

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Missions Leaders Deny  
Ministerial Oversupply

By Norman Jameson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist seminaries have awarded 8,801 degrees in the past five years and surveys indicate 28,000 high school, college and graduate students are preparing for Baptist church related vocations.

Do those numbers indicate an upcoming oversupply of trained church leadership?

A 1978 report by Jackson W. Carroll, coordinator of research at the Hartford Seminary Foundation, says many Protestant bodies face a severe oversupply of clergy. The greatest oversupply, the report said, is found in the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (Southern) and the United Presbyterian Church.

If trends of clergy oversupply and membership decline continue, the report said, "there will be an Episcopal priest for every lay member of that denomination in the year 2004." The report predicted the same thing for Southern Baptists by 2023, although Baptist statisticians refute that claim.

But the 4,000 empty Baptist pulpits (compared to 4,200 ten years ago), the 1,526 immediate career openings on foreign mission fields and the needs of Bold Mission Thrust convince most Southern Baptist leaders there are not more people being trained than the denomination can absorb. The six SBC seminaries, for example, say they have no trouble placing 90 to 95 percent of their graduates.

"How can there be an oversupply of ministers when we have more than 136 million unsaved people in this country alone?" said Russell Dilday at his inauguration as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, the nation's largest with 3,800 students.

William G. Tanner, executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, says, "If we're serious about Bold Mission Thrust and the challenge toward the year 2000, it would be short-sighted not to have these people trained. When God gets ready to do a great work, he first prepares the workers."

The numbers alone indicate workers are being prepared. The problem, say mission leaders, is in distribution. Not enough county seat churches are available for those who expect to be called to one, while struggling congregations in new work areas are crying for leadership.

Seminary presidents say their students show an unprecedented willingness to go into the hard places. But leaders in "pioneer" (new work) areas generally admit they don't see a cadre of fresh new faces with eager ideas spreading into states and nations where Southern Baptists have said they will give everyone a chance to hear and respond to the gospel by the year 2000.

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If all seminary graduates envision receiving a secure pastorate with their diploma, says Duke McCall, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, then there are too many graduates for the positions available.

But he says seminary enrollments ought to be doubled again if Baptists are serious about the challenge of Bold Mission Thrust. The seminaries' own projections indicate a 17 percent enrollment increase by 1985, to 12,605.

Dan Stringer, when he was director-treasurer of the Northwest Baptist Convention, and Ellis Bush, executive secretary-treasurer of the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey, both leaders in relatively new Southern Baptist penetrations, said the problem with getting seminary graduates to their areas is that the churches cannot afford to bring someone from the too-distant schools for an interview. And, as Stringer says, "struggling new churches cannot afford to make a mistake."

Stringer, now executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention, says Baptist polity contributes to poor distribution of trained graduates because most seminaries, while they try to help graduates, hesitate to employ what may be interpreted as a placement service.

Action at Southwestern Seminary indicates that may change. Dilday says Southwestern, in a year, will launch "an aggressive placement program" to help the Home Mission Board and young conventions get people into pioneer areas.

A helpful solution to the distribution problem could be re-emphasis of bi-vocational ministry, an historic Baptist method of growth which gets people on the church field with secular employment. But Bush and other missions leaders say seminaries are not training or conditioning students to see bi-vocational ministry as a viable option.

Bush says flatly that he has seen "no increased willingness for seminary graduates to come to new work areas as bi-vocational ministers." One problem is that some students, called early to the ministry, have pursued training in no other profession.

Tanner says there is a new awareness in seminaries about the need for curriculum for bi-vocational service. He welcomes the move because he says 9,000 of the 35,000 SBC pastors are bi-vocational and "we could not survive without these people."

The lure of graduates to foreign missions also must increase since Southern Baptists are still 2,000 short of their goal of having 5,000 career missionaries in 125 countries by the end of the century.

"I'd like to have some of those people," says Louis Cobbs, director of missionary personnel for the Foreign Mission Board. He says there are 10 jobs for every person the board has been able to appoint for want of applicants.

Otha Winningham, director of Southern Baptist work in the Minnesota-Wisconsin Fellowship, says there are probably double the number of people being trained than are needed if Southern Baptists do not mount a massive program of church extension.

Research Winningham has done indicates a potential oversupply of seminary graduates arose in the early 1950s. Then a trend toward multiple-member church staffs absorbed many.

That's still the situation in new work areas. This year, for the first time, the nine-year-old Penn-Jersey convention has its first church with a two-member staff.

Even in established areas, the need for trained leaders is great. James Landes, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the strongest of the 34 Southern Baptist state conventions, says Texas churches plan to start over 800 mission points in the next few years.

"If we have proper response to the opportunities and challenges that God has given us, and God lays it on their hearts to get into new work areas, then we don't have one too many students in our seminaries," Landes said.

He called on leaders through the entire educational system to put "a much stronger emphasis on new work and career missions."

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Baptist Evangelistic March  
Yields 1,010 New Christians

By Veda Rae Lozuk

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VENEZUELA (BP)--The impact of more than 1,000 new Christians is being felt throughout eastern Venezuela following Baptists' third month-long "evangelistic march" here.

In one instance, Southern Baptist missionaries Eugene and Eva Nell Kimler, back from furlough and looking for a house in which to begin a mission in the city of Cumana, found themselves with 29 new Christians before they could locate a meeting house.

The "march," led by Francisco Aular, evangelism director for the National Baptist Convention of Venezuela, involved 120 volunteers divided into teams working in person-to-person evangelism from door to door in 16 towns. The volunteers made 2,214 contacts, resulting in 1,010 professions of faith in Jesus Christ. The team enlisted new converts to join in the march.

