



-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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January 19, 1981

81-09

Video Network Selects
Topics for Production

By Tim Fields

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The first sixty topics on which video tapes will be produced have been selected by the newly-formed Southern Baptist Video Network.

The network was formed last fall as a cooperative effort by state conventions and Southern Baptist Convention agencies in order to produce and distribute at least 60 videotapes each year for use by the churches.

The network also has established a goal of leading 1,000 associations and at least 10,000 churches to secure video player equipment during the next three years.

The first 60 titles will be for training and information, according to Cecil Ray, executive director of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and chairman of the network's ad hoc committee.

In a meeting in Nashville, committee members also previewed a completed promotional tape on the network, featuring country comedian Jerry Clower. The tape, produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, explains the goals and purpose of the network.

Jimmy Allen, president of the RTVC, said the promotional tape is being made available to each state convention for loan to churches and associations to help them understand the purpose of the network.

To finance projects of the network, the committee is calling for Baptist state conventions to contribute nearly \$1 million during the next three years. Each convention is being asked to allocate the equivalent of \$10 per church per year for three years.

"In return for their investment, each participating convention will receive one copy of every videotape produced by the network," Ray explained. "Baptist state conventions can then personalize, duplicate and distribute the tapes to churches any way they wish," he said.

In addition to the \$1 million which the network hopes to collect, the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission has agreed to produce the first 25 tapes for "out-of-pocket" expenses.

Allen said this would constitute a savings of nearly \$125,000 in production costs to "clients" of the network.

Allen told the committee that the first tape in the series of 60 has already been completed by his agency for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

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The tape entitled "Three Essentials for Marriage" features family and marriage therapist David Mace at Ridgecrest Conference Center and is one of a series of five tapes supporting the 1982-85 convention theme on strengthening families. The other four tapes in the series will be completed by mid-February.

A sampling of other titles to be produced this year include "The Pastor Leading the Sunday School in Growth," "Introduction to Church Training," "The Purpose and Plan of Baptist Brotherhood," "This Is Woman's Missionary Union," "How the Cooperative Program Works," and "Volunteers in Missions." Other how-to tapes will center on evangelism, church music, church administration, home and foreign missions, the family, and Christian and ethical concerns.

According to Ray, tapes produced through the network will be distributed primarily through the Baptist Sunday School Board film centers and through state conventions. Southern Baptist agencies can distribute tapes which relate to their program assignments, Ray said.

"Depending on the degree of subsidy provided by the network, tapes will be made available to churches free or on a service fee, rental or cost recovery basis," he explained.

In addition to distribution of software programs, the video network has made arrangements with the Sunday School Board to provide video hardware at reduced prices to Southern Baptist agencies, state conventions, associations and churches.

Prices for a commercial 1/2-inch VHS two-hour video playback unit and an accompanying color television monitor start at approximately \$1,500.

The video network wants to encourage churches to use the less expensive 1/2-inch player and will produce the majority of tapes in the 1/2-inch VHS format although 3/4-inch tapes can be made available.

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Abner McCall Resigns;
Reynolds Is Successor

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WACO, Texas (BP)--Abner V. McCall, 65, has announced his resignation as president of Baylor University effective May 31, 1981, and has been elected chancellor effective June 1, 1981.

Trustees, in their January meeting, also named Herbert H. Reynolds, 50, executive vice president, as McCall's successor at the head of the nation's largest Southern Baptist-affiliated school.

McCall, who has headed Baylor since 1961, will have no significant administrative responsibilities as chancellor, but will take on assignments from the board of trustees and will consult with and advise the board and the president on matters of general policy.

Also, trustees said McCall will "advise and assist the president on external affairs and in maintaining and enhancing denominational, legislative, alumni and community relationships."

McCall is the second person in recent history to be elected chancellor. The late W.R. White resigned the presidency in 1961 and was chancellor until 1963, when he was named president emeritus.

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W. Dewey Presley, chairman of the Baylor board of trustees, said McCall previously informed the board of his desire to be relieved of the chief executive officer's responsibilities after his 65th birthday.

In 1978, a trustee committee was appointed to study presidential succession. Later that year, a long-range plan was approved which called for McCall to remain as president until May 31, 1981, at which time he would become chancellor. It also named Reynolds as McCall's successor.

Reynolds, who joined the Baylor administration as senior vice president in 1969, was elected executive vice president and chief operating officer in 1978.

Presley, of Dallas, said Baylor experienced "tremendous growth" under McCall's presidency. In 1961, the university consisted of 25 buildings on 50 acres with capital assets of about \$36 million. At the time, 5,600 students were enrolled and the faculty numbered about 300.

"Now," Presley said, "the campus includes more than 40 buildings on 300 acres and enrollment last fall was around the 10,100 mark. The faculty totals 538. Capital assets amount to about \$180 million."

McCall, who was first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1979, was born in Perrin, Texas, and reared in the Fort Worth Masonic Home and Orphanage, where he, his brothers and sister were placed after the death of their father in 1918.

