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Cyclist 10-Speeds
Ahead for Missions

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.

WALKER, La. (BP)—When Tom Higginbotham grabbed the handlebars of his 10-speed in San Diego, Calif., May 4, his goal was a cross-country marathon for missions.

Higginbotham, who spent nine months in Paramaribo, Surinam, was off to tell the nation about the opportunities for volunteer mission work, planning to arrive in Richmond, Va., July 31.

"Missionaries on furlough speak about missions but I wanted to do something that would get attention and be different," he said. "So I planned a bicycle trip to give me opportunity to stop at churches along the way to talk about missions and show my slides."

To make the journey, the 25-year-old, trim 145-pounder will spend 70 of the 90 days on the bicycle. The other 20 days will be for speaking and rest. "In some places where the temperature is high, such as through Arizona and New Mexico, I may only travel 15 miles a day," he said. "But the schedule will require an average of 47.5 miles per day at approximately 17 miles-per-hour average speed."

Even before he left the equatorial country of Surinam, Higginbotham plotted his 3,325-mile bicycle trip and wrote letters to pastors along the 11-state route.

In Blythe, Calif., women at the Baptist church set a meeting at 9 a.m., Saturday, just to listen to his story, he said.

He plans to carry no maps, just his route-book diary. "By not having a map it will make the journey more challenging and if I need to ask for directions someone may ask what I'm doing and I will have an opportunity to talk about missions," he stated matter-of-factly.

Instructions along the way are informal. His letter from Quemado, N.M., stated the church has no pastor now; "see Bill Armstrong at the only Texaco station in town for directions."

A reply from a pastor in Borrego Springs Baptist Church, N.M., stated, "Nobody ever comes here; draw me a map to show if you know where you're going. Nobody ever speaks to us here—we're off the beaten path."

Higginbotham's gear weighs about 45 pounds. He has a pup tent and plans to purchase most of his food along the way.

The journey will put him at Glorieta June 1 where he will spend the night to see the Baptist Conference Center; into Oklahoma where he will speak at the Oklahoma State University Baptist Student Union June 18; and across to Arkansas where his parents will meet him on their vacation at a state park.

July 9 he has a scheduled program at Itta Bena, Miss., First Baptist Church; into Alabama, the only state he received no speaking invitations; and into Mableton, Ga., July 19 where he plans a four-day rest stop.

A note to himself in the diary states "get a good night's rest, you'll need it. July 24 will be an 83-mile-day."

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On July 31 Higginbotham will leave South Hill, Va. The note states "Start early, it's 55 miles to Richmond." After a weekend there he will return by plane, with the bicycle, to Baton Rouge, La.

He saved much of the estimated \$1,300 for the trip from a "well-paying job" as petroleum inspector when he worked on the Alyeska Pipeline Terminal in Valdez, Alaska in 1979. "And some friends have helped with my expenses even for the trip to Surinam."

Higginbotham, a quietly self-confident young man, has one primary goal, telling others about the benefits of being a volunteer missionary. "People don't realize what a joy it is to share time in another country telling about the gospel and helping others."

"Tom discovered firsthand that all is not rose-colored on foreign soil," said Fred Day, SBC missionary in Surinam. "Adversity comes in unexpected forms, including a sting by a tropical wasp which shut his eyes for two days; torrential rains; being burglarized; and being present during a military coup where soldiers were posted everywhere with machine guns."

As he shared his Surinam experiences and anticipated the cross-country marathon, Higginbotham said about volunteer missions, "If the Lord calls you to go, you might as well pack up and leave, because you won't be happy until you are where He wants you to be."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers.

Written Credentials Needed
For Registration At LA SBC

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LOS ANGELES (BP)--A registration card or a written confirmation will be required for messengers to register at the 1981 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Los Angeles.

Registration Secretary Lee Porter said the persons who try to register without the card or written confirmation will not be registered.

The ruling is the second phase of increased checking of the registration process for messengers elected by the churches, and is part of a three-year plan to correct violations discovered at the 1979 annual meeting in Houston.

Porter investigated charges of registration irregularities and discovered double registration, churches that exceeded their allowed number and messengers who registered but were not elected by their churches.

"When the first phase was instituted last year in St. Louis, we had relatively little problem," Porter said. "There were no double registrations, and we found only one church in violation of the bylaws," Porter said.

Messengers to the 1980 annual meeting in St. Louis voted to tighten the registration process.

"We will continue to operate on our historic assumption that churches will properly elect and properly certify election of their messengers and that individuals will honestly represent

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their election," Porter said.

"However, because of the problems in the past, the procedure will be more closely checked and further controls added as Southern Baptists get acclimated to the new approach. We must maintain the integrity of the registration and voting process," he added.

Porter outlined the steps which must be taken prior to the Los Angeles convention in order for persons to receive accreditation to vote as messengers.

1. A person must be elected properly by the church under constitutional requirements which permit one messenger for each "cooperating church" and one additional messenger either for each \$250 of contributions to the work of the SBC or each 250 members. The church must use either the contribution or the membership test, and not a combination. No church may have more than 10 messengers.

2. A church allowed the full complement of 10 messengers should elect no more than 10 persons. "The constitution has no provisions for alternates and alternates will not be registered," Porter said.

3. Persons elected must be a member of the church which elects them.

4. Messengers must register personally and present either the registration card or written credentials from the church. Without the written records, they will not be registered, Porter said.

The registration cards, Porter said, are available to churches through state convention offices and most associations.

A credentials committee has been appointed by SBC President Bailey E. Smith, and will hear challenges to the rulings.

