



## BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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1980s Hold Challenges,  
Promise For Baptist Schools

By Rex Hammock

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Educators at Southern Baptist-related schools are bracing themselves for difficulties during the next decade.

Economic, demographic and legal challenges are but a few of the concerns they express for the 1980s.

Some admit fear of growing "government encroachment" into church-related education while others predict that the '80s will see a recruitment scramble for older students as the population decreases among traditional college-age youth.

Yet, while admitting the expected difficulties, most school officials remain optimistic about the future of the denomination's 72 seminaries, colleges and schools, according to reports in the December 1979 issue of "The Southern Baptist Educator."

"The coming recession in higher education," says Robert Lynn, president of Louisiana College, Pineville, La., "will hand Baptist schools a day of opportunity to preserve quality in education with a moral base for our society."

Echoing Lynn, George Borders, president of Palm Beach Atlantic College, West Palm Beach, Fla., sees the decade holding great promise for Baptist schools "if they maintain their commitment to quality educational programs, Christian values and denominational service."

Still, ominous clouds appear on the schools' horizon.

According to experts in educational trends, the most important force in the 1980s for all higher education, including SBC schools, is the impending drop in the population of 18-year-olds. Census officials predict that the decade could see as much as a 25 percent drop among this traditional college-age group.

"The resulting scramble for older, part-time students," says David Breneman, an economist and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, "will dominate the higher education environment of the 1980s and beyond."

The trend toward older students, says one Baptist educator, may cause programs in continuing and adult education, especially in urban areas, to exceed traditional programs.

Baptist schools, however, could escape the brunt of student enrollment decline. The recent migration of people into "Sun Belt" states, if continued during the 1980s, will bring new people into the area where most Southern Baptist schools are located.

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Location, admits Breneman, will be one of the ultimate factors making the difference in a school's ability to weather the economic storms of the '80s.

Another storm which Baptist schools must face during the decade will be increased "government intervention into university affairs," according to John Fant, general counsel for Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

Fant, a former judge, explains that most Baptist schools, because they do not receive direct government funds, were exempt from much government regulation before 1975.

"The change came," he explains, "when the Department of Health, Education and Welfare adopted regulations to enforce Title IX (sex discrimination) which declared that a 'recipient institution' was any school that received federal funds directly or 'indirectly.'"

In other words, if one student receives one dollar in federal student aid the entire institution and all of its activities are subject to regulation. Because students at practically all Southern Baptist schools receive some federal assistance--either grants or guaranteed loans--the schools must respond to all federal regulations.

Fant predicts many possible areas of confrontation between church-related schools and federal agencies during the 1980s.

"Baptists must be legally prepared and willing to stand up for the principles in which we believe," he declares.

Fant says, however, that Baptist schools' best defense against federal intervention is to have a clear sense of mission. "If we adhere to the basic doctrine of denominational purpose in our educational communities, we will meet certain exemptions from intrusion by governmental agencies under the provisions of the First Amendment," he explains.

Such a clear sense of purpose is vital if Baptist schools are to successfully meet the challenges of the 1980s, adds Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director-treasurer of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, Tenn.

Explaining that parents and students are increasingly interested in "value-oriented" education, Walker says that Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust gives the denomination's schools a "special edge." Bold Mission Thrust is the Southern Baptist plan to proclaim the gospel to the entire world by the year 2000.

"The Bold Missions emphasis," he explains, "will make us more aware that the church-related college experience is, in fact, the missionary thrust into a particular segment of our population."

To meet the challenges of the future, says Walker, Baptist schools must continue the formula with which they have met past challenges.

"Each Southern Baptist institution," he says, "must continue to reflect commitment to introduce Christian truth into every area of life and be obedient to the clear intent of the scriptures in a teaching ministry."

Concordance Published  
By Baptists In Lebanon

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)--Although Arabic has been used in Christian worship and theological study for about 1,000 years, there has never been an Arabic-Greek concordance for ministers, teachers and students--until now.

