



# **BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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81-113

Hymers, Powell To Distribute  
Thesis Despite Author's Plea

By Norman Jameson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--"It will take a court order" to get R.L. Hymers to stop distributing copies of a thesis he says documents liberalism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Hymers, a Hollywood, Calif., evangelist, and William A. Powell Sr., editor of the Southern Baptist Journal, plan to distribute hundreds of copies of the thesis in exchange for donations to the financially plagued publication, despite the author's request they stop.

Noel Hollyfield Jr. wrote the thesis in 1976 as part of requirements toward a master of theology degree. It was written from surveys conducted from 190 students, including 39 graduate students, to see if he could determine degrees of "Christian orthodoxy" among them. Southern's enrollment at the time was 2,113.

According to the thesis, the results were so skewed toward the "orthodox" they could not be analyzed with normal distribution tests.

It did, however, conclude that "as higher education increased, 'orthodoxy' decreased." That conclusion loaded the guns of the most conservative element in the SBC which has long targeted the six seminaries in general and Southern in particular for charges of liberalism.

But Hollyfield says his findings are similar to findings all over the world, among all faiths, that higher education decreases orthodoxy in religious beliefs. Similar studies show that age and the number of years in a pastorate increase orthodoxy.

Orthodoxy for purposes of the survey is defined as, "conforming to the usual beliefs of established doctrines, especially in religion: proper, correct, or conventional."

Hymers, on the board of directors of the Journal, maintains Hollyfield's study proves "the more a student studies at Southern, the less he believes in the Bible." Now, armed with their interpretation of the thesis, they feel they at last can document their charges of liberalism.

Hollyfield, however, feels the interpretation Powell and Hymers have attached to the thesis is "not at all what it said."

"The most salient point is, my thesis says nothing radical if you understand it," claims Hollyfield, who lives in Countryside, Ill., and teaches mathematics at Elgin Academy. "I don't see how anyone who looked at the thesis honestly could have come up with their interpretation."

After giving early permission to Powell to distribute the thesis to "a few of his friends," Hollyfield learned Powell planned mass distribution and was using the thesis to raise money.

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He telegraphed Powell during the SBC in Los Angeles and asked him to stop. Powell did not and will not stop. Hollyfield has since applied for a copyright on the thesis but it will have little legal effect because the thesis has been so long in the public domain, according to two Nashville lawyers.

"I have a deep conviction that Southern Baptists need to know what's in this thesis," said Powell. "As long as Baptist Press and most state newspaper editors do their best to keep it from the people, I will do my best to get it to them."

Powell's fund raising letter declared a financial emergency, saying the Journal was overdrawn at the bank and about to lose its computer.

So in exchange for \$10, Powell promised a copy of the 159-page thesis. He had received 201 orders as of July 21, 190 of them with money enclosed, although he would not say how much money.

Hymers, executive director of the George W. Truett Society for Evangelization Inc., said he was raising money to get the Southern Baptist Journal into every SBC church in the months leading up to the 1981 SBC meeting in New Orleans. He was asking \$50 for a free thesis and had received one order. He said later he would send free copies to anyone who asked.

Since the June convention, Hymers said the Journal has raised \$10,000 through calls and letters to friends, excluding the thesis offer, and is well out of debt. "They're in fine shape down there now and I'm glad for that."

Powell, however, says he is still \$4,200 in the red, and it is "absolutely not true" all his bills are paid.

The thesis statistics that most enraged Hymers and Powell were quoted first in Harold Lindsell's book, *The Bible in the Balance*, published in 1979. Those are the results from the 19 Ph.D.-Th.M. students interviewed. Just 63 percent of the 19 checked the most orthodox possibility, "I know God really exists and I have no doubts about it."

Other answers to the question, "Which of the following statements comes closest to expressing what you believe about God," were: While I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God, 26 percent; I find myself believing in God some of the time, but not at other times, five percent; what I believe about God is \_\_\_\_\_, five percent.

No one checked either of two blanks that indicated they did not believe in God. But Powell, Hymers and Lindsell claim the study proves only 63 percent of the students at Southern believe in God.

