



-- FEATURES
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Homebounds Enroll
In Prayer Ministry

By Johnnie B. McCracken

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — For perhaps the first time in Southern Baptist history, homebound persons have the opportunity of belonging to a mission support team.

This team, called "Missions Pray-ers," invites the homebound to participate in a worldwide prayer ministry for Southern Baptist missions.

Since its initiation last fall by Woman's Missionary Union, response has been excellent says Eljee Bentley, who coordinates the program.

It was launched after WMU staff realized that many people who had at one time been actively involved in missions are no longer able to leave home.

"We wanted these people to feel they were a part of a team effort, that they were really doing something for Bold Mission Thrust," says Bentley, referring to Southern Baptists' plan to confront every person in the world with the gospel by the year 2000.

"Many people who are active and who work, don't have a lot of time to pray. Many homebound people do, and after all, prayer is the most important thing if Bold Mission Thrust is to succeed," she says.

According to Bentley, more than 1,500 requests for information about the program have been received at the national headquarters of Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, Ala. Requests came from as far as Brazil.

"What has surprised me," says Bentley, "is the number of requests we've gotten from people who've thought up ways to use this program—ways we never thought of."

"A social director of a nursing home where there were a number of Southern Baptists saw it as a way to involve people there. A number of people who work with the homebound in Sunday School also want the kits to take to the homebound in their departments."

Evidence that the program is meeting a need among the homebound can be seen in the number of people who have written letters.

A Georgia woman wrote, "At 78 I am not traveling or driving, but I believe so firmly that prayer is the most valuable privilege Christians have, I would like to be a part of this emphasis."

"Prayer may seem inactive, but God isn't," a Virginia woman wrote. "I can no longer go to meetings or church, but I can contribute through prayer."

Another woman indicated that her blind husband was joining her in this ministry of praying for missionaries.

One foreign missionary wrote for the kit so she could adapt the material for use with people in Brazil.

Those interested in "Missions Prayers" can receive the free kit by writing to Missions Prayers, Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, 600 North Twentieth St., Birmingham, Ala. 35203.

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Mrs. Johnnie B. McCracken is a writer in Birmingham, Ala.

Child Care Leader
Dies in Air Crash

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ATLANTA (BP)--O. Leonard Pedigo Jr., administrator of Georgia Baptist Children's Homes, was killed in a mid-air light plane collision June 8 over Eatonton, Ga.

Pedigo's single engine plane collided with a twin engine craft. Both passengers in the second aircraft also died. Officials at Eatonton airport said both planes were flying on visual control and neither had filed a flight plan.

Pedigo, an experienced pilot, was enroute from his home in Lithonia, Ga., to the children's home campus at Baxley. Earlier this year Pedigo, 66, announced plans to retire by Dec. 31 or as soon as a successor could be elected.

Pedigo, a native of Knoxville, Tenn., was elected administrator of the children's home in 1970. Previously, he was pastor of Georgia churches in Harlem, Dearing, Vidalia and Stone Mountain.

He was president of the Child Care Executives of the SBC in 1978 and currently was a member of the licensing commission of the Georgia Department of Human Resources.

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God's Hand on Baptists,
Stewardship Man Says

Baptist Press
7/10/81

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--God has placed his hand on Southern Baptists to help him evangelize the world, Rudy Fagan, director of the SBC Stewardship Commission, told 2,000 church missions leaders at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

"We are living in one of those unusual periods in history when God has decided to intervene," Fagan said. "I believe he has placed his hand on Southern Baptists. He has chosen us in an unusual way to play a part in his plan to evangelize the world."

Fagan's address highlighted a session on stewardship at the week-long Bold New Laity conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union.

Fagan said unexplainable events and unusual timing generally identify God at work. He said a current example is the growth of Southern Baptist seminary enrollment while enrollment at other seminaries in the United States is declining.

After two years of limited growth the gifts of Southern Baptists in 1974 through the Cooperative Program, a unified plan for supporting missions, increased 12.4 percent over the previous year. In every year since, these gifts have kept ahead of inflation, even during the double digit years, Fagan added.

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"How do you explain the way Southern Baptists began turning loose of their money, particularly in 1974?" he asked.

During the same period the Southern Baptist concept of Bold Mission Thrust to evangelize the world by the year 2000 also emerged, Fagan recalled.

Other evidences of divine intervention which Fagan cited were the 2,000 baptisms at First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., in 1980; 16,000 religious conversions in a crusade in the Philippines; 20,000 professions of faith in a Korean crusade; and the unifying effort of Southern Baptists at their June convention in Los Angeles.

"Several weeks ago the state Baptist papers were predicting a knockdown, dragout meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Los Angeles. But God's people called Baptists asked God to answer their prayers for unity.

"We came out of that city with a unity and love that only God could have designed and effected," Fagan said.

The stewardship executive urged Southern Baptists to "lay off all of your luxuries and move as one people at God's command in the gospel explosion around the world."

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Nashville Church Buys
Groceries Half Price

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7/10/81

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Although it did not approach the feeding of 5,000 from a lad's lunch, members of Nashville's Radnor Baptist Church doubled their grocery-buying power through an innovative scheme of pastor Paul Durham.

