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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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80-01

**Opportunities Await
Women in Missions**

By Dan Martin

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--For women, this is the most exciting time to be involved in missions, leaders at the Southern Baptist Student Conference on World Missions said.

"I can't think of a better time for women to be interested in and involved in missions. Doors are opening and women can write their own job descriptions," Laura Fry told young women during the national conference sponsored by the National Student Ministries department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Fry, a national consultant on evangelism with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, added, "God is working with the men of the convention to help them see ways in which women can be involved in missions efforts."

She said times have changed since she graduated from seminary, when one of her professors told her: "You are going to suffer for what God did to you. He made you a woman."

William G. Tanner, executive director-treasurer of the Home Mission Board, told the more than 3,000 students at the conference, "Not all of the opportunities are as wide open as we would like for them to be, but if you are willing to go, and if you want to go, then the Home Mission Board will try to find the opportunity for you to go."

From the Foreign Mission Board perspective, leaders say "opportunities are virtually limitless," both for married and single women.

Bill O'Brien, secretary for the board's department of denominational coordination, said: "We have traditionally had as many opportunities for women in missions as any vocational option in Southern Baptist life. We currently have more requests for women than at any time in recent years."

"Last year, we appointed people in 59 categories of work. There is hardly a category not open to women, and that includes everything from medical to church planting to field evangelism."

Lahoma Greenwood, a missionary to Guatemala, said though she went to Guatemala thinking she would spend most of her time in home and church, she now writes children's literature in the Kechi language and takes people to the doctor and translates for them when they come to town.

The mention of women's service in church-related vocations walk arm in arm with the question of ordination.

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Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of the Woman's Missionary Union, noted that ordination and being pastor of a Southern Baptist church are not options available to women.

Weatherford said the question of ordination had not arisen as much in the 1979 conference as in earlier meetings, likely because Southern Baptists have done a better job of letting women know what opportunities are available to them. Opportunities now open to women, she said, include chaplaincy, church planting, day care centers, Christian social ministries, and a host of other jobs.

"I think part of the increased enrollment of women in seminary is because there is a desire on their part to be as well prepared as possible to be co-laborers with their future husbands who will be missionaries, pastors, evangelists, denomination leaders," Weatherford added. "They want to be as well prepared as possible, and I do not believe this is a demeaning situation for a woman."

"I think there are lots of opportunities in missions," said Lois Custer, a freshman at Mary Hardin-Baylor University in Belton, Tex. "I don't know what the Lord's will is for me, but I know I have a call for missions. That call is shown every time I am with someone. There are many mission fields and mine right now is whomever I am with."

Judy Wise, a senior at Northwestern Louisiana Nursing School, also believes there are many opportunities. "When I finish nursing school, I will work until I pass the state board and then go into seminary and into foreign missions," she said.

Templ Browder, assistant director of the Baptist Student Union at the University of Texas in Austin, however, believes opportunities are limited, simply because not many jobs have opened up for women, making specific jobs harder to find.

"The young women I work with seem open to go as married persons, but do not seem as open to going as single women," she said.

Fry added: "A pivotal fact is that you are a missionary. Right where you are now, you are a missionary. Trust God to lead you and you will find all kinds of opportunity."

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Christians Visiting China
Warned to Lower Profiles

Baptist Press
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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Christians visiting mainland China should not be too zealous in their witnessing efforts, warns a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board official.

In a written report George H. Hays, secretary for east Asia, told of a Christian group invited to a banquet by a governmental arm designed to contain and control Protestant Christianity in China. Only one member of the group showed up at the banquet; the others were distributing tracts on the streets.

While it is commendable that the group was taking advantage of an opportunity to witness, Hays said, their absence angered the hosts and he warned that this kind of behavior could make witnessing efforts more difficult for the next Christian group.

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Although tourists' luggage is rarely opened, offering ample opportunity to take in Bibles and tracts, Hays cautioned that a "flood of Bibles and other Christian literature could prove to be counterproductive if the government decided too much was coming in," and he called for cooperation among Christian groups in this matter.

Caution is still the attitude among many Christians in China, especially the older ones who fear the government is using a tactic to identify the Christians. Churches in at least seven cities are now open, but they are controlled by the government. Services are limited, preachers are designated, and although they are not told what to preach, it is obvious that government observers are present at all meetings, Hays' report said.

He believes that the Peking government has not had a change in philosophy but rather is changing strategies for pragmatic reasons, among them the possibility of receiving assistance and education in advanced technology, education, and agriculture from predominately Christian countries.

