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Evangelist Need Tops List

Of 1,526 Overseas Requests

By Mary Jane Welch

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries in 30 countries rated general evangelists their greatest need as they requested a record 1,526 reinforcements for 1980.

But the annual request for new missionaries also includes jobs as diverse as physician, music promoter and business manager to augment the widespread efforts of almost 3,000 missionaries in 95 countries.

Sixty-nine percent of all 1980 personnel requests, made by a vote of missionaries in each field, are for evangelism and church development specialists. Some of these would go to Southern Baptists' newer mission fields, such as Burundi and Southwest Africa, where they would join one mission couple trying to witness to a whole nation.

In spite of record appointments, the number of evangelists approved never equals the number missionaries request. In 1978, when a record 350 new missionaries were approved, only 67 were appointed for evangelism and church development. With three appointment services still to be held in 1979, less than 10 percent of the 473 evangelists requested have been appointed. East Asia, with seven countries, and West Africa, with nine countries, each have received only one evangelist thus far in 1979.

The board's missionary personnel department recently brought its regional representatives to the home office for its annual review of requests with area secretaries. George H. Hays, secretary for East Asia, told the group that missionaries in Korea waited five years before 1978 without appointment of an evangelist. "All this time (there was) . . . a tremendous response in Korea," he declared.

Because of the response in Korea, missionaries have requested five more general evangelists in 1980. They also have asked for a church administration consultant and a stewardship promoter to work with the Korean convention in nurturing the new believers. Even with the good response, "I have a feeling our back door is too large in Korea and we're not conserving all the new Christians who have been coming in," Hays said.

Looking at other East Asian countries, Hays said Hong Kong needs evangelists simply because it has so few, and Japan faces a personnel shortage with almost half of the present missionary force scheduled for retirement in the next decade.

In West Africa, Nigeria also faces a large number of retirements in the near future, but the French-speaking countries have an even greater need for evangelists. "If I had to pick out just one priority, I really hope we can do something about the requests for Niger this year," said John E. Mills, secretary for West Africa. Niger missionaries have requested two agricultural evangelists--one specializing in crop farming and one in animal husbandry.

"This is really the best opportunity to build churches," he said, adding that Niger doesn't need someone who is just a farmer, but someone who also has "an evangelist's heart."

Other requests in West Africa illustrate the diversity of needs throughout the world. Mills stressed the need for seminary teachers and doctors in Nigeria. "What we do in the seminary will have more far-reaching results in Nigeria than anything in years to come," he said.

Four medical specialists--an internist, a surgeon or orthopedist, a pediatrician and a pathologist--were requested for Eku Hospital in the southern part of Nigeria to help continue its intern program, he said. The interns handle the day-to-day patient load.

Nigeria missionaries also asked the board to appoint its first optometrist to teach at the University of Benin there.

Literacy workers, such as one requested for Ghana, are especially needed because of a 90 percent illiteracy rate in West Africa, Mills said.

Other areas of the world echoed the plea for general evangelists, but also requested specialists in many other fields. In Mexico, evangelists are needed to begin work in interior cities which have populations of more than 100,000 but no Baptist witness. In Brazil, a secretary is needed to replace a missionary facing retirement.

Career and associate missionaries, single persons and couples are all needed. Of the requests, 721 can be filled by career missionaries and 129 by missionary associates. Associates are persons between 35 and 59, employed for a renewable four-year term. Although a majority of the jobs call for a couple, single women can fill 169 of the positions and single men can fill 176 of them.

In addition, 114 requests call for missionary journeymen. A missionary journeyman is a college graduate 26 or under who spends two years working alongside career missionaries overseas before pursuing a career in the United States.

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Bracey Campbell Resigns
Sunday School Board Post

Baptist Press
9/26/79

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Bracey Campbell III, supervisor of the news and information section in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's office of communications, has resigned to return to the Nashville Banner as managing editor.

Campbell, 32, implemented a reorganization and expansion of the board's news operation during his 19-month tenure. He also served as chief of the Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press.

"Bracey Campbell helped us turn a corner in our job of sharing the mission and message of the Sunday School Board with Southern Baptists," said Lloyd Householder, director of communications.

"Having grown up in a Baptist pastor's home, he brought with him an understanding of Baptist life in addition to his excellent experience in the newspaper field. His tenure with us will be characterized as one in which aggressive but fair news reporting prevailed."

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Before coming to the board in 1978, Campbell had been managing editor of the Banner for two years and had worked for the afternoon paper since 1971 on the copy desk, as a political reporter and as chief political reporter.

Prior to 1971 Campbell worked for the Jackson (Miss.) Clarion-Ledger for six years.

A graduate of Mississippi College, Campbell is a deacon at First Baptist Church, a member of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and a member of the board of trustees of Nashville's Baptist Hospital.

He is married to the former Gay Smith of Jackson, Miss., and they have one son, Benjamin Bracey. Campbell is the son of Mrs. L. Frank Campbell of Jackson, Miss., and the late L. Frank Campbell, a Baptist pastor in Mississippi for more than 25 years.

