



-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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Neighbour Urges
Focus of Priorities

By Linda Lawson

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--If Southern Baptists don't change their ways and make winning people to Christ their first priority, "We'll turn a world that has only a tiny proportion of Christians over to our grandchildren," Ralph Neighbour warned.

Neighbour, pastor of West Memorial Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, spoke to 1,500 persons attending the Church Training Leadership and Youth Conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

Noting that the world's population is expected to balloon to 7.2 billion by the year 2000, Neighbour said Baptists worldwide would have to convert 62.5 million persons each year just to maintain the same ratio of Christians to non-Christians.

To reach that number the first year, Neighbour said every Southern Baptist would have to personally win five persons to Christ. However, he said current denominational statistics show it takes 30 Southern Baptists to win one person.

"You and I have to become witnesses--not individual Lone Rangers with tracts--but models of what Jesus Christ called us to be," said Neighbour.

Roy Edgemon, director of the Sunday School Board's church training department, said Southern Baptists' efforts to share the gospel with the entire world by the year 2000 will not become a reality "unless we equip the strength to do the work of ministry."

To challenge Southern Baptists to the tasks of outreach and evangelism, Edgemon said adult and youth church training curricula for 1981-82 will develop the theme "Climatizing for Church Growth."

"Our goal is to create growth eyes. Our people are going to think and talk and dream about God's will for our churches," said Edgemon.

Neighbour said the most challenging mission field today is the 175 mega cities--those with populations of more than one million persons.

"The major cities of this globe today are cities in abject poverty," said Neighbour. "Nobody knows how to win the poor, and they are going to hell by the thousands."

"Church training exists to equip you to give your life away to reach the unreached."

He called for new strategies and sacrifices for reaching people in the cities. For example, he said, some couples may have to postpone having children so they can give

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the years of their twenties to live in urban slums and minister to the poor.

"If we're going to win this world, we've got to get our message out of the walls of our church buildings," he said.

Neighbour said he believes the small group concept of New Testament Christians offers a model for Baptists today.

"Those New Testament Christians formed little cells of love that moved from house to house. They had fellowship, they prayed, they penetrated their neighborhoods," he said. "When a cell of love begins to move in a neighborhood, the neighborhood changes."

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Reversionary Clause
Suit Under Advisement

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8/3/81

WINCHESTER, Tenn. (BP)--A lawsuit concerning church property and a reversionary clause is under advisement by the judge of the chancery court of Franklin County.

Judge Earl H. Henley said he considers the case to be precedent setting, but said the case will be decided on the basis of legal documents rather than doctrine or the exercise of religion.

Henley took the case under advisement following a trial July 29-30 in the county about halfway between Nashville and Chattanooga.

A group of members and former members of Paynes Baptist Church—now Bethel Baptist Church of Estill Springs—seeks to regain church property, charging the present congregation does not fulfill a provision of the deed which requires the church "to adhere to, maintain and propagate the doctrines, faith and practices of missionary Baptist churches, and to cooperate with local Baptist associations, Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention."

The deed contains a reversionary clause that if the church ceases to meet this condition, the property will go to the group of members who did meet this condition or will revert back to the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

The executive board voted Dec. 12, 1980, to respond to a request for support from the group which seeks to regain the property and is a plaintiff in the case.

In 1963, First Baptist Church of Estill Springs, which sponsored the new mission in the Paynes community and Duck River Baptist Association, requested financial assistance from the executive board to purchase property for the Paynes congregation.

The board granted \$1,500 and also provided financial aid for the new church's pastors for four years.

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S.A.V.E. Week Effort
Nets 303 Professions

By Elmer Gray

MODESTO, Calif. (BP)--An intensive effort by Orangeburg Baptist Church has resulted in 303 first-time professions of faith.

For the third year, the church has conducted an intensive effort called S.A.V.E. Week, standing for Saturation Action in Visitation and Evangelism.

The effort, according to pastor Jim Silvers, is an effort to "take the best elements of door-to-door visitation, Vacation Bible School and music ministry concerts and put them all together in a week of evangelistic emphasis."

The effort, developed by the church staff of Silvers, Richard Barber, minister of music and education, and Ed Suchman, minister of youth, combines door-to-door soul-winning visitation, using as many visitors as can be enlisted, Backyard Bible Clubs, meeting for an hour and a half each afternoon, and a series of nightly concerts of contemporary gospel music, concluding with an evangelistic message and an invitation.

The format was first tried in 1979, and resulted in 103 professions of faith. That year, the guest choir was from Phoenix (Arizona) First Southern Baptist Church.

The following year, using its own members and youth choir, S.A.V.E. resulted in 96 professions of faith.

This year, the church had a total of 303 professions of faith, with about 80 more in three follow-up weeks. The guest choir was from First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., where Southern Baptist Convention President Bailey Smith is pastor.

First Southern was asked to come to Modesto after Silvers had spent \$300 in long distance telephone calls seeking a youth choir to come. One choir, he said, turned him down because they wanted to go to Orange County—near Los Angeles—where they could go to Disneyland.

Silvers said the staff prayed and felt the Lord told them to go to the top. Barber called First Southern, and found the youth choir had the week open. The church prayed and the Oklahoma church accepted.

