

(BP)**-- FEATURES**

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Georgia Baptist Pastor
 Turns TV Movie Around

By Jack U. Harwell

CRAWFORDVILLE, Ga. (BP)—Determined Georgia Baptist pastor Louis Stokes, who believes principle is more important than money, has succeeded in bucking a major Hollywood movie company.

As a result, a national television movie to be shown this fall will be less objectionable to Christians than it would have been in the original script.

A Hollywood production company was in Crawfordville in March and April to make a movie for TV called "Coward of the County." It will star singer Kenny Rogers and is based on Rogers' 1980 hit song by that name.

Public officials in Crawfordville gave movie officials permission to film in their town. Preliminary contacts were with Stokes about the possibility of filming some scenes in and around Crawfordville Baptist Church where Stokes is pastor. Stokes was told the movie would be one with which his church and community would be proud to be affiliated.

"But I was determined to find out exactly what type of movie they wanted to film on our church grounds and in town," said Stokes.

So he requested a copy of the complete script and learned that Rogers in the lead role would play the part of a part-time country preacher who was a "liquor-drinking, womanizing and profane hypocrite of the worst type," in Stokes' words.

"The language in the script was totally unacceptable to me," he said. "So was the characterization of the minister. I am tired of movies and TV depicting preachers as scoundrels. I did not want such a movie filmed at Crawfordville Baptist Church."

Stokes called an emergency meeting of his deacons and they voted unanimously not to allow the movie company to film any footage at Crawfordville church.

When Stokes conveyed this refusal to the moviemakers, they asked for personal conferences. These conferences stretched into long dialogues about morals, movies, American tastes, spirituality, Rogers' personal career and many other subjects.

Stokes recalls: "Ken Kragen, producer and Rogers' manager, later told me that those sessions were the most uplifting spiritual experiences he had ever had. He had never been so confronted by a minister or any other Christian."

Out of all these discussions, Stokes says he convinced the moviemakers to totally re-write the second half of the movie.

As revised, Rogers will be "converted" halfway through the movie. He will abandon his drinking and womanizing, marry the common-law wife he has lived with, ask his congregation to forgive him for his double lifestyle, resign his pastorate and the congregation will forgive him and call him back as pastor because of his confession and conversion.

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"In the original script, the minister never questioned or repented of his hypocritical life-style," Stokes says. "In the final script, he does repent and becomes a new man. It certainly depicts ministers in a better light than they were portrayed in the original."

Crawfordville Baptist Church still would not permit filming on their property, because the language, drinking and lifestyles in the first half of the movie were still unacceptable to them.

"But the new script is a vast improvement over the old one," Stokes told The Christian Index, news journal of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

"Maybe it shows once again that Christians can get something accomplished, even with so powerful a medium as TV, when they are willing to take a stand," he added.

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Burkett To Fill
Annuity PR Slot

Baptist Press
4/15/81

DALLAS (BP)--Corabob "Bobbie" C. Burkett has been named acting director of public relations for the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, effective April 23, succeeding John Bloskas, who resigned to accept a corporate position.

Burkett, 39, originally from Shreveport, La., joined the Annuity Board in 1975 as executive secretary to the public relations director. In 1976 she was promoted to administrative assistant.

Burkett was on the music staff of First Baptist Church, Amarillo, Texas, where she was a member for 20 years.

She attended Amarillo Junior College and graduated from West Texas State University in 1966 with a degree in education. She has done graduate work at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, the University of Vienna and North Texas State University.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Annuity Board.

Baptist Message
Uses Motor Home

Baptist Press
4/15/81

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--The Message is mobile.

Loan of a 24-foot self-contained mobile home has given the Louisiana Baptist Message, weekly newspaper for Louisiana Baptists, a mobile office to go where the news is.

"The mobile home really makes the Baptist Message staff and office available to Louisiana Baptists," says Editor Lynn Clayton. "It lets them know we're going the extra mile for them."

Associate Editor Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr., and E.T. Carruth, circulation and advertising manager, will travel together in the motor home several times a year. On location, they will give information on the services offered by the Message, helps on photography and hints on writing news releases for the Message and for local newspapers.

The mobile office's first outing, to the state Woman's Missionary Union meeting and then to the Northeast Associational office, was so successful Clayton plans trips to every area of the state.

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Robbers Steal \$10,000
From Publications Board

By Mike Creswell

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP)--Armed gunmen burst into the offices of the Baptist Religious Education and Publications Board in Rio de Janeiro April 13 and escaped with about \$10,000 payroll cash.

Workers were shaken, but nobody was harmed and no shots fired, according to Joaquim de Paula Rosa, executive director for this Brazilian Baptist Convention organization.

Insurance will cover most of the loss but the incident comes at a time when the board is particularly hard pressed financially because of Brazil's current tight economic conditions.

Rosa said three gunmen came to the board about 2 p.m. While one man held a gun on a gatekeeper, the other two entered the administration area. Once inside, the men forced eight to 10 workers to lie on the floor while they scooped up the money, then fled. The entire episode took only three or four minutes.