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Rogers, Bennett Field
Variety of Questions on NBC

Baptist Press
9/26/79

NEW YORK (BP)--Adrian Rogers and Harold Bennett explained the Southern Baptist Convention's Bold Mission Thrust and other issues during an hour-long interview with Russell Barbour in an NBC-TV network program, Sept. 23.

Rogers, new president of the 13.2-million-member SBC, and Bennett, new executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, fielded questions ranging from Southern Baptist relationship to President Jimmy Carter to the issue of biblical inerrancy.

In the program entitled "The Thrust Toward 2000," Barbour pressed the two SBC leaders to explain how Southern Baptists can expect to accomplish the ambitious Bold Mission Thrust goal of proclaiming the message of Christ to the entire world by the year 2000.

Bennett explained that Southern Baptists already have a career mission force of almost 6,000 persons in the United States and 95 foreign countries which will be the nucleus of such an effort. He said they will be augmented by a growing number of volunteers and career missionaries.

Rogers said that Southern Baptists must approach Bold Mission Thrust as if they are the only ones to do it, but noted: "Bold Mission Thrust won't be done by Southern Baptists alone." He said it will take the combined efforts of many Christians to reach the world for Christ.

Responding to Barbour's questions, the two SBC leaders emphasized that the SBC will attempt to reach more blacks and other ethnic groups as part of Bold Mission Thrust, but that no one would be coerced to change their views.

On the question of inerrancy, posed by Barbour in light of the controversy over that issue during the election of Rogers to the SBC presidency in June, Rogers defined it to mean belief that the Scriptures are without error in their original manuscripts.

In discussing the SBC's Baptist Faith and Message Statement, passed by the SBC in 1963 and reaffirmed in 1979, Rogers said he believes there are very few Southern Baptists who would attribute error to the Bible--"I would guess less than five percent."

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Bennett read the section on the Scripture in the Baptist Faith and Message Statement. It says, "The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ."

Pressed by Barbour about what he would do, if anything, to rid the SBC of "liberal" professors, Rogers said he intends no witch hunt but said, "I don't want young men taught there are errors in the Bible from the standpoint of human rationality."

He emphasized that he, as SBC president, has no authority to remove anyone from any position, but that he does have certain appointive powers to committees and the influence of leadership.

Asked if he would appoint persons to committees who don't believe in biblical inerrancy, he said, "I have never knowingly had teachers or deacons (in churches he has served as pastor) who didn't believe in the inspiration of the Scripture. If I knew a person had said he did not believe in inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible, I would not appoint him."

He said he believes that anyone paid by Southern Baptist money to teach in Southern Baptist institutions should teach what Baptists believe, but said: "I would not favor a witch hunt but would not oppose a committee if it were fair and honest" to investigate liberalism. But he said he had not decided to appoint such a committee, noting that Southern Baptists already have procedures to handle such things.

Both Rogers and Bennett emphasized that Southern Baptists are not a people who must ascribe to a certain creed, but, added Rogers, we are a people with a commonality of belief. "We believe in the inspiration of Scripture, the Lordship of Jesus Christ, salvation by grace through faith, baptism of believers only by immersion, the eternal security of the believer, separation of church and state, evangelism and the spread of the gospel."

"It gets to be a witch hunt to make someone dot all the (theological) i's and cross all the t's. I just want people to believe that the Book is trustworthy," Rogers said, noting that he was elected president because people said, "Adrian believes that way."

He added, however, in effect, that a vote for another candidate was not necessarily a vote against the concept of biblical inerrancy. "Many of the others not elected also believe in inerrancy," he said.

He said that he hopes the subject has become such an issue that those who can't conscientiously support biblical inerrancy would want to teach somewhere else besides Southern Baptist ranks.

Bennett and Rogers also explained that an internal investigation of the registration process at the SBC meeting in Houston had revealed no massive irregularities and that there were no indications that some irregularities which did occur had had any effect on Rogers' first ballot election.

They emphasized, however, that the investigation, which will lead to revisions in the constitution and bylaws and tightening of procedures, was not of the election but of the registration process.

On the question of President Carter, Barbour probed the SBC leaders on how they see the relationship with their fellow Southern Baptist.

"It's our duty to pray for our president and keep him informed on how we feel, but I haven't been asked for any advice," Rogers said.

Rogers, responding to a question, said he would feel obliged to let Carter know if there was any serious disagreement with a moral position he had taken.

He and Bennett pointed out that Southern Baptists are a varied denomination with a variation of opinions, and that there is no Baptist position on Carter or his policies.

Even though Southern Baptists have a variety of opinions, Bennett said, "the thing that binds us together is our mission to reach the world for Christ."

Responding to Barbour's questions, he said this effort would involve wide use of mass media and that he doesn't think recent changes in leadership at the SBC Radio and Television Commission would prevent that sort of participation by the commission. "I would think they would be actively involved," he said.

The commission and NBC cooperated in production of the Barbour interview with Bennett and Rogers.