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'Plain Jane' WMU President  
Says Women Can Do More

By Catherine B. Allen

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—After six years as the leading elected lady in Southern Baptist life, Christine Gregory is alarmed at the poor visibility for women in the largest U. S. Protestant denomination.

"Women are still not given proportionate opportunities to use their God-given gifts to edify the body of Christ," she said. "Either women are pushed down by false teachers, or they are not being challenged to use their abilities in the denomination."

Gregory arrived at her analysis from nationwide observation. She completes her six-year tenure as 12th president of Woman's Missionary Union, a 1.1 million-member auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, at the annual meeting, June 8, in Los Angeles. When elected, she warned that she was a "plain Jane, down to earth" woman.

She is convinced that laywomen, as well as laymen, are the best hopes for expansion in missions. Although Southern Baptists support 6,000 missionaries, more than other evangelical groups, they want to double that number by the year 2000.

"Laypersons can broaden the base of mission support. Their involvement is the only practical way to expand," she said.

"My dream is that the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention will alternate between laypersons and professional persons," Gregory said.

As president of WMU, she has worked full time without salary. She has traveled almost one million miles on five continents and all over the U.S. More than half the time has been away from her comfortable home in Danville, Va.

When WMU launched its three-year emphasis on Life-Changing Commitments, Gregory set an example for other women by revamping an old coat. She gave the money earmarked for a new coat to a missions offering. "I don't feel the need of a new dress every time I go somewhere," she explained. "I haven't bought a dress in ages."

How will Christine Gregory gear down to life in Danville next June? "I'm not looking for any other office," she said. "Old women should train the young, then move on. That's biblical!"

"Yet this is not the end, but a beginning, for me. I thought I was committed to missions before. Now I know I am, but in a new way."

Gregory will dig into volunteer service. A long-time champion of mission action in Virginia, she plans to develop a program of literacy missions in her area. She expects to conduct Bible clubs for children in her shaded backyard, based on WMU's Big A Club, a Bible teaching program for children who do not attend church. "Mission action is my first and last love," Gregory explained. "Ministering and witnessing are the greatest honors in the world."

Mission action for Christine Gregory is not occasional food baskets or old clothes distribution. "I mean personal evangelism linked with a serious attack on a social problem, such as alcoholism, illiteracy, ethnic isolation, mistreatment of the aging," she said.

"Women can handle these problems better than the government. Maybe better than men too. Women are organizers and implementers. But they have to be trained. They need to learn how to survey their communities, then to match opportunity with resource.

"We have failed to make women realize the bottom line of missions education. That bottom line is to train and motivate people to win this world. That's all!"

Gregory feels WMU enrollment and sense of direction are taking flight. Prior to her administration, and for three years during it, enrollment declined. She attributes recent growth in statistics to the Baptist Young Women (BYW), the WMU organization for ages 18-29, which she says rose from a struggle.

Now she wants WMU to give careful attention to older women which will soon make up the largest single segment of the American population. She also thinks WMU could lead in "regrouping the family," helping all ages to come together in the interest of Christian love and ministry.

"WMU must continually examine its past and methods of programming," she said. "Today's woman does not need or want the wordage of the past. She wants to cut to the hard core of worthwhileness in missions. Women have loved the intensive training WMU has given them.

"The firm goals, the training and commitment of WMU not only are the lifeline of missions, they are also the hope of women to develop all the gifts God gave them."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Woman's Missionary Union.

Flynt Loses Appeal;  
Faces Trial In Ohio

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WASHINGTON (BP)—Over the objections of four of its nine members, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Hustler magazine publisher Larry Flynt must stand trial in Ohio on charges of violating a state obscenity law.

The high court action brought to an end nearly five years of preliminary legal wrangling over whether officials in Cleveland went too far in singling out Flynt for prosecution under an Ohio law forbidding pandering of obscene materials.

In an unsigned decision, the five-man majority ruled that because an earlier decision of the Ohio Supreme Court to allow the trial to proceed did not amount to a final decision on the merits of the case, Cleveland should be allowed to take Flynt to trial.

Three of the dissenting justices, Potter Stewart, William J. Brennan Jr. and Thurgood Marshall, said they agreed with a Cleveland municipal court that earlier had dismissed the charges against Flynt on grounds that the prosecution was selective and discriminatory.

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## Philadelphia Must Pay For Platform Used by John Paul

WASHINGTON (BP)—A protracted dispute over who should pay for a platform built by the city of Philadelphia, for a mass presided over by Pope John Paul II in October 1979, ended when the Supreme Court let stand lower rulings that the bill must be paid by the Roman Catholic archdiocese.

The suit leading to the May 18 high court action was brought by two Philadelphia women, the Board of National Ministries of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., and the American Civil Liberties Union. One of the women, Mary Anne Forehand, is a communications specialist for American Baptist Churches.

Both a federal district court judge in Philadelphia and the Third Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the women's position that the city violated the Constitution's ban on an establishment of religion by paying for construction costs and flowers and shrubbery for the occasion.

Federal Judge Raymond J. Broderick, himself a Roman Catholic, ruled in November 1979 that the Philadelphia Archdiocese owed the city \$204,569 for the "net cost" of the platform's construction. The figure was arrived at by subtracting from the total cost of \$310,741 those items which the city could use again in future public ceremonies.

The platform, measuring more than 28 feet in height and 144 feet in diameter, was the focal point for one of the popular Roman Catholic pontiff's most successful stops on his one-week tour of parts of the United States in October 1979. More than one million people participated in the outdoor mass in Philadelphia.

