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80-31

Student Commitment Up
Say Campus Leaders

By Gail Rothwell

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Increases in baptisms and missions involvement point to renewed spiritual commitment among college students according to four student ministry leaders.

Results from the 1980 National Student Ministries Bold Mission Thrust report indicate student baptisms jumped 55.8 percent last year, up from 7,048 in 1979 to 10,984 in 1980.

Charles Roselle, secretary of National Student Ministries for the Baptist Sunday School Board, attributes the increase to Outreach '80, his department's nationwide, simultaneous campus evangelism project. He believes a growing interest in evangelism among students during the past several years, is evidenced by the 68 percent increase in the number of churches reporting student baptisms—from 2,590 in 1979 to the 1980 total of 3,759.

Rollin DeLap, National Student Ministries' missions consultant, attributes the growing number of college students participating in missions activities to an increased awareness of world needs, helped in part by the 1979 Student Conference on World Missions, held in Nashville. "The knowledge of world needs kept before students influence them so God can use their lives," he said.

At Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Mo., and Baylor University, Waco, Texas, more than 800 students have either volunteered for missions or are currently involved in some type of missions activity.

DeLap believes the 382 students at Southwest Baptist College, who committed themselves to some type of mission service during a weeklong emphasis last fall, is the largest number from one campus to commit to mission service at one time.

Student giving to missions—another indicator of interest—set a record of \$804,959 last year.

George Louterback, student director at Baylor University, reported about 500 Baylor students spend from two to five hours a week in missions service, reaching more than 1,500 senior adults, children, families and mentally handicapped youth.

Louterback said he feels the biggest factor influencing missions involvement is its challenge to students. "We have also done a better job of communicating options to students and made them aware that they can do something meaningful with their lives," he said.

DeLap feels students have a greater commitment to serving and giving once they have participated in missions. "Students who have been involved in missions usually have a greater appreciation for the local church and are more aware of the opportunities to serve in the church," he said.

California Baptist College Gets Helicopter Gift

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (BP)—When California Baptist College asked the public for items to be donated and sold in their annual year-end giving program, it didn't dream a helicopter would fly into the pot.

But that's what happened when Briggs Gillespie, a flying buff from San Diego, gave his Scorpion 133 helicopter to the Southern Baptist College.

Although the helicopter was not the most practical present, it was one of the most popular among CBC staff and students. The helicopter, along with other gifts, will be sold in CBC's annual donor gift sale. Other gifts include a truckload of RC Cola, mattresses, an art collection, a freight truck, an antique airplane and other items donated by companies and individuals. The anticipated \$200,000 raised will be put into the college scholarship fund.

The annual effort has become one of the school's larger money-makers, though not every gift is accepted. The college recently turned down a 110-foot World War II submarine chaser offered by a boatyard in San Diego.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by California Baptist College.

Supreme Court Declines
Church, School Disputes

By Stan Haste

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WASHINGTON (BP)—After a month-long recess to work on cases already argued and to consider appeals in hundreds of others, the Supreme Court returned to the bench and declined to take on three legal conflicts with church-state implications.

Two of the three rejected cases dealt directly with church disputes. In a case involving an internal disagreement over the sale of church property by an Episcopal congregation in New York, the high court declined to become involved, choosing instead to let stand a ruling by that state's supreme court that the congregational majority decision to sell the property must prevail over a dissident minority.

In an Oregon dispute over whether an interdenominational congregation could start a parochial school in a residence used for church services, the justices likewise let stand a lower ruling forbidding the school. A local zoning ordinance restricting the church to services of worship on the property did not deny church members their free exercise of religion, the lower court had held.

The high court also refused to disturb a lower federal court ruling in a case which, if heard, could have a direct impact on private, Christian schools.

At issue was whether the Internal Revenue Service may require private schools to adopt and administer a racially nondiscriminatory admissions policy in order to preserve their tax-exempt status. The case dealt with a "white-flight" segregation academy in Prince Edward County, Va., not connected with a church.

Three high court justices dissented, saying they would have scheduled the case for argument and decision, in part because of legal difficulty in distinguishing between private non-sectarian and religious schools.

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Baker Elected
Aging Leader

MEMPHIS (BP)—Raleigh Baker, associate executive director of Virginia Baptist Homes, Culpeper, Va., was elected president of the Southern Baptist Ministries for the Aging, at their annual meeting in Memphis.

Baker succeeded James D. Williams, professor of adult education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, as the organizational leader of representatives from Baptist hospitals, nursing homes, retirement homes, senior adult ministers, and seminaries.

During the three-day meeting of 62 members from 16 states, the specialists on aging agreed to sponsor with Baylor University a national conference on aging at Waco in 1984.

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Hullum Receives
Language Award

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HOUSTON (BP)—Everett Hullum, managing editor of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's "MissionsUSA" magazine, has been given the 1981 Mosaic Missions award.

The award is given annually to recognize contributions to language missions by someone who does not work directly in that field.

Hullum was commended for his "concern for people" by Oscar Romo, the board's language missions director, who made the presentation during the 24th annual Language Missions Leadership Conference in Houston. Hullum has been with the board since 1970.

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Board Upholds Censure;
Pledges Press Freedom

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2/25/81

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)—The censure and subsequent resignation of Indiana Baptist editor Gene Medaris was upheld by the Executive Board of the State Convention in Indiana during a three-hour discussion Feb. 23.

During the session, the board said the censure applies only to Medaris; does not prohibit any future editor from "freely fulfilling" his job description, and also does not give "censorship powers" to Executive Director R. V. Haygood.

