



BAPTIST PRESS

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80-130

Internationality Grows In Foreign Missions

By Beth Sayers Wildes

RIDGECREST, N. C. (BP)—By the year 2000, the religious map of the world will be radically different than it is today, a Southern Baptist scholar predicted at the Woman's Missionary Union conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

"The major centers of Christianity will have moved from the West to Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia," said Luther Copeland, a Fulbright scholar and former chancellor of Seinan Gakuin in Fukuoka, Japan, a boys' school with some 10,000 students.

Focusing on the future in foreign missions, Copeland said: "There has been a new internationality of Christian missions, and it will increase. There will be a coming of age of those young churches in countries where we've sent missionaries. Even today, these people are not only receiving our missionaries, but they are sending out missionaries of their own. This will continue as these young churches develop."

Copeland also says the next 20 years will show an increase in cooperation among foreign missionaries of many Christian denominations.

Referring to Bold Mission Thrust, Southern Baptists' plan to communicate the gospel to every person on earth by the year 2000, Copeland said Southern Baptists "have no right to be exclusive" in world evangelism.

"We are presumptuous if we think we can do it all by ourselves. We cannot ignore the fact that other Christians are just as able and dedicated as we are," he said.

By the next century, Copeland says he foresees the creation of large regional centers where Christians from many countries and denominations will gather and then go out as teams to spread the gospel.

Some 2,700 people, attending the week-long conference, heard updates on Southern Baptist missions work in the United States and abroad.

In observance of the Southern Baptist Convention's World Hunger Day, Aug. 6, an offering of \$4,648.84 was taken, to be divided equally between the Home Mission Board and the Foreign Mission Board for hunger relief.

Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the Executive Committee, also addressed the conference, challenging conferees to do more to support Southern Baptist missions. "There are more than 4.2 billion people in the world, and at least 3 billion are without Jesus Christ," he said. "God, in an unusual way, has led us to share the gospel with every person on earth. We have the only way."

Another keynoter was Marjorie Bailey, chaplain of the Men's Penitentiary in Richmond, Va., and the Women's Correction Center in Goochland.

Bailey said, based on her experience as a prison chaplain, "all people are capable of knowing God's love if it's given. I believe Jesus Christ redeems people whoever they are."

A multimedia presentation focused on the heritage and work of associations of Southern Baptist churches.

"These associations do together what one church could not do alone," said James Nelson, director of the associational missions division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Nelson also noted Southern Baptists average 1,000 baptisms and 3 new churches every day.

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Board Elects Grocer
Foundation Chairman

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—William E. Crook was elected president of the Southern Baptist Foundation's board of directors during its July meeting.

Crook succeeds J. Thomas Bryan, a Nashville physician, who retired from the board in June after 13 years as director.

Crook, 54, is owner of a chain of retail food stores and is on his second term as a director of the foundation, which invests funds for individuals and agencies for the benefit of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Hollis Says Church
Best Hope for Families

By Tim Fields

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Christ's church is still by far the best institution to provide leadership for saving the family, said Harry Hollis, director of family and special moral concerns for the Christian Life Commission.

Hollis told participants at Home Missions Week at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center that some groups and individuals are taking advantage of the family to promote themselves and their causes. He warned Southern Baptists about mercenary authors who take advantage of family needs to sell simplistic books to satisfy their own greed and of television performers who exploit family fears to raise money for their own institutions.

"We must tell these people to stop using the family and start loving, helping and celebrating the family," Hollis said.

"In this election year hundreds of candidates throughout the nation may try to play politics with the family. We must tell these politicians that there are too many broken homes and hearts to play politics with the family.

"Our hope for solving family problems and finding joyful fulfillment in family life lies in Jesus Christ. The church of Jesus Christ can avoid the pitfalls of manipulation and of self-serving treatment of families by following in the footsteps of Jesus."

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Hollis encouraged Southern Baptists to use the Bible as a test for orthodoxy in dealing with families. "The Bible says if someone does not provide for his relatives, especially for members of his own family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever," he stated.

"Perhaps all of us should examine ourselves in relation to the heresy of neglecting our families. If Christians are going to take the lead in facing the challenges to family we must first make certain Jesus Christ is reflected in our homes and hearts."

Hollis called on Southern Baptists to become involved in frontiers of family leadership in such areas as biomedicine, aging, parenting, family enrichment, social justice, the sexual revolution and family evangelism. He added that developments in biomedicine which will have a radical impact on families include genetic engineering, extensive prolongation of life, memory enhancement and memory editing, new pressures to practice euthanasia and possibly the cloning of human tissues.