In his 17-page memorandum ordering the archdiocese to repay the city, Judge Broderick declared that the First Amendment to the Constitution "has consistently been interpreted in letter and in spirit as prohibiting the expenditure of public funds for a religious service."

The city had argued on the other side that its provisions for the papal visit were made out of concern for public safety and enhancement of the city's image.

Following its normal pattern, the Supreme Court offered no reasons for its decision to let stand Judge Broderick's decision and that of the Third Circuit upholding the judge's position.

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Jimmy Draper Responds  
To Committee Criticism

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EULESS, Texas (BP)—Commenting that "some voice needs to be raised," James T. Draper Jr. has defended the personnel and selection of the 1981 Southern Baptist Convention committee on committees.

Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless and chairman of the committee on committees, made his comments in the wake of criticism of the committee by a group led by Cecil Sherman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Asheville, N.C., and Kenneth Chafin, pastor of South Main Baptist Church of Houston, Texas.

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Selection of the 52-member committee was announced in April by Bailey E. Smith, president of the SBC. The committee, which does not require convention approval, names the key committee on boards and other special committees authorized by the convention.

"A group who call themselves 'denominational loyalists' have cast many accusations and much criticism at this group of men and women," Draper told Baptist Press. "As chairman of this committee I must respond to these senseless and vicious charges."

Draper, a former associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., of which Smith currently is pastor, said he is a "third generation Southern Baptist preacher, graduate of two Southern Baptist schools and holds an honorary doctorate from a third."

He pointed out First Baptist, Euless will give some \$150,000 in undesignated Cooperative Program gifts in 1981, and nearly \$300,000 to the Tarrant Baptist Association.

"We have increased all our Cooperative Program and missions gifts by over 300 percent in the last five years," he said.

Draper said in the wake of the criticism, information was developed on those who are to serve on the committee. Draper gathered some of the information, and used some provided by Ernie Perkins, director of missions of the Concord Baptist Association in Fort Smith, Ark., and one of the two Arkansas representatives on the committee.

"There is one state executive secretary, three directors of missions, two presidents of state executive boards, at least three state convention presidents, at least one former vice president of a state convention and another was elected president of his state's pastors' conference. One member is Korean and one a black, who was vice president of his state convention and now moderator of his association," Draper said.

He added Cooperative Program giving is good among the members, saying a random check of 15 of the members showed one pastor led his church to give 22 percent through the Cooperative Program, two gave 20 percent, one gave 16.5 percent, two gave 15 percent, two gave 11 percent, six gave 10 percent and the other contributes 9.3 percent.

"Others at random include one trustee of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, one member of the trustees of the Annuity Board, and many who serve state boards and committees.

"The broad base of this committee does not deserve the accusations received. Surely in these critical times we need prayer and not pre-judgment and condemnation," Draper said.

He added: "We have not even met yet. We will do our job well, fairly and with devotion. If we fail to do that, then criticize us.

"There is no place in Southern Baptist life for the irresponsible, misleading, deliberately distorted, inflammatory and unchristian accusations that have been hurled at this fine group of people on this committee.

"We are told that Southern Baptists love the Bible, the church, the denomination and, above all else, the Lord Jesus Christ. Only those who do not (do so) need fear this committee.

"I ask for your prayers and trust, we will be faithful to both."

## Dash for Ditch Saves Churchmen in Tornado

EMBERSON, Texas (BP)—Nineteen members of Emberson Baptist Church were celebrating a birthday at Wednesday night supper when someone yelled a tornado was coming.

They all rushed out the doors and dove into a nearby shallow ditch. Moments later the twister demolished the building.

The tornado ripped a 200 to 300-yard swath through the town shortly after 7 p.m., May 13, destroying the church and 22 homes. Damage was estimated at more than \$1 million.

Thirty residents were taken to area hospitals with only eight admitted. There were no deaths.

"We had so little warning about the tornado," said church member Jane Perryman. "Some of the children had been outside playing and noticed the dark clouds. They alerted the pastor and some of the adults. One man yelled, 'This is it' and we all immediately ran outside."

"People have told us that the whole thing probably didn't last more than three minutes but it seemed like an hour to me," said Peggy Penn. "We were laying in the ditch with our face to the ground while the hail and rain beat on us and the debris whipped around us. It was through the grace of God that we are alive today."

Church members were rushed to the hospital to be treated for cuts and bruises. A laceration on pastor Kenneth Davis's right arm required 150 stitches.

"I had my arm over my wife and was praying silently," Davis said. "The whole thing lasted only a few seconds. I didn't realize that my arm was cut until I got up."

Lumber from the 100-year-old wood frame building was scattered miles around leaving only the concrete stairs to the three entrances and some of the pews from the sanctuary. Fortunately, a few weeks earlier the church had doubled its insurance to \$40,000.

"Our building may be gone but we are still the church," Perryman said. "In the past few months our congregation had started adding new members and last Sunday there were 65 in attendance. I don't believe this is going to hurt our spirit and we will soon start to rebuild."

The pastor agreed that the church will be rebuilt. "We feel like the Lord put us here to stay, and that's what we intend to do—stay here and survive."

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

## Skeletal Remains Believed Those of Filipino Pastor

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MINDANAO, Philippines (BP)—Skeletal remains believed to be those of Filipino pastor Cresencio Fernando were found recently in a shallow grave in northern Mindanao, Philippines.

Fernando left his home Feb. 16 to attend an evangelistic meeting in another town. He never arrived at the meeting or returned home.

Scattered packages of Sunday School literature and tracts were found near the skeleton, leading authorities to believe the remains are those of Fernando. Several Baptist pastors in the area have been threatened by communist and Muslim dissidents.

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