

August 2, 1979

Radio Blitz Bears
"Good News, Iowa!"

By Judy Touchton

79-131

DES MOINES, Iowa (BP)--"Good news, Iowa! For more good news call 1-800-342-7005."

Ninety percent of Iowa's residents heard that message tagged at the end of one of nine radio evangelism spots broadcast statewide during a week of simultaneous revivals in seven north central states.

In support of simultaneous revivals in Iowa, part of the North Central States' year of evangelism, estimates showed every Iowa resident averaged hearing 2½ testimonies about faith in Jesus Christ.

A starting offensive tackle for Iowa State University, Jim Wilson, told about his Christianity, "After I became a Christian, I didn't lose friends. I made more friends."

Connie Thompson, a Van Meter, Iowa, homemaker with five children and one on the way, talked about her faith and the help it gives in times of depression.

Joshua Vang, a Laotian refugee who is building Laotian congregations around the country, shared his testimony in his native language--even on all-English radio stations.

Kim Wood, a 15-year-old high school student from Fort Dodge gave her testimony, which seemed one of the most effective from the number of callers specifically mentioning her. Other testimonies were aired from a life insurance underwriter, a college student, a radio announcer, a welder for John Deere tractor manufacturers, and a salesman for a crop chemical and photographic products company.

For approximately 76 cents for each Southern Baptist church member--right at \$8,000 --472 testimonies were given by radio, 271 by telephone.

Thirty persons, who called in on one of the two in-state WATS lines, were referred to local churches. More than 100 callers hung up immediately. "We think it was because they expected a recording and instead they got a warm body who said, 'Good news, Iowa! This is _____. May I tell you my good news?' and then shared their personal testimony," said Mike McCrocklin, who directs evangelistic efforts for the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship, part of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

The radio blitz resulted in one profession of faith--on Thursday about 1 p.m. "It's significant it happened on Thursday," McCrocklin reported, adding the campaign "quit too soon." Even on Saturday, the last day, a graph of call frequency showed calls up compared with other days.

Originally the fellowship dreamed of billboards, newspaper, radio and television ads--ruled out because of high costs. At about \$100 each, one billboard for each Iowa church and

chapel would cost, McCrocklin estimated, in excess of \$8,000--the total budget for the evangelism campaign. Television ads would have exceeded \$50,000. A page in the Des Moines Register-Tribune costs \$4,000.

From a \$10,000 Bold Mission Thrust grant from Missouri, Wilson Parker, Iowa fellowship director, reserved up to \$5,000 in case fund-raising for the radio blitz fell short. The full \$5,000 was not needed.

Instead, churches raised more than \$5,000 in special offerings--more than the state mission offering last year. "Participation was about 50 percent, but we achieved 70 percent of our budget," McCrocklin said.

The \$8,000 paid for radio time and telephones. Each 47-second tape-recorded testimony was produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission and paid for with Home Mission Board evangelism funds.

WHO, a Des Moines 50,000-watt clear channel radio station with talk-show format, contracted for 120 repetitions of one-minute ads during the campaign week. KNET, a Des Moines station playing easy rock and top hits, played 75 repetitions. Other stations were chosen by location of Southern Baptist churches in the state.

Spots played from 8 a.m. to midnight. And that's when volunteer counselors covered the telephones at the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship office in Des Moines. "The first spot went on at approximately 8:20 a.m., and we could count on the phone ringing about three minutes after the first spot," McCrocklin reported.

Planners made a conscious decision to use secular broadcasting services. "This was disconcerting for some Christian people," McCrocklin said. "But the blitz was not designed to give Christian people a good warm feeling. We wanted to do something unique--something bold for our people.

"We wanted to do something to give the fellowship high visibility, to get laity involved. We wanted to do something that had a dynamic, splashing effect."

"What we proved was that on a shoestring budget, we were able to present the gospel and its claims on a person's life at least two times to virtually every person in Iowa," McCrocklin said.

"What we did in Iowa would not have been bold someplace else," he admitted, "but it was bold here in Iowa because we did it with no money, no resources, no guarantees."

-30-

Marv Knox Named
HMB News Writer

Baptist Press
8/2/79

ATLANTA (BP)--Marv Knox, a reporter on the Abilene (Texas) Reporter-News, has been named assistant news editor at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Knox, 22, replaces Judy Touchton who resigned to attend graduate school at the University of Missouri. Touchton, a Home Mission Board employee nine years, has been assistant news editor for two-and-a-half years.

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Knox will assist news editor Dan Martin in preparing news releases, features and photo-features on the work and personnel of the Home Mission Board.

A 1979 graduate of Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Knox also has been editor of the H-SU Brand, the student newspaper, and spent 10 weeks in 1978 as a student summer intern news writer on the Rocky Mountain Baptist.

In H-SU, Knox was president of his sophomore and junior classes, member of the student congress, outstanding journalism student in 1976 and 1978 and member of two national honor societies.

His father, E. Marvin Knox, is pastor of Southside Baptist Church, in Wichita Falls, Texas. His wife is the former Joanna Jarchow of Fort Worth, Texas.

-30-

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta Bureau of Baptist Press.

Tennessee Church Robbed
During Worship Service

Baptist Press
8/2/79

CLEVELAND, Tenn. (BP)--A thief took \$12,000 to \$18,000 from First Baptist Church, Cleveland, Tenn., July 15, during the second morning worship service.

The robber apparently obtained a master key from the pastor's office. He took 17 billfolds and wallets from the choir room and over \$10,000 in checks and cash from the safe in the finance office. The money had been collected during the first worship service that morning and in Sunday School. Nearly \$5,000 cash, on hand from several special emphases the previous two weeks, was taken.