He graduated from Masonic High School and received a small scholarship to Baylor, where he worked his way through, earning a law degree in 1938 and a bachelor of arts degree in 1942.

He taught at Baylor from 1938 to 1942, when he joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He returned to Baylor in 1946, and remained until 1956 when he became an associate justice of the Supreme Court of Texas. He returned to Baylor in 1959 as executive vice president and assumed the presidency in 1961.

Reynolds, a native of Frankston, Texas, retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1968 after a 20-year career which included service in the Far East, work at the Biomedical Research Laboratory at Alamogordo, N.M., and the task of establishing the Air Force Human Resources Research Laboratory in San Antonio.

He earned a bachelor of science and a regular Air Force Commission from Trinity University, and masters and doctors degrees in psychology from Baylor University.



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Gentle Man Walking
Through Violent Life

By Norman Jameson

WICHITA, Kan. (BP)--A movie about Ray Linnen's life would be rated "R" because of violence. Yet the retired tax planner is a gentle Sunday School teacher who only wants to help people.

Disaster falls around Linnen like rain, but an umbrella of "divine protection" has shed at least a dozen encounters with certain death. When he was eight years old, he waited to cross a street to a newspaper stand to begin his paper route and a speeding car smashed into the stand, killing three people.

At other times in Linnen's life, an oil rig blew up behind him after he had left to answer a telephone; two airplanes he was scheduled to be on but missed crashed, including one that killed 31 people; and a man who replaced him at a refinery in Wichita was killed in a boiler explosion.

"There's a time and a place for everybody's death," says Linnen, a member of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Wichita. "When it's your time, you'll go. It just hasn't been my time yet."

Linnen bases his philosophy on the theory that "the Lord has something for you to do and he will leave you here until you do it."

Twenty-five years ago when he was heading home from work, he saw a dark cloud in his rear view mirror and decided to skip his usual daily stop at the ice cream parlor in Udall. Five minutes later the deadliest tornado in Kansas history leveled the ice cream parlor, killing seven people inside. Seventy-three others were killed and 200 injured in the town of 450.

When Linnen and his wife Virginia were honeymooning in Colorado, they crossed a bridge during a ferocious storm and pulled to the roadside. Minutes later, floodwaters swept the bridge away.

The Linnens left the steep winding roads of the Rockies a few days later. They were traveling on their first flat road in miles when "darned if my brakes didn't go out," Linnen recalls. Their car rolled safely to a stop.

Most recently, Linnen was supposed to do some tax work at an industrial park near Wichita, but he delayed a half hour to help a widow who lives across the street from him. Back in his house the telephone rang. It was the man he was supposed to see at the industrial park, telling him a tornado had struck the area at the time he was supposed to have been there.

Since Linnen's story became known through an Associated Press release in August, he has appeared on 40 to 45 television and radio talk shows. He accepts no appearance fee and will only agree to be on the show if he is given the opportunity to talk about his faith.

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The exposure has brought him many cries for help. He now has a thick folder of letters and records of telephone calls from people who have sought his council. A lady who was about to commit suicide called and told him after hearing his testimony on the radio she was going to find what the Lord had for her.

"Behind each experience, I've been able to help someone," says Linnen. "Every time I help somebody, I usually get them out of their problem, but then I inherit some more."

Some of Linnen's strange fortunes have not just saved his life, but have improved its condition. Deaf in both ears, Linnen learned of a new operation in 1958 that might restore his hearing. He drove without an appointment to Oklahoma City to see a specialist who was booked four months ahead. On the way, he just made it around a big truck that had jackknifed, blocking the road.

When he got to Oklahoma City there was an opening and he had the exam and successful operation that day. He learned later the person who was to have been in his time slot had been behind him on the road and couldn't make it around the disabled truck.

Later, shortly after he had lost everything he had in a business deal where his partners cheated him, a man walked into his office and gave him the biggest contract he ever had, to manage oil wells that were producing \$850,000 a day. It wasn't until three years later Linnen and the man learned he was supposed to have gone to an oil management office around the corner from Linnen's.

With such a wealth of personal experience from which to draw, Sunday School teacher Linnen, who utilized a real skeleton and used the Bible for a treasure map at youth Halloween parties, says, "No one falls asleep in my class."

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(BP) photo mailed to Baptist state newspapers.

Mercer Pools Gifts
Of Donor, Students

Baptist Press
1/19/81

MACON, Ga. (BP)--A gift to Mercer University of \$125,000 from Lamar and Frances Plunkett of Bowdon, Ga., will be used to begin construction of an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

Students in the College of Liberal Arts voted to contribute a portion of their activities fees toward the project on their campus. Completion of the heated pool is expected by this fall.

Plunkett, president and chairman of the board at LaMar Manufacturing Company and Bowdon Manufacturing Company, served three terms on the Mercer board of trustees and was chairman of the board's executive committee three years.

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