"God was watching over the employees during the robbery," he said, "because a worker entered the personnel office just seconds after the robbers had fled. The man likely would have been shot had he entered during the robbery."

The money taken represented only a partial payroll for the board. Most of the payroll is paid by check, but some printing plant workers are paid in cash. Two-thirds of the 270 workers already had picked up their pay before the robbery.

In February, some men came to the board apparently intending robbery but a gatekeeper called police and they left. The men later went to the gatekeeper's home, beat him and ransacked his house. The gatekeeper was forced to move over the incident.

Several businesses in the area have been robbed in recent months but board officials thought security was adequate at the complex, located in the outskirts of northern Rio de Janeiro. Rosa said, in light of the robbery, further security measures will be taken.

The board publishes Sunday School and other religious education materials for the Brazilian Baptist Convention and is the world's largest producer of Portuguese Bibles, according to Rosa. The board will print 600,000 Bibles this year and production is expected to top one million copies by the convention's 100th anniversary next year after two new presses become operational.

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Mike Creswell, associate editor for The Commission Magazine, is on special assignment in Brazil.

Bailey Smith Announces
Committee on Committees

Baptist Press
4/15/81

DEL CITY, Okla. (BP)--Bailey Smith, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has announced appointment of the committee on committees.

The 52-member committee will be presented to the 1981 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 9-11 in Los Angeles. The committee includes two representatives from each of the 26 state conventions qualified by membership for representation.

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Jimmy Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, will be chairman.

Named:

ALABAMA--Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, and Bobbie (Mrs. Jimmy) Jackson, Huntsville.

ARIZONA--Jim Harvey, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Glendale, and Wendell Freeze of Yuma, president of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention.

ARKANSAS--Wayne Smith, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sparkman, and Ernie Perkins, director of missions, Concord Association, Fort Smith.

CALIFORNIA--Bob Lewis, pastor of First Baptist Church, Westminster, and Herman Wooten, director of missions, Orange County Association, Orange.

COLORADO--Harold Blackwell of Salida and Mrs. Jean Cooper, Littleton.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA--C. Wade Freeman Jr., pastor of Capitol Hill Metropolitan Baptist Church, Washington, and president of the DC Baptist Convention, and Estelle (Mrs. Parks) Hackney of Washington.

FLORIDA--O.S. Hawkins, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fort Lauderdale, and Bob Vickery of Winter Park.

GEORGIA--Clark Hutchinson, pastor of Eastside Baptist Church, Marietta, and Ben F. Wardlow of Waynesboro.

ILLINOIS--Charles Chandler, pastor of Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church, Urbana, and Craig Riding of Rockford, president of the Illinois Baptist State Association.

INDIANA--David Simpson, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, New Whiteland, and chairman of the executive board of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, and R.V. Haygood, executive director of the SCBI.

KANSAS-NEBRASKA--Phil Lineberger, pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church, Wichita, and Barbara (Mrs. Calvin) Miller, Omaha.

KENTUCKY--G. David McClure of Louisville, and Wyman Copass, pastor of Reidland Baptist Church of Paducah.

LOUISIANA--Ron Herrod, pastor of First Baptist Church, Kenner, and Barry Landrum, pastor of First Baptist Church, Bossier City.

MARYLAND--David Flumbaum of Joppa, and David Kim, pastor of First Korean Baptist Church of Silver Springs.

MICHIGAN--Rochelle Davis, pastor of Temple of Faith Baptist Church, Detroit, and Dwain Laramore, area director of missions, Flint.

MISSISSIPPI--Larry Black, minister of music at First Baptist Church, Jackson, and Robert Eustice of Biloxi.

MISSOURI--Bob Warner, pastor of First Baptist Church, St. Louis, and Tom Carney, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Springfield.

NEW MEXICO--Tom Clayton, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hobbs, and Stan Coffey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Albuquerque.

NORTH CAROLINA--Don Bouldin, pastor of Carmel Baptist Church, Charlotte, and Henderson Belk of Charlotte, second vice president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina,

NORTHWEST--John Hatch, pastor of First Baptist Church of Lakewood in Tacoma, and Quilla (Mrs. Elmer) Whitten of Portland.

OHIO--Roy Southerland of Reynoldsburg, and Jack Davis of Huron.

OKLAHOMA--Jeanne (Mrs. Tom) Elliff of Tulsa, and Robert Harris of Del City.

SOUTH CAROLINA--Lonnie Shull, pastor of Northside Baptist Church, West Columbia, and president of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, and Fred Lowery, pastor of Pisgah Baptist Church, Spartanburg.

TENNESSEE--Pat Kough, pastor of First Baptist Church, Bemis, and Ralph Stone, pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville.

TEXAS--Jimmy Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, and John Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church, Houston.

VIRGINIA--Bob Yarborough, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Manassas, and Franklin Hall, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Tabb.

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