Cleveland police told the Baptist and Reflector, Tennessee Baptists' newspaper, that there were no leads in the case. Marvin Gibson, the church's pastor, said his office is about 10 feet from the sanctuary, but no one in the sanctuary saw anyone.

A janitor saw a stranger in the hall, but thought possibly that he was waiting on one of the choir members.

-30-

New Brotherhood Director
To Watch 'Attitude' Gauge

Baptist Press
8/2/79

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Jim Smith pointed to a gauge in the Cessna Cardinal RG and called it "the most important instrument in an airplane."

It wasn't a compass, or altimeter, or airspeed indicator. It was the "attitude indicator."

"That," said the newly-elected executive director of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, "is also an important gauge of the effectiveness of brotherhood work."

"It's not how high you fly, or how fast you fly, or how far you fly that's important, it's the attitude with which you fly," he said. The attitude indicator helps a pilot keep his wings parallel to the ground.

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To keep the plane from going into a "critical attitude" that will cause it to crash, the pilot has to maintain proper balance between speed, altitude, and all the other controls on the plane. And that's the way it is with his new job, Smith said.

There are some who are concerned about how "high" you get spiritually; there are some troubled by how far you go in statistical growth; and there are others concerned of how fast you grow, he explained.

But the important thing is attitude control--keeping a proper balance between all the factors in either flying or in motivating and mobilizing men and boys for missions and ministry.

In his acceptance speech immediately following election by the trustees of the Brotherhood Commission, Smith said he was "excited about the decade of the eighties," predicting it would be the most exciting ten years in the entire history of the Christian church.

"Just as this year has been recognized as the year of the child, I am convinced that the next few years will become known as the decade of the laity," Smith said. "There is a spirit of renewal that is beginning to manifest itself, and men with abilities and means are saying, 'Give us some handles to take hold of, we want to be involved in this great world of missions movement,'" Smith told trustees. Later, in a three-hour interview, he expanded on some of his hopes and dreams for the future.

Saying he felt it was providential that the Brotherhood Commission already has a ministries section which includes lay renewal and mission-ministry projects, Smith said that renewal or discipleship has got to become a vital part of the ongoing purpose of the commission.

Men have got to realize the Christian life is a disciplined life, a life brought under the discipline of Jesus Christ, he explained. That means that men need to practice the disciplines of a daily quiet time, prayer, Bible reading, caring for their physical bodies, handling their money, and the discipline of family relationships.

"Unless we get these dimensions into the lives of men, they are not going to be motivated to relate ministries in the right way," Smith declared.

"So when these men go out there on missions, they have got to know how to witness, how to share their faith, how to do everything they do 'unto the Lord,'" Smith said. If not, the ministries will lack a spiritual depth and dimension, and Baptist men would be nothing more than what service organizations, such as the Lions Club, are doing, he insisted.

A passage in the biblical book of Exodus convinced Smith that during the first six months of his administration he should listen instead of initiate change. Exodus 10:26 quotes Moses telling Pharaoh, "Until we arrive there, we ourselves do not know with what we will serve the Lord."

"My first reaction was to come to the commission with a long list of things I have in the back of my mind, from dreams and visions I have," Smith said. "But the Lord showed me I am not to do that, but instead to spend the first few months listening."

Although he considers his reorganization of the work of the Illinois Baptist State Association one of his major accomplishments while executive director, Smith said he doesn't plan any immediate reorganization of the Brotherhood Commission.

And although the Brotherhood department of the association changed its name to the Department of Lay Mobilization in 1977, in an effort to overcome the poor image of the Brotherhood in Illinois, Smith said he was not sure whether the name of the Brotherhood organization should be changed.

"Very frankly, the Brotherhood Commission has a very low image," he said. "It has a low image in the church, and a very low image primarily with the state executive secretaries."

Smith, a former leader of the state executive secretaries fellowship organization, said one of his first priorities will be to get the opinion of the state executive secretaries on what the Brotherhood Commission should seek to accomplish.

He said he also plans to listen to a group of laymen led by C. E. Price of Pittsburgh, a vice-president for Westinghouse Corporation, who are concerned about lay involvement in Bold Mission Thrust. "These men," he said, "may prove to be our greatest allies."

Although he plans to listen, he does have dreams and visions for the future. "I am not so much concerned about how many card-carrying members of the Brotherhood organization we have," he said. "I'm more concerned about mobilizing men and boys for missions and ministry."

Smith said he envisioned the possibility of national and local organizations of Baptist laymen in various business and professional fields, similar to the Baptist Medical and Dental Fellowship already organized and relating to the Brotherhood Commission.

He suggested the possibility of fellowships of Baptist men in government, Baptist men who are attorneys, laymen who are real estate agents, auditors, pilots, builders and construction people.

"These people are drawn together by two affinities--they are Baptist, and they have a common trade," Smith said. The key to it is mobilizing and organizing men to use their gifts and talents for missions and ministry, and keeping that motivation in proper perspective and attitude.

Smith said he envisions a retreat center, not located at the Brotherhood Commission, where laymen can go for renewal and "to weigh their lives under the right kind of guidance and leadership." He also envisions more emphasis on assistance to furloughing foreign missionaries by beefing up the Brotherhood Commission's plan to help missionaries buy and sell cars while on furlough and to help coordinate housing for furloughing missionaries.

Saying the Brotherhood Commission has got to match the mission and ministry needs in the world with resources of the laity, Smith warned against simply "finding a ministry outlet and enlisting someone to fill it." It's got to be in reverse order--building the kind of spiritual foundation that motivates and equips men to be ministers.

"When you get that, they are going to demand ministry outlets," Smith said.

And they will all be flying with the right attitude.