is no excitement in the pulpit."

Clyde Fant, pastor of First Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas, and a former professor of preaching, told the group that the greatest weakness of preaching today is not the lack of creativity, originality or organization, but of theological understanding.

Fant said the Bible and theological textbooks are the truest resources of preaching and that without an adequate biblical and theological foundation, the substance will be meaningless.

"In order for true preaching to occur," Fant said, "contact must be made between historical revelation of the Bible and the contemporary situation."

Several speakers said more preaching is needed that's directly related to the needs of the people in the congregation.

In the opening session of the conference Grady C. Cothen, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, told the preachers that recently released statistical information confirmed the general belief that morals and ethics are changing drastically today.

"To touch people with our sermons," Cothen said, "we must do our best to know what they are thinking, where they are and how we can relate to them."

Harold Bryson, preaching professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, said, "Preaching must be an interchange with an audience, not standing before people performing, seeking the right gestures, posture and voice tone.

"Preaching is more than giving a speech or lecture," Bryson said. "It is the intimate involvement of the human factor and the divine factor. We study and prepare, then pray.

"We need to preach sermons that relate to the lives of human beings, to get them to know something, feel something and finally to do something."

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Bryson said in order to find a sermon: "You need to read and study the Bible and visit and listen to the people. It's not easy, it's hard work, but when I have a devotion time sermons come easier. Changing churches with the same sermon is cheating."

"There is a world of preaching in the Bible," Bryson told the pastors, "and there is a world to preach it to."

The National Conference on Preaching was sponsored by the Louisiana Baptist Convention and the church administration department of the Sunday School Board. James Barry, preaching consultant at the board, directed the conference.

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#### Uganda Will Allow Return of Missionaries

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary couples have been assured by the new Ugandan government that they may resume work in Uganda as soon as the area between the capital of Kampala and the Kenya border is under control of the new government.

They expect to return about May 1.

G. Webster Carroll, veteran Southern Baptist missionary, told Foreign Mission Board officials April 12 that he had talked by telephone with members of the revolutionary government's cabinet that day and with Yussufu K. Lule, who has been proclaimed president of Uganda by the new government.

Carroll said Lule assured him that Southern Baptist missionaries would be invited back into Uganda to work "as soon as the situation had cleared up."

Pending establishment of an immigration procedure, the new government's officials will use personal letters to grant permission for the two Southern Baptist couples to return to the country, Carroll told Davis L. Saunders, the board's secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa.

Carroll told Saunders that the revolutionary council now governing Uganda seems to be made up almost exclusively of Christians.

During the recent fighting the Carrolls and the James L. Rices have been in Kenya awaiting the outcome of the conflict.

Once back in Uganda the missionaries intend to ask for the lifting of a ban on many churches imposed by Idi Amin in September 1977. Some 27 religious groups, including Baptists, were banned in Amin's edict. Only four religions were labeled as legal.

Missionaries will then call a national meeting of Baptist leaders to plan associational meetings and reorganize churches. Some 10 church buildings were damaged or destroyed. Missionaries plan to request personnel and funds to resume a major evangelistic effort, including church development, Bible Way Correspondence and Bible schools.

Carroll said he expects all five Bible schools to reopen. The Baptist Convention of Kenya and individual members of the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Kenya have offered their services to help teach in the Bible schools, which meet for one week each month.

Southern Baptist missionaries are planning to mount intensive medicine and food distribution efforts from Kenya. Carroll and Rice have met with Medical Assistance Program leaders and personnel of the United States embassy in Nairobi to plan distribution of supplies. They expect the first supplies to arrive in Nairobi by April 20.

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Although the scope of the project will not be fully known until missionaries go back into Uganda, plans are already being made to cooperate with the Medical Assistance Program and other Christian agencies which will supply medicine and food.

Southern Baptist missionaries expect to request large sums of relief ministries money and several volunteers to get supplies from delivery points to the people.

The Carrolls and Rices have been involved in relief work in Kenya among the refugees from Uganda. The last group with whom they worked was made up primarily of students from two Uganda schools who fled to Kenya.

