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St. Petersburg's Lampley:  
From Sharecropper to Pastor

By Dan Martin

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (BP)--Lewis Lampley knew even as a youngster "there had to be more to life than gettin' up, hitchin' up, gatherin' up and settlin' up"; something beyond sharecropping.

But he never dreamed as a boy he would someday be pastor of an integrated Southern Baptist church.

Lampley is pastor of Southside Tabernacle Baptist Church in St. Petersburg, the result of a merger among Tabernacle Baptist Church, where Lampley was pastor; Southside Baptist Church, a white church engulfed in racial transition; and First Baptist Church, a prestigious downtown church.

The Tabernacle and Southside congregations merged, and First Baptist participated by underwriting Southside's financial responsibilities and accepting Southside members who did not wish to remain in the combined congregation.

Lampley prepared early for the challenges of his task. For the first 19 of his 42 years, he lived in a small village called Pineywoods, near Brundidge, Ala. The oldest of eight children of a sharecropper, he knew the life of his family was not for him.

"I was determined not to grow up to work all year, then have Mr. Charlie (the white landowner) tell me, "ya et it up' when it was time to get my share (of the crop)."

Getting an education was tough for the sharecropper black boy. His family didn't see any reason to send him to school when all he was going to do was plow a mule. He was in the 10th grade before he attended school regularly. At age 19, he was still a year and a half from high school graduation.

That year, 1956, he married his childhood sweetheart, Geraldine Meadows. Not long afterward, they moved south "looking for greener pastures."

He bought a barbershop from a black Pentecostal who visited him from time to time. He was the first and only man to ever witness to Lampley, even though Lampley "joined" a church when he was eight.

Lampley's Pentecostal friend provided a small radio for the barbershop and tuned it to a station featuring preachers and evangelists. One day the message soaked in.

Lampley finished cutting a head of hair, retreated to the privacy of the men's room and asked God to forgive his sins and change his life. Within months of his conversion, Lampley announced his call to the ministry.

He began teaching at Tabernacle Baptist Church and was called as the church's pastor in January, 1966. Realizing a need for more education, he went on to earn a bachelor of religious education degree and took courses at Florida Seminary, Moody Bible Institute and Luther Rice Seminary.

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Today, Lampley aims at a balance of evangelism, teaching, discipleship and community ministries. His program is both for blacks and whites, without regard for color.

Lampley's merged, integrated church "has given people a chance to see what majorities and minorities can do together, successfully and effectively."

"The reason I am a Southern Baptist is that I get close to men who may not have the same sort of security I have," he insists.

"I think it is incumbent on me, a Christian, to brother my brother, whether he wants to brother me back or not," he insists. "That can't stop me from brothering him and loving him."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers.

Video Telephone Links  
HMB, Chicago Baptists

By Marv Knox

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ATLANTA (BP)--It looked like a scene from an evangelical version of Star Trek.

In Atlanta, Home Mission Board evangelism specialists assembled before a cluster of cameras and two black-and-white video monitors. Halfway across the nation, leaders of Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association convened in front of a similar battery of equipment.

And both groups talked--face to face.

The meeting was more than science fiction fantasy. Seventeen persons discussed urban evangelism strategy and its ramifications for Southern Baptist work in the Chicago area.

It cost them less than the price of a single round-trip airline ticket. The Atlanta-Chicago connection is \$210 per hour, approximately one-tenth of what it would cost to fly the Chicago contingent to Atlanta and house them overnight.

Instead, they were united by Picturephone\* Meeting Service, an audiovisual communication network linking 12 U.S. cities. Currently under an FCC-authorized market trial, PMS stations are equipped to videotape "calls." They also telecast charts and graphs and transmit copies of them to both ends of the connection.

But most importantly, callers see each other.

More than just voices, facial expressions and body language communicated thoughts and emotions as the groups discussed implications of NEST (National Evangelism Support Team) for Chicago Baptists. NEST combines the resources of local churches, national consultants and laity from across the nation to meet spiritual and physical needs.

During the hour-long conference, board and NEST leaders presented the basic thrust of the program. Chicago leaders listened and explained interpretations of Chicago's specific needs.

"We transcended the coldness of letters and distance of two-person phone calls," said Reid Hardin, the board's evangelism support director.

"Through spontaneous interaction and body language, we were able to lift our efforts to a relational basis," he added. "In so doing, we advanced our planning process. We're six months to a year ahead of where we would be without this video call."

Hardin said the board evangelism division plans to initiate similar conferences with four or five other cities on the PMS circuit during 1980. The conferences probably will consist of three or four hour-long calls each.

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"This is the most cost effective way to bridge a difficult communication gap between HMB personnel and Southern Baptists in the cities," said Dale Cross, board urban evangelism director. "It will save us trips to these areas, thus saving us time and money."

Everett Anthony, executive director of the Chicago association, said: "We'll be able to make maximum use of this resource when we learn to prepare strong agendas. Then we can budget time more precisely to make best use of this format."

"This is an outstanding breakthrough," he said. "We must utilize electronic advances such as this if we are to meet the needs of our cities."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers.

SBC Leadership Sees  
Near-Complete Change

By Norman Jameson and Vern Myers

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--1970 brought America Kent State, Charles Manson's trial, the 747 jumbo jet, American bombing of Cambodia, failure of Apollo 13, the return of Muhammed Ali, and a ban on television cigarette advertising.

For the 11.4 million Southern Baptists observing their 125th anniversary as a convention, 1970 brought the recall of the Broadman Bible commentary on Genesis as part of a "conservative-liberal" confrontation at the Denver convention; an attempt in Denver to abolish the Christian Life Commission following a morality seminar it sponsored featuring a debate with Anson Mount against the Playboy philosophy; and the Home Mission Board appointment of a minister to hippies.