A total of 658 people are receiving instruction as new believers. One mission, led by a young layman in El Tigre, has 27 in its instruction classes.

For years Venezuelan Baptists have had a goal of preaching the gospel in this vast area, far from the central plains which were the cradle of Baptist work in the country.

As a student in Venezuela's Baptist Theological Seminary, Aular said he received during prayer meetings a vision of Venezuelan towns and cities with no knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Combining these impressions, he led the convention in its first evangelistic march in 1976; two years later, he directed a similar movement in western Venezuela.

"Next year, with the Lord's help, the marchers will evangelize in places throughout the country that were left out of the two previous years," he said. "In 1981, the big push will be to evangelize the capital city of Caracas, with its more than 3.5 million people."

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Veda Rae (Mrs. George S.) Lozuk is Southern Baptist missionary press representative for Venezuela.

KKK Visibility Indicates  
'Re-emergence of Racism'

FLORENCE, Ky. (BP)--The increasing visibility of the Ku Klux Klan is one indication of a "re-emergence of a new overt racism" in the United States that must be confronted and challenged by the church, John A. Wood told students at the Kentucky Baptist Student Convention.

Wood, of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, said this generation is in "deep, deep trouble" at the point of race relations.

He warned that overtly racist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan "may be lulling us Christians to sleep in that it makes us proud that we are not 'that' bad and gives us the false feeling that since we have good will towards minorities, then we are not part of the problem."

Although the Klan is not large, Wood said it gives expression to "something that is bugging a lot of white folks" who don't like the changes that have been made to assist minorities.

"Civil rights was tolerable as long as it didn't interfere in any way with their lives, but now they feel that government action is taking from them to give to someone they don't feel is deserving," he explained. "Many people who wouldn't think of joining the Klan are nevertheless sympathetic to some of their feelings."

Wood reminded the students that "behind this despicable ideology" espoused by the Ku Klux Klan are "human beings for whom Christ died."

"Ironically," he said, "the word the oppressor needs to hear is the word the oppressed must hear: that you have worth and value because you belong to God; that you need not fear that your significance is going to be usurped by another person or group; and that your worth is guaranteed in the cross of Jesus Christ."

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5 Georgia Governors and  
Griffin Bell Honor Benefactor

Baptist Press  
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ATLANTA (BP)--Four former Georgia governors, current Gov. George D. Busbee and former U.S. Attorney General Griffin Bell, all Southern Baptists, hosted an unusual Governors Breakfast here in honor of a colorful and historic benefactor of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

About 250 Georgians attended the event commemorating the 100th anniversary of a \$50,000 gift to the seminary by Georgia's only four-term governor, Joseph Emerson Brown, also a Southern Baptist. Thirty of Brown's descendants, including his three living grandchildren, were present.

The contribution, which in today's dollars would be worth more than \$1 million, established the seminary's permanent endowment fund and saved the seminary from near bankruptcy in 1879-80. The seminary's Joseph Emerson Brown Chair of Theology is an outgrowth of Brown's gift.

Brown served as governor from 1857 to 1865, then was chief justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, and finally was U.S. senator.

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Busbee and former governors Ellis G. Arnall, S. Ernest Vandiver, Carl E. Sanders and Lester Maddox spoke to the audience about Brown and the seminary. President Jimmy Carter and Senator Herman Talmadge, both Southern Baptists and former governors, sent messages. Bell served as master of ceremonies.

Southern Seminary president Duke K. McCall, the keynote speaker, announced that the seminary would create a new endowed professorship, named for the late Carolyn King Ragan of Atlanta, whose estate has established a trust with income to be paid to the seminary annually.

The governors challenged Georgians at the breakfast to participate in the seminary's \$10 million endowment and capital needs campaign, which has now received \$7.5 million nationwide. Former Governor Vandiver, of Lavonia, Ga., is co-chairman of the Georgia campaign committee.

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#### Southern Baptists Step Up Aid To Starving Cambodians

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--As President Carter pledged an additional \$69 million in U.S. aid to starving Cambodians, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials moved ahead with efforts to provide supplemental food and relief to those Cambodians who have fled to Thailand.

W. Eugene Grubbs, the board's consultant for laymen overseas and relief ministries, said the board has \$100,000 to \$300,000 in hunger funds which can be made available to missionaries and volunteers from the Thailand Baptist Mission working with Cambodian refugees. The board appropriated \$70,000 in hunger funds for Cambodian refugees in September.

Grubbs was among 40 representatives of private volunteer agencies who met with Carter prior to his announcement of additional aid. The group asked Carter to call on U.S. and world leaders and the American public to support existing aid programs and to use his influence to expedite channels for American aid to Cambodians.

Southern Baptists can help ease the plight of these starving people by sending donations earmarked for Cambodian refugee relief to the Foreign Mission Board, Grubbs said. The board is prepared to provide food and vitamin supplements as well as other necessities such as blankets, cooking utensils, mosquito netting, soap and toothbrushes. Donations should be addressed to the Foreign Mission Board, Box 6597, Richmond, Va. 23230.

Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers already are distributing food to some of the more than one million Cambodians who have crossed into Thailand in recent weeks. Thai government estimates show an additional one million refugees on the Cambodian side of the border and about two million more behind those.

An emergency medical team from Baptist Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand, provided five days of medical assistance to the refugees as requested by Thai officials. Board officials are contacting stateside Baptist doctors and other medical people to form volunteer teams to provide medical assistance for three to six months. The first team is tentatively scheduled to leave for Thailand Nov. 6.

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