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Peacock Named To Head  
Partnership Evangelism

By Mary Jane Welch

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Billy Peacock, a veteran foreign missionary, has been named to direct Southern Baptist partnership evangelism as the SBC Foreign Mission Board moved closer to full responsibility for the program.

Partnership evangelism, which links Southern Baptist churches to churches overseas through an exchange of pastor-led teams of laypersons, was most strongly promoted by the World Evangelism Foundation, which in December announced it would phase out its organization

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because of Foreign Mission Board plans to accelerate partnership evangelism around the world.

At the meeting in which Peacock's selection was announced, W.H. (Dub) Jackson Jr., president of WEF, was appointed a missionary and named field coordinator for the program. Jackson and his wife, Doris, will be assigned for the first year to Europe and the Middle East.

Peacock, a general evangelist assigned to Korea since his appointment 13 years ago, has been missionary director of major cities evangelism in Korea since 1978. The project culminated last year in crusades led by volunteer teams from Florida and Louisiana which resulted in more than 18,000 Christian commitments.

Beginning Jan. 1, Peacock will work with Ervin Haste, evangelism and church growth consultant. By then, the board will have taken responsibility for completion of 17 partnership campaigns already being planned with national conventions overseas.

New staff members also will be added in the board's office of human resources to work with enlistment and orientation of partnership evangelism volunteers.

Haste said Peacock is needed to direct partnership evangelism because of the number of churches and the number of overseas contacts involved.

The program has the potential, he said, of involving almost all Southern Baptist churches over the next few years.

"Partnership evangelism involves only five to eight from a church, so it relates well to a smaller church," Haste said. "Some churches of 100 members could do it."

The Foreign Mission Board does not have any one program of evangelism that works in all countries, he said, but partnership evangelism is especially well-suited to developed countries, countries with strong Baptist conventions, or countries in which Southern Baptists do not have missionaries.

"There is a natural appeal to overseas churches to team up with other churches—church to church and individual to individual. They are not threatened by this, they learn a great deal of methods and it's a mutual learning. Our people that go learn from them," Haste said.

Peacock said his decision to leave Korea at a time when people are so receptive to the gospel and when general evangelists are needed so greatly was harder than his decision to leave the pastorate of Lowrey Memorial Baptist Church, Blue Mountain, Miss., to go as a missionary to Korea.

A native of Baton Rouge, La., Peacock is a graduate of Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, and of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He is married to the former Teresa Mazzara of New Orleans, and they have four children. Before going to Blue Mountain, he was pastor of Ridgecrest (La.) Baptist Church and music or music and education director for churches in Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Zachary, La.

Jackson will begin his duties in Europe and the Middle East Feb. 1, after World Evangelism Foundation, which he founded in 1968, ceases operation. He will spend a year in each of the board's major geographical areas, Europe and the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America, working with the regional consultants on evangelism and church growth to set up partnership evangelism programs.

"I really feel that we're using Dub's gifts on the cutting edge of partnership evangelism—on the field where it's happening," said Charles W. Bryan, the Foreign Mission Board's vice president for overseas operations. "We're committed to the concept of partnership evangelism as practiced by World Evangelism Foundation, but in the context of our global approach."

Jackson became involved in partnership evangelism while a Southern Baptist missionary in Japan. He resigned in 1969 to devote full time to the effort. Since it was organized, World Evangelism Foundation has held 60 crusades in 30 countries, using 6,000 volunteers and reporting 160,000 professions of faith. It also has sponsored reciprocal campaigns which brought teams from six foreign countries to the United States.

Jackson, a Texan, is married to the former Doris Shirley of Anson, Texas, and they have five grown children. One daughter, Shirley Karr and her husband, Bill, were appointed in 1980 as missionaries to Japan, where the Jacksons spent 17 years as missionaries.

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

Foreign Mission Board  
Enters 95th Country

Baptist Press  
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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board voted in July to transfer missionaries to Brunei and approved a record 84 new missionaries and four special project medical workers to boost its missionary force to 3,093.