"To open one or two churches in cities of 400,000 to 800,000 or more is window dressing at best," the report stated.

House churches, which flourish in some areas of China, are compared to the early New Testament churches where a building and trained clergy are not vital to a church's success. Some groups are experiencing more tolerance from officials and meet rather openly. Roughly half of those attending in some areas are young people, many of them new converts, according to the report.

But most observers believe there still is no hope for Christian missionaries to return to China, the report said. However, Mandarin-speaking Christians, even former missionaries, could go as businessmen or educators.

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Allen To Appear
On Television

Baptist Press
1/2/80

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Conversation with Jimmy Allen, immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention and new president of the SBC Radio and Television Commission, will be aired on the final segment of an ABC television look at religion in the next decade.

"Counsel for the Eighties," a four-part series of half-hour programs to discuss ethical, moral and religious options for the 1980s, will examine the opportunities and dangers as they appear to four lay and religious leaders.

Allen's segment will air Sunday, Jan. 27.

The first three guests in the series will be Sol Linowitz, President Carter's ambassador-at-large for Middle East negotiations; Martin Marty, Protestant writer and philosopher; and James Monroe Cameron, of St. Michael's College, Toronto, a Roman Catholic philosopher, poet and lecturer.

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Cooperative Program 14.2
Percent Ahead of Last Year

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program unified budget is running 14.19 percent ahead of the same point last year.

Figures for Oct. 1, 1979, through Dec. 31, 1979, the first three months in the 1979-80 fiscal year, reveal that Southern Baptists have given \$16,601,517 in undesignated Cooperative Program funds for national causes.

Total giving, including the Cooperative Program figure and another \$2,170,463 in designated contributions, amounts to \$18,771,980, a 16.16 percent increase over the first three months of 1978-79. The designated amount represents a 33.88 percent increase.

For the month of December 1979, total receipts amounted to \$6,330,454, a 15.17 percent increase. That figure includes \$5,647,620 in Cooperative Program receipts (a 12.35 percent increase over December 1978) and \$682,834 in designated receipts (a 45.29 percent increase).

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Wrapup

Decade Ends With
Missions Commitments

By Linda Lawson

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The end of the decade of the '70s at midnight, Dec. 31, found more than 500 Southern Baptist college students committing themselves to mission service during the closing session of the Student Conference on World Missions at the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville.

As the commitment service ended, the 3,325 students who attended the five-day conference met in pairs to promise to pray for each other during the coming year and then walked in a procession to the Opryland Hotel singing "To the Ends of the Earth."

The conference, sponsored by National Student Ministries of the Baptist Sunday School Board in cooperation with the Home and Foreign Mission Boards, was held to acquaint students with short-term and career missions opportunities. More than 150 missionaries were on hand to discuss missions careers.

The call to missions service was sounded in the closing session by R. Keith Parks, whose tenure as executive director of the Foreign Mission Board began as the conference ended.

Parks said the message of Jesus Christ will not reach the whole world "until there is a generation of Christians who dare to get up on their crosses and die and allow God to do what he's been trying to do since the first century."

"It won't take many, but it will take all that the few have to give," Parks said, urging every student to make some form of commitment.

During the session 16 home and foreign missionaries were commissioned to service.

During the five-day meeting approximately a dozen special-interest conferences dealt with career opportunities for women in missions.

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William G. Tanner, executive director-treasurer of the Home Mission Board, said: "Not all of the opportunities for women are as wide open as we would like for them to be, but if you are willing to go, and if you want to go, then the Home Mission Board will try to find the opportunity for you to go."

Student concern over the Iranian crisis surfaced in a spontaneous rap session at which former missionary to Iran, George Braswell, called the Ayatollah Khomeini a "senile, embittered man with a persecution complex." Braswell, associate professor of church history and missions at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., taught comparative religions at the University of Tehran from 1967 to 1974.

From Brazil, a 23-member music group came to the conference because "we want people here to see the fruits of their investment of nearly 100 years in mission work in Brazil and we want them to be inspired to do more in their own churches," said missionary Roger Cole.

Student groups from Mexico and Australia as well as many internationals attending colleges and universities in the United States participated in the conference.

Jon Meek, director of missions for the Baptist State Convention of New York, told the students they should all consider themselves missionaries.

"All of you are called as missionaries. The question is not in terms of shall I go, but that I am already called. The question is not whether, but where," said Meek.

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(BP) photo sent to Baptist state newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press.
