



BAPTIST PRESS

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March 14, 1980

80-43

Local Youth Ministry Trend
Is Southern Baptist Strength

By Charles Willis

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The role of youth minister in Southern Baptist churches has grown from "cheerleader" to educator and minister as caring ministries with youth gain momentum, according to a consultant in youth ministry.

Bob Taylor, on the staff of the Baptist Sunday School Board's church administration department, sees youth ministry as a profession, not a temporary calling.

"God calls persons to put their lives into youth ministry," he says. "Today Southern Baptist youth ministers have gotten away from the feeling that 'I'm here to do it until I grow up and become a pastor.'"

Taylor feels that youth ministry has moved dramatically to youth ministers who combine youth work with attention to parents, church program leaders and church staff to help them become more youth conscious. Taylor frequently recommends that youth ministers spend one-third of their time with youth, one-third with parents and one-third with youth leadership.

In moving away from the concept of youth minister as "cheerleader," he sees Southern Baptist youth ministers multiplying their work through other adults to help build stronger homes, to insure quality Bible study and otherwise strengthen the education base of youth ministry.

"We've always had a strong Bible study base," he says, "but now we have grown from an activity base to a ministry base. Years ago, our philosophy was 'make kids happy, keep them involved.' We're growing off of that base to a needs-meeting ministry.

"At one time, recreation was everything. Then we came into the youth musical period of ministry. Today we have a better balance of recreation, education, music and missions. Each area is beginning to find a place and to be important as it relates to other areas in appropriate ways."

Taylor is not alone in his assessment of youth ministry in the SBC today. Douglas W. Johnson, executive director of the Institute for Church Development Inc., Ridgewood, N.J., told youth program leaders from Southern Baptist agencies at a recent coordination conference that Southern Baptist youth ministry excels in several areas.

"The more liberal denominations changed their approach completely during the 1960s and, from all appearances, dropped the ball with regard to youth programming," Johnson said. "Their philosophy...changed from fellowship gatherings...to an emphasis upon youth being 'full members' of the church. The result was an elimination of much of the resource materials which had been produced and a reduction of national level staff who were responsible for training, resource development, and editing of youth curriculum."

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Johnson noted Southern Baptists' emphasis on trained leadership, a philosophy of evangelizing young people and coordinated and comprehensive resources and predicted continued success among youth.

While national level staff number about 50 and there are about 1,000 ministers of youth in the Southern Baptist Convention, Taylor says the addition of ministers of music and youth and ministers of education and youth swell the ranks to near 9,000. However, another trend seems to be emerging related to these combination positions.

"In the past, by far the most popular combination of jobs was that of minister of music and youth," says Taylor. "However, due to the shift in emphasis of youth ministry to a strong education base, a number of churches are now calling for a minister of education and youth."

Taylor feels that "the trend should eventually become commonplace for most churches to call a minister of education and youth when the church's size or budget prohibits having two separate staff positions."

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Massachusetts High Court
Strikes Down Prayer Law

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
3/14/80

BOSTON (BP)--Massachusetts' highest court struck down the state's new "voluntary prayer" law just six weeks after it took effect.

The state's Supreme Judicial Court said the law, which required all public school teachers to daily ask a class volunteer to lead in public prayer and excused students who did not wish to participate, violated the U.S. Constitution's ban on an establishment of religion by the state.

Justice Herbert P. Wilkins, who wrote the decision, said the law "could not be saved from unconstitutionality by the fact that prayers were spoken by volunteer pupils or that pupils could choose to be excused from exercises."

The suit which resulted in the unusually swift decision was brought on behalf of parents in Framingham and Marblehead by the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts and the American Jewish Congress.

The decision represented a defeat for conservative Democratic Gov. Edward J. King, who expressed "disappointment" at the ruling. He said he will now introduce a new law in the state legislature mandating a moment of silent meditation in the schools.

In Washington, the director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs said he was "very pleased" with the Massachusetts court's decision. James E. Wood Jr., outspoken critic of "voluntary" prayer and periods of silent meditation mandated in public schools, said "The Massachusetts law, had it been upheld, clearly would have meant using the machinery of the state to mandate religion."

Wood agreed with Justice Wilkins' view that the voluntary aspect of the law was insufficient to make it constitutional. "Young children are unacceptably placed under tremendous pressure and tremendous inhibition to conform" to the teacher's sponsorship of the prayer exercise and are in effect "trapped" in the classroom, he said. Placing children in such a situation, Wood added, amounts to "harassment."

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Hawaii Executive
Has Heart Surgery

HONOLULU (BP)--Edmond Walker, executive secretary-treasurer of the Hawaii Baptist Convention since 1963, underwent successful open heart surgery for four arterial bypasses March 10 at Straub Hospital in Honolulu.

While in Nashville, Tenn., to attend the winter meeting of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, he suffered chest pains and was taken to Baptist Hospital, Feb. 17. He returned to Honolulu on Feb. 22 and was hospitalized here on Feb. 28.

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Cooperation Theme Sounded
At Inauguration of Allen

Baptist Press
3/14/80

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptist agency heads vowed cooperation with their newest peer when they gathered to install Jimmy R. Allen as president of the Radio and Television Commission.

Representatives from Baptist agencies and state conventions and the commission trustees were present to challenge the new president and commit themselves to cooperate in the convention goal of presenting the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000.

Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the convention's Executive Committee, said: "We have been chosen to work together serving God and Southern Baptists for his honor and glory. Left up to our leadership and abilities alone, the task of establishing two churches a day from now to the turn of the century would be impossible. But by coupling our abilities with God's power, it can be done." Bennett's reference to two churches a day is part of the Bold Mission Thrust goal of having 50,000 Southern Baptist churches by the year 2000.

Grady C. Cothen, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, noted that Southern Baptist leadership had almost completely changed within the last decade. He asked agency heads to join him in a vow that "out of the confusion and competition and fragmentation of the '60s that reached even our denomination, we will unite in cooperative efforts in which we combine talent, abilities, organizations and program assignments to accomplish things for Jesus Christ."

William M. Pinson Jr., president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, who gave the "charge" to Allen, joked that "Figuring out how to charge Jimmy Allen was like a flashlight battery approaching Hoover Dam."

Pinson described Allen in four dimensions: his world vision to find new ways and insights to minister; his impact on the nation enabling him to show how the media can be used for good and not for harm; his belief that local church members are the key to reaching people for Christ; and his spiritual sensitivity and desire to walk with and please the Father.

Pinson directed his challenge not only to Allen but to agency heads and all Southern Baptists: "There is a complexity to what God has been up to in Jimmy Allen's life. He does all things completely. The challenge may be to ourselves to keep up with him, to catch his vision."

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Pinson also issued a challenge of cooperation: "The Radio and Television Commission cannot do what needs to be done on its own but together with the resources of this commission and other agencies, we may well be able to do what God wants us to do."

Allen echoed Pinson's desire for agency cooperation and asked each not to draw lines around what it can and cannot do.

"For a long time, we have been bound by the smallness of our own vision by efforts to protect our own turf," Allen said. "We do not have any business marking off something and claiming it for ourselves. It all belongs to God."

"I yearn to serve all agencies," he declared. Allen also expressed the importance of agencies working with local churches in their efforts to spread the gospel.

"What we (Baptist agencies) are supposed to be doing is giving the churches tools to share the gospel. I feel God has laid it on me in this way (as president of the Radio and Television Commission) not to be the center of anything but to be the implementer for local churches around the world.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Radio and Television Commission.

Purdy To Assume Duties
At Boyce Bible School

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Harold J. Purdy, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Madisonville, Ky., for 20 years, has been named a faculty member and an associate in administration at Boyce Bible School, a division of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Purdy, a 1942 graduate of Southern, has been a J-term professor at Boyce Bible School for six years. He's a former president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention and was a member of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1966-73.

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Americans Can't Relate
To Persecution For Faith

Baptist Press
3/14/80

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Americans don't understand what it's like to suffer in the name of Jesus though others in the world face serious persecution for their faith, a medical missionary told a missions conference at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dr. Wana Ann Fort, told 725 college-age participants in the conference that in her country of Rhodesia, people are murdered because they are Christians.

"Even our missionary friend Archie Dunaway was killed at our hospital because he was sharing Jesus with the people when the Communist terrorists came," she said. "Many suffer in that country today because they are following Jesus." Dunaway was killed in June 1978.

"Unless you and I are willing to suffer, we will never accomplish what we as Southern Baptists have set as our goal--reaching every person in the world with the name of Jesus by the end of the century. It is going to take many more than are now going and are now there," she said.

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Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, said that if Christians are to carry out God's commandment, then they must have the kind of faith that will "cause us to get our feet wet."

He referred to a passage from the book of Joshua where Joshua and 12 men were to cross the Jordan River but God did not part the waters for them until they had actually gotten their feet wet.

"If only we had the faith it takes to walk right up to the edge and take one more step and get our feet wet," he said, "then perhaps all the people of the world would hear about God and the good news."

Tom Wolf, pastor of the Church on Brady, a multi-ethnic Southern Baptist congregation near downtown Los Angeles, related: "One of the greatest problems in the Christian church today is that people are unaware that we are in constant spiritual conflict. It took World War II to drive home the nail first struck by World War I to teach the philosophers that man is not good and that man has an abyss that is almost unconceivable for cruelty, viciousness and horror. The holocaust of World War II proved it."

Bob Tremaine, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Beverly Hills, Calif., held that the "church of Jesus needs to be where the people are who need it." Tremaine recalled that some of the churches he has helped establish have met in bars, town halls, parking lots, topless night clubs and in the basement of a coffeehouse.

Dr. Giles Fort Jr., medical missionary to Rhodesia, told the conferees: "If we are going to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, it is going to cost us all. It may not be that God will call upon you to give your life in death but He is asking you to give yourselves as a living sacrifice to witness for Him.

"Yes, you will be ridiculed and yes, you will be persecuted. The Bible says you will be partakers of the afflictions of the gospel. But the Lord says He needs us and that He has a job for us to do."

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CORRECTION: In (BP) mailing 3/13/80 in story, "Home Board Approves 46 for Mission Work," page 6, paragraph 2, line 4, after Baylor University and Southwestern Seminary (and before Mrs. Warden,....) insert: Mrs. Smart is a native of Bolivar, Mo., and has degrees from Southwest Baptist College and Baylor University.

The Wardens will move to Kirbyville, Texas, where he will be a church starter for the Home Mission Board department of church extension. He's served as a mission starter for the Austin Baptist Association since 1979. Since 1953 he has been pastor of churches in Arizona, Oklahoma, and Texas. A native of Wasola, Mo., he has degrees from East Texas Baptist College and Southwestern Seminary. Mrs. Warden, a native of Ava, Mo., has a degree in elementary education from Texas A & I University.

Thanks and many apologies from the typist,

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