When Durham learned from a church member who is a bank official that a supermarket in the neighborhood had gone bankrupt, Durham negotiated to buy the store's stock for 50 percent of shelf price. Then, Durham announced the groceries would be offered to members of the church and residents of Radnor Towers, the church's high-rise apartment for senior citizens, at the church's cost.

Admittance to the sale was by ticket only, and tickets were given to those attending the June 28 morning service. Durham estimates attendance was up about 300.

Deacons and church staff workers and their wives were volunteer cashiers and sackers for the sale and the store was overwhelmed by shoppers.

When the doors opened at 5 p.m., the line of shoppers was a block and a half long.

By 8:30 p.m., when the lines began to dwindle, most of the shelves lining the five aisles were stripped. The first items gone were canned goods and detergents. By closing time, all that remained were cat food, seasonings, a few pickles and diet soft drinks.

Durham, pleased with the sale's success, felt it met a real need in the lives of his congregation and the residents of Radnor Towers. Many of the shoppers spent well over \$100.

"I just wanted to help my people, and this is a great way to promote the church and help my people," Durham said.

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Nashville newspapers carried articles and pictures on their front pages, and local television stations covered the event. Durham had telephone calls from radio stations and newspapers as far away as Texas.

Church member Helen Claus commented, "We went through a stewardship program at the church that required sacrificial giving by most of the members, and this shows that Brother Paul thinks of his congregation."

The grocery sale had a special appeal to Durham. When he was 14 years old, he ran away from home and worked in a supermarket, becoming assistant manager when he was 18.

Reflecting on the grocery experience, Durham noted, "If you are going to feed people spiritually, you also have to help them in other ways."

Now Durham is exploring the possibility of forming a cooperative to buy a service station.

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Panel Narrowly Approves
Helms' Human Life Bill

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
7/10/81

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Senate subcommittee narrowly approved a bill that declares that "the life of each human being begins at conception," but further action on the controversial measure is unlikely before next year.

The three Republicans and two Democrats on the Separation of Powers subcommittee split along party lines in the vote to send the so-called "human life bill" to the full Judiciary Committee, but recommended that full committee consideration be delayed until after hearings have been held on a proposed constitutional amendment banning abortion.

That delay in full committee consideration means it will likely be next year before further action on the measure occurs.

Introduced by Sen. Jesse Helms, and backed by separation of powers chairman Sen. John P. East, both North Carolina Republicans, S. 158 states the finding of Congress that the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution "protects all human beings," including fetuses.

Opponents of the measure have charged that it is a short-cut method of changing the Constitution and overturning Supreme Court decisions on abortion. The human life bill would require only a simple majority in both houses of Congress while a constitutional amendment would require a two-thirds vote plus ratification by 38 states.

Referring to the Supreme Court's 1973 landmark decision defining a woman's right to seek an abortion, East contended that the bill is simply a response to the "constitutional crisis precipitated by the court itself."

The swing vote which kept the measure alive came from conservative Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, who expressed reservations throughout the eight days of hearings about the constitutionality of the proposal and called it "one of the most controversial single pieces of legislation in recent congresses."

"On an issue of this magnitude, I would prefer that the collective wisdom of the entire Judiciary Committee, rather than only this subcommittee, be called into play," Hatch said in explaining his vote.

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Hatch, chairman of the Subcommittee on the Constitution which will likely hold hearings on the constitutional amendment proposals sometime this fall, was joined by East and Sen. Jeremiah Denton, R-Ala., in voting for the measure. Democratic Sens. Max S. Baucus of Montana and Howell Heflin of Alabama voted against it.

Meanwhile, the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights which has House jurisdiction over a companion bill, has no action scheduled on it.

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Hays Expected To Recover
Following Heart Attack

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7/10/81

HONG KONG (BP)--George H. Hays, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board director for work in east Asia, is expected to recover completely from a heart attack he suffered July 8 in Hong Kong.

In a phone conversation with board officials July 10, Mrs. Hays, who was with her husband when he became ill, reported that the doctors have taken him off oxygen, his blood pressure is better, and he is in no pain. He will remain in Baptist Hospital in Hong Kong for four weeks.

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Ageless Man
Earns Degree

By Tim Nicholas

Baptist Press
7/10/81

MORTON, Miss. (BP) — Albert Durham earned a doctor of ministries degree from Mississippi Baptist Seminary this spring. He is 78.

Durham, who showed up at the seminary more than 10 years ago, has taken more than 50 classes at the non-accredited seminary, affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention and with several National Baptist bodies.

"What has amazed me," said Dick Brogan, seminary president, "is his stickability—his consistent trudging to complete this course."

Durham had only completed 8th grade but the seminary is specially equipped to educate students with no college degrees. He felt called to preach at age 32 and has been pastor of St. Peter's Missionary Baptist Church for 15 years.

Durham was born in 1903 into a poor family of sharecroppers who worked a black man's plantation. "I was brought up just as poor as a person can get," said Durham. "And it took most of my life to get answers to the question, 'Why so poor?'" Durham said he found the answer in the Bible: "Every good and perfect gift comes from God." He added, "The Lord knew I would give God the glory."