"Not everything scientifically possible is morally permissible," Hollis said. "Christians must get involved vocationally in biomedicine so we can affirm science's search for truth and insist that what is discovered is used responsibly."

Hollis also called on church members to use the family as a laboratory for learning justice. "Justice is still being denied to many today," he said. The resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan is an indication that discrimination is very much alive and sick in America.

"The new racists have traded their white sheets for button-down collars and their crude racial slurs for sophisticated theories of racial inferiority, but their racism is still a sin."

"We must develop colorblind families and families who give attention to such issues as economics, energy, hunger, peace and violence," Hollis added.

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Allen Meeks Named
Alaska Executive

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ANCHORAGE, Alaska (BP)—Allen Meeks, interim executive director-treasurer of the Alaska Baptist Convention, has been named executive at the 35th annual meeting of the convention.

Meeks was unanimously elected by the 225 messengers attending the meeting at Faith Baptist Church in Anchorage.

Messengers also approved a budget of \$855,415, of which some \$317,000 will come from the 69 churches and missions of the convention. Also, messengers restored cuts made in an austerity move in 1979 to the convention's contribution to the national Cooperative Program.

Last year, the contribution was cut from 29 to 25 percent, but this year, the cut was restored and augmented, going to 30 percent.

In addition to electing Meeks, messengers also elected Ferrell Mills of Faith Baptist Church, Anchorage, as president. Other officers are: Al Allen, Moose Creek Baptist Church, Fairbanks, first vice president, and Roy Williams, first Baptist Church, Kenai, second vice president.

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John Allen, missions director, was given additional responsibilities as leader of evangelism.

Meeks, 62, has been a staffer of the convention since November, 1964, when he was named director of religious education. He became interim executive in February of 1979, succeeding Troy Prince, who resigned, citing health problems.

Meeks, a native of Arkansas, moved to Alaska in 1960, and was on the staffs of Sunset Hills, Jewel Lake, and First churches, all in Anchorage.

He is a graduate of Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

The 1981 meeting of the Alaska Baptist Convention will be Aug. 11-13 at First Baptist Church, Soldotna.

Photo - SSB

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Blind Couple Leads
Active, Fruitful Lives

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.

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KENNER, La. (BP)—Jose Torres creates wood furniture and repairs electric motors and plumbing.

Torres and his wife, Norma, sing to the accompaniment of his guitar playing and they operate a tape ministry for the Spanish-speaking congregation of Williams Boulevard Baptist Church in Kenner, La.

They are both blind. She has been blind since birth and he was left blind after a skating accident at age 14.

They met at a school for the blind in Havana, Cuba, their native country. He learned woodworking and guitar playing there.

"Jesus tells me everything. I cannot explain how I can do these things, anything I want to do," Torres says.

Jose and Norma learned about Jesus when they moved to the New Orleans suburb of Kenner eight years ago. Now Torres is training to become a deacon and is president of the Spanish congregation's choir. Mrs. Torres, last year, was president of the Woman's Missionary Union.

Torres is enthusiastic about his most recently learned skill, soldering. "I didn't know if I could do it, but I tried and was able to solder wires," he says proudly.

His fingers tell him how high the electric saw blade projects above the table surface. With sure fingers he sets the guide, turns on the switch and cuts an inch and a half from the side of a board.

Furniture in the house is testimony of his precise skills from the wood lathe. And his newest project is assembling an imported mahogany china cabinet for a friend.

The versatile Cuban had intended to make his living with woodworking when he arrived in the United States. "But I found competition from imports and mass production was too much," he says.

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The Torres family, including a 13-year-old daughter, left Cuba in 1967 and became American citizens in 1973.

Torres and his pastor, David Lema, also from Cuba, are often witnesses for persons seeking U.S. citizenship. In fact, he says, "We go to the office so much the officer recognizes us immediately."

Woodworking and repairing worn equipment is being overshadowed by the Torres' new interest, a tape ministry for the church.

After recording services and programs at the church they edit the tapes to eliminate noise and achieve the correct length and prepare a master tape. From this they make copies that are distributed to members of the congregation who send them to friends.

"We like doing this," Mrs. Torres says. "It is a wonderful way to help people." One member recently sent a tape to Guatemala.

"People who don't go to church will listen to a tape in their home and become interested in the gospel," Torres says.

Daily they study their Braille Bible in Spanish and listen to Talking Books received by subscription. And, each day, they improve their English by listening to cassettes.

In spite of their busy schedule they both help in the church visitation program. Lema said, "I can call on Jose at any time and he is ready to go. And his wife also visits in the hospital when a church member is there and I cannot make a visit."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers.