



# -- FEATURES

produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee  
460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
(615) 244-2355  
W. C. Fields, Director  
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor  
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

September 26, 1980

80-153

Minister's Son Avoided God,  
Now He's Urgent Preacher

By Anita Bowden

DAVAO CITY, Philippines (BP)—For years Oscar Fortuna ran from the Lord. Now an urgency drives him in the other direction.

"We may become another Vietnam," the Filipino pastor says, "and so many people have not heard the gospel, have never seen a Bible."

About 2,000 Southern Baptists attending the Foreign Missions conference in Glorieta, N.M., sensed this urgency as Fortuna told of needs in his country.

Although Filipinos are open to receiving the gospel, Fortuna says lack of money is a major obstacle. His church in Davao City, on the southern island of Mindanao, is located in that city's worst slum district. About 60 percent of his church members are from that slum area and they have little ability to support the church financially.

"It is a place where you find 8-year-old boys who commit crimes from theft to murder; 12-year-old girls who are already prostitutes. They do it to survive," Fortuna says.

"Last year three fathers killed their whole families and then killed themselves because they couldn't stand seeing what their children were going through. Last April the area was hit by the biggest fire in our history. Six thousand families lost their homes. The crime rate went way up. Every three hours there is a holdup."

The church can't just shut its eyes to the needs in the community, Fortuna says. "When you visit in a home and the children have not had lunch and supper, you can't say, 'Let's pray and the Lord will provide.' You have to give."

Although it's difficult to give money, Fortuna hopes to implement a training program to help rehabilitate the young prostitutes. Sewing machines have been donated and a hospital has said it will hire the girls as soon as they complete their sewing lessons. He also hopes to begin a training program for the boys.

The child of a Baptist pastor, Fortuna grew up knowing what it was like to go to bed with an empty stomach. He vowed as a teen-ager that he would never go into the ministry. He didn't want his children to relive his experiences.

He worked five years for an export company and was in the prime of his career when his father died. He became chairman of the church pulpits committee and worked diligently with the other members to prepare a list of possible pastors.

"As I got up to present the list in church, several of our members stood up and said, 'Oscar, we believe you are the answer to our prayers. We believe God wants you to be our pastor.'"

Fortuna protested. He had never been to seminary. He didn't know how to prepare a sermon. He already had a job. He had four children. He would face an 80 percent salary cut. Finally he agreed to pray about it for one month and asked the church to pray with him.

That evening he became sick and at the end of the week, he entered the hospital for what became a 17-day stay. He says while he was in the hospital the Lord spoke to him, showing him the "need of people groping in darkness," and erasing Fortuna's doubt about his abilities to be a minister. Kneeling beside his hospital bed, he committed his life to the Lord and to the ministry.

When he resigned from his job his boss told him he was a fool. Friends told him he had lost his mind when they learned he was taking a drastic salary cut. His wife was angry and concerned about what would become of their children. But Fortuna was firm.

That was five years ago. Fortuna and his family have made it, though sometimes their faith has been tested. One day they had no food in the house at lunchtime. When Fortuna's wife came to him with the sad news, he told her to set the table. Angry, she told him again they had no food, but he assured her that the Lord had called him into the ministry and would provide for their needs.

She set the table and the family sat down to pray. Before Fortuna could finish the prayer they heard a knock on the door. The daughter of one of their church members had brought a lunch her mother had prepared.

On another occasion Fortuna gave his monthly salary check for a child he did not know who needed immediate medical attention which her mother could not afford.

At home his family prayed that God would take care of them until the next month's salary came. The next morning Fortuna received a check from a man in Germany whom he'd met briefly but never corresponded with—for twice the amount he had given for the child.

-30-

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Regular Church Service  
Contains a "Surprise"

Baptist Press  
9/26/80

ROBINSON, III. (BP)—The regular worship service at Highland Avenue Baptist Church here contained a surprise.

During the service, the houselights dimmed and the organist began the wedding march. The groom, in a tuxedo, came into the sanctuary and the bride, in a white bridal gown, came down the aisle.

Teresa Cowles and Doug Waldrop, both members, planned the wedding with pastor Jack Oglesby. Only relative and close friends knew about it.

Oglesby said the wedding was without flowers and frills and that he spoke of sacredness, selflessness, submissiveness and sovereignty of marriage.

After a short recessional, the organist played "The Savior Is Waiting." An invitation was given and 14 couples rededicated their marriage and one person made a profession of faith.

-30-

Electronic Church Effectiveness  
Contrasted to SBC by Professor

By Mark Smith

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)—The electronic media is not as effective in evangelism as many believe, and actually may be counter to local churches, a Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary professor says.

"The fact is," said G. William Schweer, professor of evangelism at the seminary, "the electronic church is just not the miraculous evangelism tool some claim it is, or that apparent multitudes think it is."

Schweer, who made his remarks during the seminary's annual academic convocation, added: "Many have been led to feel that the powerful electronic media can quickly fulfill our evangelistic responsibilities, but it simply cannot. I believe the electronic church does bring about conversions and I am thankful for every one of them, but I just don't believe it can take the place of local church."