Suchman flew to Oklahoma to instruct the choir in the S.A.V.E. program: "We do not want them to be surprised when they get on the field. We train them in storytelling and in visitation evangelism."

In addition to the Oklahoma choir, other workers for the week included 12 members of four Summer Evangelism Teams under the direction of Monty McWhorter of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California evangelism department.

The teams, which included a preacher, a music leader and a fellowship director, helped in visitation, and each team member led a Backyard Bible Club, promoting the effort by skating through neighborhoods and distributing 15,000 brochures.

Enrollment in the Backyard Bible Clubs started at 202 on Monday and climbed to 494 by Friday. They resulted in 129 professions of faith. When a child made a profession of faith, workers called on the parents and shared the decision, often using the explanation as an opportunity to present the gospel to the adults.

In addition, from 50 to 88 persons went out daily to make door-to-door contacts, which resulted in 154 professions of faith.

Barber said a study of the 1980 record reveals that in every 20 contacts, there was an opportunity to present the plan of salvation, and for every 10 presentations, at least one profession of faith resulted.

About a third of those who make professions of faith follow through by being baptized. Many join other churches, and some require further cultivation during the year, Barber says.

Barber insists the results are the work of the Lord. "We make the nest; he brings the eggs. If we don't make the nest, he doesn't bring the eggs."

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Ridgecrest Medical Emergency
Traced To Contaminated Ham

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--A medical emergency at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center--which resulted in 310 persons being treated for vomiting and diarrhea--has been traced to contaminated ham.

According to Ken McAnear, conference center manager, the source of the contamination is believed to be a food services contractor's employee who had suffered a burn on his arm, who reportedly transmitted germs from the wound to the hams.

A countywide disaster was declared July 25, several hours after the opening meal of Sunday School Leadership Conference. Varying degrees of illness were reported among conference participants beginning about 8:30 p.m. and every available Buncombe County ambulance and emergency medical technician was called in.

The N.C. Highway Patrol blocked off portions of Interstate 40 between Ridgecrest and Asheville at times to enable convoys of ambulances, vans, buses and hearses to transport patients.

In all, 25 area emergency services, including law enforcement agencies, fire departments, funeral homes and rescue squads aided in transporting the ill to five area health care facilities.

Of the 310 stricken, 64 required hospitalization, and all have since been released.

According to McAnear, the Buncombe County Emergency Medical Service, the McDowell County Emergency Medical Service, American Enka Co. Infirmary, and a number of emergency rescue squads and funeral homes donated their services.

All costs were covered, and no expenses were incurred by those who became ill.

In the aftermath of the emergency, many of those stricken praised the Ridgecrest staff for its work.

One, Inez Norris of First Baptist Church of Center Point in Birmingham, Ala., said: "I was impressed by so many who care. I was so sick, I couldn't have cared less what happened to me, but others cared for me."

William C. Larmore of Piedmont Baptist Church of Marietta, Ga., said: "Frankly, I must thank the Lord for the opportunity. There were four men in the hospital room to which I was assigned, and I had a chance to witness to them."

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He later sent a Bible and a Sunday School quarterly to one of the men who did not own a Bible.

Three of the 22 persons Lamar Moore brought from Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Fla., were hospitalized. "Those three were able to witness and have a positive influence on the ones ministering to them at the hospital," he said.

Moore added: "Ridgecrest is one of the best investments Southern Baptists have made. The spiritual food here is great."

Betty Robinson of West Jackson Street Baptist Church in Tupelo, Miss., praised the Ridgecrest staff, the hospitals and the police. Calling Ridgecrest "about as close to heaven as you can get," she added that the experience "won't stop me from coming back."

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July Big Month
For CP Gifts

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Increases from three states of more than 70 percent boosted July's national Cooperative Program contributions to \$7,389,033, up 29.86 percent over July 1980.

Led by Tennessee's 77 percent increase, healthy increases among most states pushed contributions for the first 10 months to \$68,263,290, or 14.75 percent ahead of the same period last year.

Designated contributions, primarily for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions, were up 55.44 percent over last July, to \$2,790,391.

"Having just returned from a mission trip in West Africa, and seeing first hand the urgent mission needs, I'm gratified at the increase in both Cooperative Program and special mission offerings as indicated by the designated gifts," said Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee.

"The missionaries asked specifically about Bold Mission Thrust and I told them churches are responding more positively now than ever," he said. "Mission contributions in July reflect the mission commitment of Southern Baptists. We thank God for this."

Other states with major July increases were, South Carolina, up 71 percent; Mississippi, up 71.3 percent; North Carolina, up 49 percent; and Florida, up 47 percent.

Contributions to date, both designated and undesignated, total \$137,669,255, an increase of 14.32 percent over the same period last year.

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Carson-Newman Receives
Large Leeper Family Gift

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8/3/81

JEFFERSON CITY, Tenn. (BP)--The R.J. Leeper family of Jefferson County has made a gift of real estate valued over \$350,000 to Carson-Newman College as part of the institution's Vision '80 Campaign.

Cordell Maddox, college president, said the Leepers' gift is the largest gift ever made to the college by an individual.

Leeper was in the hardware business in Jefferson City for 30 years. His wife Mary is a Carson-Newman graduate and they have two daughters currently attending the Southern Baptist school.

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