It also elected Isam E. Ballenger to succeed J.D. Hughey, who retires Dec. 31 as director of work in Europe and the Middle East. Missionary Jerry Rankin of Indonesia was announced as associate to the director for South and Southeast Asia.

The actions came in a three-day meeting in which four other staff appointments were announced, the board's partnership evangelism program moved briskly ahead, and President R. Keith Parks urged Southern Baptist support of legislation preserving the present rate of postal subsidy for second-class, nonprofit mailers.

Southern Baptist work in Brunei, the 95th country or territory where missionaries are assigned, will begin officially Aug. 15 as missionaries Bob and Dorothy Evans transfer to that country from Singapore. Located on the northern part of the Island of Borneo, Brunei is surrounded on three sides by East Malaysia.

Christian work began in the country in the 1950s, and in May 1977 Evans began spending 10 days a month there, assisting two established churches. The Georgia missionary couple will be devoting full time to church and Theological Education by Extension (TEE) on Brunei.

Appointment of the record group of missionaries in July brought the month's total to 170, also a new high for one month, and the year's total to date to 229. Eighty-two missionary journeymen, commissioned earlier in July at Ridgecrest, N.C., for two year's service overseas, are included.

The personnel changes covered a variety of responsibilities.

Billy Peacock, missionary director of the major cities evangelism program in Korea, will join the Richmond staff to head up Southern Baptist partnership evangelism efforts worldwide.

W.H. (Dub) Jackson Jr., president of World Evangelism Foundation, and his wife, Doris, were reappointed missionaries. Jackson will be field coordinator for partnership evangelism,

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which links Southern Baptist churches to churches overseas through an exchange of pastor-led teams of laypersons for evangelistic campaigns. Jackson will assist the regional consultant for evangelism and church growth on partnership evangelism projects next year in Europe, then will work in following years with regional consultants in other parts of the world.

Lloyd Atkinson, a former missionary to Chile who has been serving as administrative assistant to the director for western South America, will become a candidate consultant in the personnel selection department. He will be responsible for missionary candidates in Alabama, Mississippi, South Texas, and Louisiana, including New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Betty Jean Freeman Law, who with her late husband, Thomas L. Law Jr., was a missionary to Spain from 1962-1980, will assume Atkinson's duties in the western South America office.

Jerry Jones, former missionary journeyman to Austria and staff assistant in the board's missionary personnel work from 1972-74, will become college coordinator in the ministries and deputation department. He succeeds Marjorie Basden in this assignment working with college students considering journeyman or career mission service. In March, Basden assumed management of World Mission Conference coordination for the board.

The board also approved new guidelines to better define the missionary associate role and allow them to become career missionaries after they complete 10 years' service if they meet certain requirements. Associates are employed for four-year terms, but a number have served until retirement.

The changes also added one year to the age range of persons eligible for the associate program, now open to those 35 to 60. Formerly, 59 was the maximum age at which a person could enter the program.

Parks presented a plaque of appreciation to Phil Strickland, director of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, for his work last year in helping to obtain passage of legislation restoring the \$20,000 federal income tax exclusion for missionaries and other charitable workers in less developed countries.

He noted that until passage of the measure, the board had been forced to earmark \$1 million a year for 1979, 1980 and 1981 to help missionaries pay this tax. Now, a majority of the money has been made available for work overseas except for that portion still required for missionaries serving in developed nations.

Swiss businessman Gabriel Marinello, administrative committee chairman for the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, told of the unifying influence of this seminary upon Baptist work in Europe.

At a concluding luncheon the new national president of Woman's Missionary Union, Dorothy Sample of Michigan, pledged her efforts to continue giving Baptist women and others in the churches the "bold vision" of missions involvement. She stressed plans to help start local women's organizations in the one-third of Southern Baptist churches that do not yet have them.

Parks and his wife, Helen Jean, said their recent trip to eastern and southern Africa impressed them not only with the responsiveness of people to the gospel but also with the urgency for all Southern Baptists to respond sacrificially to meet the world's needs.