Southern Baptists are furnishing funds for shelter, medicine and some food for the refugees. Because personnel is limited to just the four missionaries assigned to Uganda, they have been working with personnel from other Christian groups.

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Georgia Pastor Named  
Carter Speechwriter

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WASHINGTON (BP)--R. L. (Bob) Maddox, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Calhoun, Ga., has been named a speechwriter to President Jimmy Carter, effective May 15.

During the past year, Maddox, pastor of the Georgia church for more than seven years, has written two speeches for the president and one for Mrs. Carter. Maddox said he first wrote for Carter the speech delivered by the president to a meeting last June in Atlanta sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Most recently, Maddox wrote a draft for Carter's speech at the signing of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty March 26 and for an address delivered by Mrs. Carter the same day via telephone hookup to the Christian Life Commission's family seminar in Orlando, Fla.

The Calhoun congregation, which includes the president's son Jack and his wife Judy, was pleased with his decision to join Carter's team of five speechwriters, Maddox said. He told the congregation that he saw the opportunity as the "next step in our ministry."

Maddox said he had some indication several weeks before the offer came on April 13 that he would be asked to join the president's staff. He said he was ready to say yes because he had prayed about it. "I feel very comfortable in the Lord," he told Baptist Press, noting that he hopes to continue to preach in the Washington area as opportunities arise.

The Georgia pastor has written lessons for three adult Sunday School quarterlies of the Baptist Sunday School Board and is the author of a commentary on Acts in the Layman's Bible Book Commentary series to be published this year by the board.

He said that while he did not campaign extensively for the president in 1976, his wife did spend a week on the campaign trail with Judy Carter.

He and his wife, Linda Cook Maddox of Thomaston, Ga., are graduates of Baylor University. He received the bachelor of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and the doctor of sacred theology degree from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, Atlanta.

Maddox said his wife and three children will remain in Calhoun, where Mrs. Maddox teaches school, until the conclusion of the current school year.

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Mississippi Baptists  
Rise With Flood Water

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Mississippi Baptists have been feeding 3,000 people a day from their disaster relief van as flood waters held Jackson in isolation.

The self-contained unit set up in the parking lot of Colonial Heights Baptist Church in northeast Jackson, just a block from the flood's edge on three sides and a mile from the dam on the Ross Barnett Reservoir astride the Pearl River.

The homes of Len Turner, Colonial Heights pastor, and David Grant, pastor of the Broadmoor Baptist Church, were underwater but there was no reported damage or injuries to other Baptist property or life.

Officials were faced with a can't win decision as water continued to rush downstream and fill the reservoir astride "the Mighty Pearl." They had to let water through the dam to relieve pressure, but the water they released pushed the Pearl farther out of its banks downstream.

Over 8,000 homes in Jackson were flooded, according to local reports, displacing about 15,000 residents. President Carter has declared 25 counties in Mississippi eligible for federal disaster assistance. Hinds and Jackson counties were the hardest hit.

Interstate 55 north and south around the city was closed. Traffic downtown was virtually nil. The Red Cross was helping supply food to the Baptist relief van. Volunteers in the van also sent meals to several evacuation centers through the center directors.

Tim Nicholas, associate editor of the Mississippi Baptist Record, said the spirit of Christian cooperation at the disaster site was high. As flood waters receded, the van was to move further downstream and several Jackson churches were going to assume the feeding role.

There was one report of snake bite as snakes left the woods for higher ground. One house reportedly was full of snakes.

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Moustache Tickles  
Church Into Giving

Baptist Press  
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GREENWOOD, Miss. (BP)--Curtis Burge, pastor of First Baptist Church in Greenwood, brought his moustache to church in an envelope.

He'd taken a lot of ribbing about how much better he'd look without it so after a church supper he offered the shavings to the highest bidder. The proceeds were to go to the annual Annie Armstrong Easter offering for home missions.

When the bidding got way up past a dollar, Burge's wife walked to the podium and emptied her change purse. Others got into the spirit of it and donated a total of \$42.80.

The delta church's offering goal is \$7,000. The convention wide goal is \$15 million.

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