The new concordance of the Bible, in the final stages of production, will be distributed soon, reports Frances (Mrs. J. Wayne) Fuller, Southern Baptist missionary director of Baptist Publications, publisher of the concordance.

Mrs. Fuller says she expects to sell the book to pastors, priests, and theological students of all evangelical and Orthodox churches in the Middle East.

Ghassan Khalaf, an editorial worker at Baptist Publications, compiled the concordance, beginning work on it while confined to his home during the severest fighting of the Lebanese civil war.

During the past year more than 1,000 pages of the book were prepared for printing at an offset commercial press. When the final page was ready for press, four-fifths of the book had already been printed.

The book's foreword was written by Dr. Kenneth Bailey, Presbyterian missionary and linguistic scholar in the Near East School of Theology. In it, he mentioned the long absence of a reference book, adding, "The publication of this concordance is an event of great significance."

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Georgia Executive Body  
Affirms Support of Harwell

Baptist Press  
12/18/79

ATLANTA (BP)--The executive committee of the Georgia Baptist Convention has affirmed its intention to retain Jack U. Harwell as editor of "The Christian Index," the convention's news journal.

The action follows failure at the recent annual meeting of the convention in Savannah by persons seeking to generate support to have Harwell fired because of his theological views. William Powell, editor of "The Southern Baptist Journal," publication of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, organized to find Southern Baptist "liberals," led the effort to fire Harwell.

Before the convention the executive committee met and voted to ask its administrative committee to meet with the board of directors of "The Christian Index" to consider charges against Harwell and bring a report back to the executive committee. The charges involved Harwell's interpretation of the Adam and Eve account in Genesis, written in a personal letter five years ago, not theological content of "The Christian Index" itself.

The convention in Savannah approved, by a four to one margin, a motion to "express our full confidence in the personal and professional integrity of the editor so that the executive committee in its deliberations will know the sentiment of the messengers." Messengers sustained a ruling that motions to fire Harwell were out of order.

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In the joint meeting of the administrative committee and the newspaper's directors, Harwell reaffirmed his "acceptance of and adherence to the Baptist Faith and Message statement" adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963 and later by the Georgia Baptist Convention.

The executive committee noted that since Harwell had reaffirmed the theological position of the convention and policies of operation for the newspaper that "the executive committee continue his services as editor of 'The Christian Index.'"

The executive committee's statement expressed appreciation "for Dr. Harwell's professional ability and services in editing a denominational news journal which has served Georgia Baptists well and which has earned the respect of leaders in both religious and secular journalism."

"Any opinions, including those of the editor, which may not be in harmony with the Baptist Faith and Message statement in no way changes the commitment to this statement by 'The Christian Index,' the directors or the executive committee of the Georgia Baptist Convention," the executive committee said.

"Any statement not in harmony with the Baptist Faith and Message statement does not have the endorsement or approval of the executive committee of the Georgia Baptist Convention," the committee added.

The committee's statement further declared that the Georgia Baptist newspaper "is to reflect the spirit and theological position of Georgia and Southern Baptists" but also noted:

"As pastors in Georgia Baptist churches are free to preach within the context of the affirmed faith and theological position of Baptists, so the editor of 'The Christian Index' is free to discuss issues within the scope of 'The Index's' purpose and objective, and as the Lord leads in the discussion of subjects which the editor deems to be of interest and concern to Georgia Baptists."

"The editor is responsible for editorial expression," the statement continued, "and it is understood that he does not speak officially for the Georgia Baptist Convention or the executive committee. It is also understood that at times the editor's thinking and statements may not be in harmony with other Baptists and other leaders in Georgia Baptist life. The editor is personally responsible for expressed editorial opinions and judgment."

The statement further called upon all Georgia Baptists to unite in "support of 'The Christian Index' as it undertakes to serve Georgia Baptists..." in Bold Mission Thrust efforts and other programs and ministries supported by the convention.

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2000th Church Constitutes  
In North Central States

By Norman Jameson

Baptist Press  
12/18/79

MILFORD, Mich. (BP)--Southern Baptists flexed their missions muscle three times in Milford, Mich., before they pulled a new church into the ring.

When the final bell rang Dec. 16 on Milford Baptist Chapel the fight had just begun for its 63 charter members as they constituted into South Hills Baptist Church, the 2000th Southern Baptist church in the 11th North Central States.

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Dale Gross, pistol-packing karate expert and pastor of the milestone church, says third-round efforts worked in Milford where two earlier attempts to start a church had failed because "we didn't give up when we hit rocky ground."

South Hills Baptist Church and its pastor may be the archetypical story in Southern Baptist missions. To hear it, 241 church members and denominational leaders from around the country braved an early winter snow storm and crowded into an elementary school gymnasium for the constitution service.

Gross became a Christian in a storefront Baptist church in Detroit when he was 16. He says the Lord called him to preach that very year but he ran "like Jonah" for 17 years before accepting a request from Orchard Hills Baptist Church to help start a mission in Milford.

Gross is bivocational, making his living as the commanding officer of the patrol division of the nearby Novi police force. The mission first met in a school, as many do. The new work is in the heart of a special Southern Baptist missions effort called North Central Missions Thrust, part of the larger overall Bold Mission Thrust to tell everyone the story of Jesus in this century.

From the beginning, the chapel was self-supporting and it budgeted 10 percent of its offerings to world missions through the Cooperative Program and two percent to associational ministries.

As the 2000th church, it marks a great milestone in the North Central States' goal to double all phases of their work by 1990, including having 3,600 churches. The North Central States include Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota and Iowa.

Southern Baptist work in the area has grown from 621 churches with 108,000 members in 1949 to 2,000 churches and 475,000 members in 1979--an increase in membership of 340 percent while the population increased 30 percent. Leaders in the seven states will soon meet to select points at which to begin 780 new churches in 1980-81. That's a rate of one a day.

South Hills became the 191st Southern Baptist church in the Baptist State Convention of Michigan which was founded in 1957 with 53 congregations. In 1951, there were just six Southern Baptist congregations in Michigan, with 800 members.

"One of the things we've done from the first day is think big," says Gross about his successful church, which will move into a new building in March. "Be absolutely positive about everything. Never doubt. If you're absolutely positive and stand on God's word, you can't fail."

Taking the advice of Billy Graham for whom Gross was the personal body guard during a crusade in Pontiac, Mich., Gross keeps his sermons simple. One half his congregation are new Christians and former Catholics.

Gross, who calls himself a second generation hillbilly because his parents hailed from Kentucky and Arkansas, rises daily at 5:30 a.m., and at 4:30 a.m. Sundays to keep up with his duties. Besides full-time jobs as policeman and pastor, he's studying for the doctor of ministries degree from Luther Rice Seminary. When he visits church members and prospects, his wife, Judy, frequently goes with him.

Gross says the publicity his church has received because the machinations of fate picked it to be the 2000th has been helpful. One person, investigating the activity, joined the church.

Growth continues. There were 53 names on the program bulletin that were to be charter members, but 10 persons joined the church between the printing of the bulletin and the constitution service. Gross anticipates a 500-member church within 10 years. That would be 10 percent of the current population of Milford.

"I realize I am only a man," Gross said after others had praised his work. "God is doing all these great things, not me."

But Billy Whitt, director of the cooperative missions division for Michigan Baptists, said "Nobody in our association is doing any better job than Dale Gross. If we're going to really penetrate this area and Michigan, we need a lot more men like him."

Southern Baptist denominational leaders attending the constitution service included Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the Executive Committee; Grady Cothen, president of the Sunday School Board; Robert Deneen, president of the Home Mission Board; Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union; Charles Ashcraft, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention; Ray Roberts, executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio; Robert Wilson, executive director of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan; and E. Harmon Moore, executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana; along with other associational and church leaders who had a part in establishing the South Hills church.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers.

William J. Reynolds'  
Retirement Announced

Baptist Press  
12/18/79

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--William J. Reynolds, 59, secretary of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church music department since 1971, has announced his early retirement effective April 30, 1980.

Changing philosophies and administrative conflicts were cited as reasons for Reynolds' retirement.

"Dr. Reynolds has led Southern Baptists well for many years in the field of church music," said Grady C. Cothen, president of the Sunday School Board. "He is an extraordinarily gifted musician and a man of the highest moral character."

Ralph McIntyre, director of the church and staff support division, said, "In recent years there has been a widening philosophical gap related to kinds of music for Southern Baptist churches. We have experienced administrative problems in the music department which we have been unable to overcome."

"We wish Dr. Reynolds well and we will move immediately to secure the best possible leadership in music at the Baptist Sunday School Board," said Cothen.

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Reynolds said his plans include continued involvement "in the activities of my profession-- as a composer, writer, congregational song and worship leader, music consultant and choral clinician.

"Among the immediate tasks at hand will be the completion of plans for the music at the meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis in June and the Baptist World Alliance in Toronto in July," Reynolds said.

Reynolds joined the church music department in 1955 and served as music editor and supervisor of music publications before assuming leadership of Southern Baptists' program of church music.

He was general editor and chairman of the hymnal committee for the 1975 edition of the "Baptist Hymnal," which to date has sold more than 3.3 million copies.

Reynolds is the author of "Christ and the Carols," "Hymns of Our Faith," "Congregational Singing" and "Companion to the Baptist Hymnal." He is co-author of "A Joyful Sound: Christian Hymnody," a textbook on hymnody.

Reynolds has composed many sacred choral works, gospel songs and hymns.

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Seminary Evacuation Mars  
News Of Rhodesian Peace

By Mary Jane Welch

Baptist Press  
12/18/79

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--While welcoming news that a cease fire promises to reopen rural areas of Rhodesia to missionaries, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board received news that the seminary campus near Gwelo has been evacuated.

Davis L. Saunders, secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa, received a telegram sent Dec. 17, the same day as the peace agreement was initiated by the Patriotic Front, saying simply that the seminary campus had been evacuated and that all personnel were safe.

News reports indicated that guerrilla agreement cleared the way for a formal signing Dec. 19 of a cease fire, ending the seven-year war in the country. Patriotic Front forces have been fighting, first the minority government of Ian Smith and later the black majority government of Bishop Abel Muzorewa, for control of the country.

The cease fire has the effect of returning the country to British colonial status temporarily. Rhodesia had recently changed its name to Zimbabwe/Rhodesia. It will return to its original name at least temporarily.

Southern Baptist missionaries had already moved seminary classes from the campus, located several miles from town, into Gwelo, but students continued living in dormitories on campus. Since the evacuation occurred during a school holiday only a few students, the vice principal, the pastor of the seminary church and the superintendent of the nearby Baptist camp would have had to evacuate, Saunders said.

He said the evacuation was probably prompted by a last minute show of power before the cease fire. He anticipates the mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries) will request more funds and personnel to reopen rural work if the cease fire holds.

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"It will be relief for the missionaries," he said. Missionaries have sometimes had to travel in armed convoys. The cease fire promises to restore freedom of movement and religious freedom that has not existed for some time in rural Rhodesia.

Saunders also anticipates that missionaries will request more money for urban work because many of those who fled to the more secure cities will probably remain there. Already the mission and the Baptist Convention of Rhodesia have implemented Bold Mission Thrust by beginning work in two new townships created outside Salisbury to house the influx of people.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: In keeping with the country's temporary return to British colony status, the Foreign Mission Board will use the colonial name of Rhodesia until a new government takes power. The country had recently changed its name to Zimbabwe/Rhodesia, but will return, at least temporarily, to its original name.

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