Earlier in life he had begun to work his way up and out of poverty. He went to the federal land bank with \$35 and one mule for collateral. He paid the debt in only seven years and now has 280 acres in north Madison County, where oil companies have dug several test wells.

Insurance on the land was due once and he only had a dollar. He sold some sweetgum trees for barrel staves for a man who gave Durham the profit, which he used immediately to pay the insurance.

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Another time he was about to lose his place and the land bank manager, impressed by his nerve in trying to find cash, paid the back note out of his own pocket and arranged for an oil lease to cover it. "I gave him one-35th of the mineral rights," said Durham. "To say thank you verbally don't mean nothing."

He bought a cow on the installment plan—a dollar a week for 20 weeks. He said that cow and her increase produced 25 head.

He went into construction and by 1949 he was foreman of a crew with both black and white men on it. He retired in 1969 from the T. L. James Construction Company of Ruston, La.

All 10 of his children finished high school and two went to college. His schooling at Mississippi Baptist Seminary came because "I had prayed for the time I'd retire and study God's Word the way I should," he said.

He registered at the seminary in 1970 and "threw myself open for knowledge," he said. He completed coursework for a bachelor of theology, a master of theology, and now completed the doctor of ministries degree.

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Challenger Becomes Ineligible
For Executive Committee Seat

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
7/10/81

MIDDLETOWN, Ky. (BP)--Eldred Taylor, focus of an unprecedented challenge to a Southern Baptist Convention committee on boards nomination, has become ineligible to serve in the seat he won at the 1981 SBC in Los Angeles.

Taylor, pastor of First Baptist Church of Somerset, Ky., narrowly won election to the SBC Executive Committee after he was proposed from the floor in a challenge to official nominee William R. (Bob) Parker, pastor of Kosmosdale Baptist Church of Louisville.

However, June 10, Taylor became ineligible to serve on the Executive Committee when he was elected as executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Board of Child Care, an agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Under Bylaw 20 of the SBC Constitution, "no salaried official of...any agency of a state convention may be a member of the Executive Committee...."

The ineligibility also causes Kentucky to forfeit one of its three seats on the Executive Committee, which functions as the fiduciary and fiscal agency as well as the convention between annual sessions.

J. Howard Cobble, pastor of First Baptist Church of Avondale Estates, Ga., and chairman of the Executive Committee, said: "The position is vacant until the next convention. Kentucky and the Executive Committee each will be short a member until someone is elected at the 1982 meeting in New Orleans."

Cobble said that while some of the agencies of the convention have provisions for electing a replacement, the Executive Committee does not.

Taylor, 59, who will take his new post Sept. 1, told Baptist Press he had been approached about the possibility of his assuming leadership for the child care agency prior to his election in Los Angeles, but that nothing definite had occurred.

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He added he had turned the job down on one other occasion and thought he had "laid the thing to rest" with that refusal. He said he was approached on May 21, and agreed only to talk with the search committee. "I told them I would pray about it (the meeting) and that we would meet later," Taylor said.

He said: "At the time I was elected by the convention, no definite decision on my part or on the part of the search committee had been made."

On June 19, he said, the search committee told him they wished to unanimously recommend him to the board for election. Taylor is president of the board, and was an ex-officio member of the search committee.

He said he and his wife prayed, and "the Lord gave us green signals rather than red signals." He noted he is "very reluctant" to leave Somerset, where he has been pastor 23 years, and the "only reason I am going is that the Lord said for me to do it."

Taylor also said he was not aware "until after the convention" that he would become ineligible to serve on the Executive Committee if he accepted the child care post.

He mentioned specifically that C. R. Daley, editor of the Western Recorder, journal of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, has served on the board of trustees at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Ben Elrod, president of Georgetown College, a KBC agency, was re-elected to the Southwestern board.

"I was not aware that the bylaw for the Executive Committee was different," he said. Other agencies and institutions only prohibit as trustees persons who indirectly or directly receive all or part of their salary from the agency they would serve, or who would be responsible for administration of funds received from that agency.

T.L. McSwain, pastor of Hurstbourne Baptist Church of Louisville, who nominated Taylor for the Executive Committee, said Taylor's ineligibility "does not alter" the point made at the convention, "that the committee on boards is responsible to the people of the convention for its nominations."

McSwain said the attack was not directed at Parker personally, but was intended to send a message to the committee on boards that messengers will not accept nominees who "have a very poor record of support for and involvement in Baptist work."

At the time, McSwain said Parker's congregation contributes 1.5 percent of its budget through the SBC Cooperative Program, the method the denomination uses to support its work of education, missions and evangelism.

Parker, who did not attend the Los Angeles convention because of his mother's illness, said he felt the manner in which he was unseated was "unfair...but I have tried to put it in the back of my mind and just go on."

Parker, who presented Resolution 16 on Doctrinal Integrity at the 1980 meeting of the SBC in St. Louis, and who is the Kentucky chairman of Moral Majority, said: "I think it is unfortunate. It would be much better if we had full representation, and we would have if I had been elected."