The 31-member board—which functions as the convention between annual sessions—accepted a report from its five-member executive committee on its actions in the Jan. 23 censure of Medaris for "breach of loyalty to the executive director and executive board," and in accepting on Feb. 2 his resignation as editor of the 9,500-circulation weekly tabloid.

Board members in effect ratified the action by overwhelmingly voting down a resolution presented by J.R. Jones of Cornersville, which called for the executive board to "override" the censure resolution, publicly apologize to Medaris and to establish a state convention study committee to assure "future editors of the state paper shall have reasonable journalistic freedom and editorial control."

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Medaris, 51, was censured after he published a letter to the editor, questioning the use of money from Fund 58 to purchase gifts for E. Harmon Moore, who retired as executive director Dec. 31. Medaris withheld the name of the letter's author.

The resolution of censure termed the letters "controversial" and said they "created disharmony." It instructed Medaris to "share controversial letters or issues" with Haygood "before printing."

According to David Simpson, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of New Whiteland and chairman of the board, the censure was issued because Medaris did not answer the question, and thus failed to provide a "supportive service of information, inspiration and encouragement."

Simpson added: "The primary issue involved was a repeated poor exercise of judgment on the part of the editor. This problem has existed for a far longer period than the last two months."

Haygood told Baptist Press: "The single issue was a controversy over poor judgment on the part of the editor. A lot of other things got involved—parliamentary procedure and press freedom—because people did not understand the issue."

The censure was a reprimand, a reprimand of only one editor at one time and was not intended to give the executive director censorship powers. It was an effort to implore the editor to work with his executive director."

Simpson and Haygood maintain the issue is not press freedom, and Simpson added: "As long as I have anything to do with it, there will be press freedom. But, at the same time, everybody has to answer to somebody. You cannot have freedom without responsibility. Mr. Medaris did not understand the balance between freedom and responsibility."

Simpson admits there is "some personal conflict involved" between Haygood and Medaris, but said the "problem existed with our previous executive director, too."

Don Lauer, a medical doctor who is a member of Speedway Baptist Church, expressed dissatisfaction with the procedure of airing the issue, as well as the outcome.

"People left the meeting resolving to work together, but understanding there is still some disagreement about the matter," he said.

Lauer, author of the unsigned letter which initiated the controversy, defended Medaris: "None of us have any evidence of longtime poor judgment on Gene's part. I know of no one even mildly displeased with the paper. Gene has spoken well on current events and attacked issues in editorials. He is widely appreciated throughout the state."

Lauer's primary displeasure was that the executive board "did not personally interview all parties involved, and do independent fact finding" in the controversy.

Medaris, who did not attend the board meeting, expressed disappointment that the "central issues" of the conflict have been obscured by "personalities."

He told Baptist Press when the censure was issued, he asked Haygood for time to seek another position, either in a church or in denominational service, saying he told the Indiana executive he "would be gone by the time school is out."

The editor said he instead was offered an option of resignation with three months of salary and benefits or being fired with one week's remuneration.

"I do not know why they have chosen to engage in character assassination, or why they have chosen to blacken my name. All I asked for was that I be allowed time to leave; they did not let me do so," Medaris said.

Medaris, who has been editor of the Indiana Baptist for three and a half years, also pointed out he was not allowed to meet with the executive committee to discuss the letters, the questions or his performance until he submitted his resignation. After that, he says he was allowed a meeting with the five-member committee, also headed by Simpson.

He said the issue is not "poor judgment," but the use of funds, the actions of the executive committee and executive director and freedom of the press.

"I do not believe you can censure one person when he is the editor," Medaris said. "You must censure his job as editor. If I was censured, then the next person can be censured, as well. I believe Indiana Baptists still have questions about this.

"Anytime a Baptist can't question the actions of their leadership, then we are all in trouble."

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Graham Crusade Denied
Government Stadium Use

By Susan Cahen

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MEXICO CITY (BP)—Mexican government officials have done an about face and will not allow a government-owned stadium to be used for the Billy Graham Crusade March 1-8.

According to Mexican Baptist spokesmen, the government official who revoked permission for the use of 60,000-seat INDE Stadium was apologetic and cordial as he cited constitutional provisions for strong separation of church and state which prohibit use of public facilities for religious purposes.

Those regulations, however, were relaxed last year when Pope John Paul II visited Mexico, and, as a result, crusade organizers sought and obtained permission to use the public stadium for the Graham crusade.

Mexican Baptist leaders feel the change was prompted because several months ago Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, head of a Swiss Catholic seminary, made social and political comments in the city which caused a furor among the Mexican people.

When permission was rescinded, crusade organizers attempted to secure Azteca Stadium, a 100,000-seat private soccer stadium, but officials declined to give their approval. Mexican Baptists felt Roman Catholic Archbishop Corripio Ahumada advised the predominately Catholic groups not to give their approval.

Graham was to arrive in Mexico City on the afternoon of Feb. 25, and there were uncertainties even on that day as to where the crusade would be held. One possibility was Arena Mexico, an 11,000-seat private facility, but Mexican Baptist leader Jose Velez said it was "less than desirable."

It may have to be used, however, and large outdoor gatherings are being considered as alternate possibilities.

The Graham crusade was scheduled to coincide with a four-year program called PRUEBA, aimed at saturating the city with the gospel by 1982. The city's 46 Baptist churches will hold simultaneous revivals following the crusade.

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