Registration for the SBC will open at 3 p.m. Sunday, June 7, at the Los Angeles Convention Center and will continue until the convention ends June 11.

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Dallas Baptist College
To Honor Bailey Smith

Baptist Press
5/6/81

DALLAS (BP)--Bailey E. Smith, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, will receive an honorary doctor of biblical studies degree when he addresses the 12th spring commencement at Dallas Baptist College, May 15.

In announcing the honorary degree, Marvin Watson, DBC president, said Smith has contributed to our time in a most significant and positive manner.

Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., since 1973, was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1980 while also serving as president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

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Commissioning Service
Held for 75 Missionaries

DOUGLASVILLE, Ga. (BP)--Seventy-five Southern Baptist home missionaries were commissioned for service in 27 states and Puerto Rico during ceremonies at Prays Mill Baptist Church.

Home Mission Board President William G. Tanner, in commissioning the missionaries, said it is academic to talk about "winning the whole world to Christ if there is no spiritual awakening in our own land."

Tanner told about 1,200 guests and members of the church the Home Mission Board has about 3,000 other missionaries with the same kind of dedication and commitment as the 75 who were commissioned.

Don Rhymes, former director of the department of missionary personnel for the HMB, is pastor of the church, which is named for a Baptist layman, Ephram Pray, who owned a grist mill and gave the property for the church founded in 1842.

Irvin Dawson, director of the missionary personnel department since last October, said the 75 missionaries came from 22 states and eight other countries.

Twenty-three of the missionaries, the largest number, are involved in church extension work, most as church starters.

They are Jimmie and Marla Cline of St. Joseph, Mo.; John and Jacqueline Copeland of Anchorage, Alaska; John and Ann Crow of Wabash, Ind.; Frank and Maria Archer and William and Evelyn Foote, each assigned to the Detroit area; Timothy and Jeannie Gramley of Onawa, Iowa; Leonard Morgan of Beckley, W. Va.; John and Cynthia Mullens of Cherry Hill, N.J.; Christopher and Candace Ray of West Seattle, Wash.; and John and Diane Worcester of Atlanta.

Twenty missionaries were commissioned for language work, including seven for international seamen's center work--Alas and Geclna de Souza of Mobile, Ala.; Joe E. Jones of Freeport, Texas; Don and Barbara Wells of Houston; and Yun and Su-Ing Yong of Philadelphia.

Other language missionaries commissioned were James and Paulette Kellum, Indochinese in Memphis, Tenn.; Robert and Nadine Landes, deaf in Chicago; Kendale and Elizabeth Moore, language missions coordinator for Kentucky; Bernle and Anita Moraga, Hispanics in Waco, Texas; Miguel and Carmen Soto, Spanish in San Juan, Puerto Rico; Gayle Prettyman, Spanish in San Antonio, Texas; and Fuad and Rifka Shorosh, Arabs in Knoxville and Chattanooga, Tenn.

A dozen Christian social ministries workers were commissioned, most of them for work in Baptist centers. They are Joycelyn Carrell of Phenix City, Ala.; Andrew and Martha Creel of Atlanta; Beverly Gray of Oklahoma City, and Armando and Yvonne Ramos of El Paso. All work in Baptist centers in those cities.

Other CSM missionaries commissioned were Thomas and June Cairns, CSM director for the Baptist Convention of New York; Charlotte Ann Johnson, CSM director for Lauderdale Association in Mississippi; Michael and Beverly Flannery, CSM director for Central Baptist Association, Indiana; and Martha Jane Edwards, social worker for Sellers Home in New Orleans.

Four missionaries, Bernard and Louise Blount of Orlando, Fla., and Urban and Loretta Green, of Tulsa, Okla., were commissioned for work through the HMB's black church relations department.

Eight missionaries each were commissioned through the board's metropolitan missions department and rural-urban missions department, almost all of them serving in associational missions.

Metropolitan missionaries commissioned were Wade and Sherry Akins of Landover Hills, Md.; George and Leona Davis of Champaign, Ill.; Ross and Shelba Harmonson of Eldridge, Iowa; James and Joyce Swedenburg of Parma, Ohio.

Rural-urban missionaries commissioned were Tom and Thelma Bacon of Easton, Nev.; Robert and Gloria Moore of Howard Association in Maryland; Harrell and Vera Parr of High Desert Association in California; and Gordon and Maxine Robison of Douglas Siskiyou Association in Oregon.

Dawson explained that most of the 75 missionaries were already serving on the field, and were in the Atlanta area for a week-long orientation program sponsored twice each year by the board.

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(BP) photos mailed only to states where missionaries are serving or are natives.

April CP Receipts
14.5 Percent Ahead

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--April receipts to the national Southern Baptist Cooperative Program increased 14.5 percent over April 1980.

The undesignated receipts, the primary means of support for SBC mission and education programs, totaled \$6,374,821, an increase of \$807,232. For the year, they are up 13.8 percent to \$47,364,696.

Designated receipts for April increased 21 percent to \$5,523,668. For the first seven months of the fiscal year, designated receipts total \$51,122,386, or 13.3 percent ahead of the same period last year.

Designated and undesignated receipts combined are \$98,487,082, an increase of 13.5 percent for the year.

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Baptists Bring New Life
To Seattle Funeral Home

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5/6/81

WEST SEATTLE, Wash. (BP)--Chris and Candy Ray, newly commissioned Southern Baptist home missionaries appointed as church planter apprentices, go to church each Sunday at the West Home Funeral Chapel.

Ray is pastor of the little church, which meets in the funeral home and was started as a result of summer missions work done by two students from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary last summer.

Ray feels the name of the church is especially appropriate--the New Life Baptist Church.

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