In his address, Schweer revealed the results of a survey he performed involving 85 California Baptist pastors.

According to the survey, 80 percent of the pastors feel that the "electronic church" causing people to stay at home, and almost as many feel that it is having a negative effect on the financial program of their church.

"Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Jim Bakker and Oral Roberts," he said, "all take in over \$1 million a week with much larger projections for the future. And, the industry is now growing at the rate of one new Christian radio station per week and one new television station a month."

"These figures show that it is indeed powerful and that it can do much," he said. "It can inform, it can affirm, it can influence and it can even plant seed."

Schweer, however, contrasted the contributions of the electronic church with those of the Southern Baptist Convention. He said financial gifts to the SBC and to the seven major religious television programs are about the same as they were last year, as the SBC spent about \$356 million for missions.

"Southern Baptist giving supported, in round figures, six seminaries with over 10,000 students, 67 schools and Bible schools, 1,100 Baptist Student directors, approximately 6,000 full-time missionaries at home and in 90 other countries, numerous radio and television programs every week, leadership persons and materials for more than 35,000 congregations and an average of 1,000 baptisms per day for the past 25 years," Schweer said.

"When that is honestly compared with the accomplishment of those major (television) programs, it cannot but raise serious questions for conscientious stewards about the 'electronic church'," Schweer added.

Schweer listed several "drawbacks" to the "electronic church":

--the individual watching decides whether or not to view or listen to a program,

--investigations show that religious television does have a limited audience, particularly when it must compete against the major entertainment networks, and

--it is one way communication, impersonal and non-relational.

"The electronic church of today," the professor stated, "asks of people a very minimal involvement, mainly offerings and prayers, and permits them to feel they are participating in a great spiritual enterprise."

"Because of this," he explained, "there is a feeling among many that the electronic church is in direct competition with the local church."

The professor concluded by saying: "The electronic media are not nearly as effective in evangelism as many supposed in relation to the vastly superior nature of face-to-face contact."

"We can be thankful for the things electronic media can do, and hopefully we will learn much about how this can be effectively used," Schweer said, "but the essentials of the tasks of evangelism must still be done by the local church."

-30-

(Smith is public relations associate at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.)

Southern Baptist Leaders  
Denounce Christian Right

Baptist Press  
9/26/80

WASHINGTON (BP)—Three Southern Baptist leaders—a pastor, an executive and an ethicist—attacked the new Christian right during a two-day meeting here.

William L. Self, pastor of Wieuca Road Baptist Church in Atlanta; Jimmy R. Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission; and James Dunn, executive secretary of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, were among the key speakers at the 33rd Americans United National Conference on Church and State.

The meeting, sponsored by Americans United for Separation of Church and State, centered on the Christian right—a fusing of fundamentalist religion and conservative politics—as speaker after speaker denounced what Allen called the movement's "desperate lurch for power."

Self warned that the "new political right has seduced some evangelicals into being handmaidens in the revolution to return to a more simple day," adding that "God's people have been offered the kingdoms of this world which the new political right cannot give."

In an address entitled "What God Has Put Asunder, Let No Man Join Together," Self contended that "when church and state go to bed together, they do not make love or produce offspring. One always rapes the other."

Self pointed to remarks by Alabama Gov. Fob James and Texas evangelist James Robison at the National Affairs Briefing at Dallas in August to show that the merger between the religious and political right has undermined the wall of separation between church and state.

Self, former second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and chairman of the Foreign Mission Board, said some evangelicals are "trying to stampede the American voter and turn back the clock on the issue of separation of church and state," and warned that unless the stampede is headed off by election day, Americans will face the prospect of "cleaning up the mess it makes."

-more-

The Atlanta pastor accused Robison and Gov. James of wanting to burn down the wall of separation between church and state in order to solve a few problems and compared that step to burning down his own church's \$2 million physical plant in order to get rid of a few roaches.

Allen predicted the new Christian right movement will fail and pass from the scene but warned that the more difficult task will be "to pick up the pieces" when secularists overreact to it.

Allen added that while "today is 'don't panic day'" for advocates of separation of church and state, it is also "'don't go to sleep day.'"

He said the Christian right is characterized by a "desperation mentality" seeking to infuse into American society an "artificial shot of adrenalin." Such a prescription, Allen went on, can work only temporarily and will be followed by a secularist surge which will feature a new anti-clericalism.

What America needs instead, Allen insisted, is "a renewal of commitment" to the vision of the nation's founders. That vision, he said, was that the church and state should speak, but not dictate, to each other.

Concern about the direction of the Christian right also was expressed by Dunn: "What they want is a theocracy, and if you listen carefully to the number of times they use the first person singular pronoun, they not only want a theocracy, each one of them wants to be Theo."

Dunn urged Christian involvement in the political arena, but warned against becoming part of the "immoral majority" by being "uninformed, uncaring, unrealistic, unfaithful, unbrotherly and untruthful" in that process.

During the meeting, Glenn Archer, who served as director of Americans United for 28 years, and his wife, Ruth, were honored as the first recipients of the Madison-Jefferson Religious Liberty Award.