And 1970 introduced a decade that was to see virtually a complete rollover in Southern Baptist Convention leadership. Only two agency heads in place Jan. 1, 1970--Foy Valentine of the Christian Life Commission and Duke McCall, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary--will begin 1980 in the same office.

According to research in the decade's annual reports, the president or administrative executive has changed at least once in the 1970s in: 27 of 46 senior colleges; 17 of 19 SBC agencies; 26 of 34 state Baptist newspapers (including four founded in the '70s); four of the current 10 largest churches; and 21 of 34 state Baptist conventions (including three founded in the '70s). Three other state executive secretaries have announced retirements in 1980.

Seventy persons have been editors of state Baptist newspapers in the 1970s. That number includes some executive secretaries who acted as editors. Two editors--J. Marse Grant of North Carolina and C.R. Daley of Kentucky--headed their respective publications when the new year's bell rang for 1960.

The '70s launched the boldest missions statement in Southern Baptist history, Bold Mission Thrust, an unabashed plan to give everyone in the world a chance to hear and respond to the gospel of Jesus in this century.

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Yet the chief executives in office when the goal was first articulated will, for the most part, no longer be in positions of leadership to push, pull and pray it through.

Noted Baptist historian Robert Baker says history shows convention programs and goals will not be harmfully affected by changes in leadership. "No one is going to turn his back on Bold Mission Thrust," he says.

Baker, author of "The Southern Baptist Convention and Its People," points out, for instance, that the highly successful Cooperative Program plan of missions funding began in 1925, but the people who made it go did so in the '40s.

"The change of leadership will be a buttress to Bold Mission Thrust," Baker says. He feels the rapid turnover has brought a new creativity and that from its beginning, Bold Mission Thrust has meant "somebody stood on somebody's shoulders."

Albert McClellan, director of program planning and associate executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee for the past 30 years, has held office while the compacted changes of the decades whirled around him.

Of all the people who have been agency heads, Baptist state newspaper editors or state executive secretaries during those three decades, only one--Duke McCall--is still in a chief executive role. He was executive secretary of the Executive Committee when McClellan came.

McClellan feels the change in leadership is good for Southern Baptists. He points to the increased optimism of a person coming new to a job over the person giving it up. "These men will support Bold Mission Thrust because that's the purpose of the denomination," McClellan says. "It's not new. It's always been. We're just articulating it now."

Not since the '50s has there been nearly so large a leadership turnover. With the average age of the current SBC agency heads at 53, it's unlikely the '80s will be as active.

In fact, with the trend toward retirement at age 70, at least seven national executives could reach the 21st century while still in service. They include: Russell Dilday, Southwestern Seminary; A. Rudolph Fagan, Stewardship Commission; Hollis Johnson III, Southern Baptist Foundation; W. Randall Lolley, Southeastern Seminary; William Pinson Jr., Golden Gate Seminary; William G. Tanner, Home Mission Board; and Carolyn Weatherford, Woman's Missionary Union.

McClellan, considering the decade's changes, declares, "The list (of changes) says we have a bright, happy, wholesome tomorrow."

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War Swells Capital City;  
Strains People, Resources

By Linda R. Coleman

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SALISBURY, Rhodesia (BP)--Once, the swings on a playground in Salisbury, Rhodesia, provided afternoons of fun and laughter for children. Now those same swings form the frame for a hut made of plastic sheets.

Even if a cease-fire brings an end to the seven-year war for control of Rhodesia, six Southern Baptist missionaries stationed in Salisbury will still have a ministry to thousands who have fled to the safety of the city.

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There is no space to play, so old and young alike swarm into the surrounding streets. Daily life is consumed with trying to get food, looking for work, and scooping out the water and mud from under the leaky plastic tents when it rains.

Until a few years ago, there were no slums in Salisbury, no large scale hunger or rampant disease. Now within a short distance of the modern skyscrapers of downtown are communities where people live in the squalor of plastic tents. The effects of war are devastating and far-reaching.

Relief work is going on. Small, temporary housing is being constructed by the city. Red Cross and other relief agencies are trying to cope. Local church members, already burdened with escalating prices, fewer jobs, and the needs of relatives from their extended families, try to assist as much as they can. The people and their needs outstrip all resources.

The Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries) and the Baptist Convention of Rhodesia are supporting two pastors for two years. These men are to live and work among the people of Glen View and Zengeza, two housing developments which have mushroomed outside the city.

Simon Jena, a young pastor who had to leave his home and church in the Sanyati reserve, is working in Zengeza. The missionaries thought immediately of him for the position, but couldn't locate him. Unaware of that, Jena went to the mission office to say the Lord had given him a burden for the people of Zengeza.

Since he had no income, he requested help with bus fare so he could preach to the people. The mission made a better offer and he accepted. Already he is meeting with a small group of believers in a town officially projected to house 60,000 people.

Zengeza is one of three areas being developed under the Chitungwiza Urban Council with a projected population of one-half million people within the next five years--the present official total population of Salisbury.

A second development, Glen View, will officially house 50,000 residents. Unofficially, the number will be nearer 100,000 because of the influx of refugees. A recent seminary graduate, Clement Chipunza, was to begin working there in mid-December.

Southern Baptists have not had a full-time missionary to assist churches in Salisbury since July 1977. Missionaries there, Mr. and Mrs. David M. Coleman, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel L. Jones, Mary Louise Clark, and Anne Sliker, assist with church work, but have other strategic assignments.

A city of 1.5 million people, touched by the effects of a long war, is too large for the small work force that Southern Baptists have there.