



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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January 4, 1982

82-01

CO

World Evangelism Foundation
Hands Reins to Foreign Board

By John Rutledge

DALLAS (BP)--It was billed as a celebration, but many of the speakers shed tears. Some called it a funeral, others a wedding. But whatever the description, the last official gathering of the World Evangelism Foundation in December in Dallas marked a significant moment for Southern Baptists as mission leaders outlined convention plans to adopt the concept that WEF pioneered--partnership evangelism.

The foundation was begun by W. H. "Dub" Jackson Jr., a Southern Baptist missionary to Japan for 17 years who resigned in 1969 to develop a way to send teams of pastors and laymen on one-to-one witnessing ventures in partnership with foreign Baptist churches.

The result was World Evangelism Foundation. During more than 12 years, it has coordinated trips by about 6,000 U.S. Baptists to 35 countries.

During foundation crusades, about 60,000 persons expressed a desire "to know the Lord" Jackson said. "We feel that most were genuine conversions because of the excellent follow-up by the national churches." People returned from the crusades excited about missions in general.

The Foreign Mission Board, however, is beginning its own partnership evangelism program and WEF decided last year to phase out its operation. The banquet in Dallas was the last event for the foundation.

Jackson joins the board March 1 as regional coordinator for partnership evangelism assigned to Ruschlikon, Switzerland, for a year. Later he will spend a year each in South America, Asia and Africa to help establish the board's new program.

William O'Brien, executive vice president of the Foreign Mission Board, said "its really not a merger or a takeover. It is the adoption of a concept--partnership missions."

The "concept" was praised and examined by more than a dozen speakers during the banquet at the Dallas Hilton and an inspirational program at First Church in Dallas that lasted more than four hours.

Ramsey Pollard, retired pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, praised Foreign Mission Board Executive Director R. Keith Parks, who could not attend the banquet.

"Parks has a vision and a capacity to welcome change and see its necessity that perhaps

no other executive secretary has had," Pollard said. "There is a new day coming, and more evangelism than the Foreign Mission Board has ever done."

W. A. Criswell of First Baptist Church, Dallas, said the zeal of the participants in partnership evangelism crusades he had experienced "makes me feel like I'm part infidel" and said he was glad that the Foreign Mission Board "has finally seen that if we're going to evangelize the world, we're going to need to have more than just paid foreign missionaries."

O'Brien presented a plaque on behalf of Parks to the WEF personnel with an inscription acknowledging the contributions of WEF for "envisioning a world, nurturing a dream and providing a way to reach out to the world in partnership evangelism."

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RTVC Test Marketing
Evangelistic TV Pilot

By Greg Warner

CO

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission is issuing an "Invitation to Life" in five cities during January test marketing of a preaching program by that name.

Broadcasts of the pilot for the proposed American Christian Television System are both an evangelistic effort for Baptists in the five areas and a test of the show's effectiveness for the commission. This small-scale test marketing is in preparation for full-scale, weekly airing of "Invitation to Life" when the ACTS network becomes operational next year.

For the pilot, revival services were videotaped at Central Baptist Church, Magnolia, Ark., and North Phoenix Baptist Church, Phoenix, Ariz. Services were combined with short feature segments about church members and edited into the four half hour broadcasts.

The finished program will be aired on four consecutive Friday nights beginning Jan. 8 on Atlanta NBC affiliate WXIA-TV at 8 p.m. They will be shown Thursdays beginning Jan. 7 in Bakersville, Calif., on KERO-TV (NBC) at 9 p.m.; in Midland-Odessa, Texas, on KPPX-TV (ABC) at 7 p.m.; and in Greenville and Spartanburg, S.C. and Asheville, N.C., on WLOS-TV (ABC) at 8:30 p.m. Independent station WOFL-TV in Orlando, Fla., will air the programs on Mondays beginning Jan. 4 at 8 p.m.

Led by associational mission directors, Baptists in each of these areas have been organizing telephone counseling and viewing groups in local churches to make these test broadcasts an evangelistic outreach.

The telephone counseling will be handled in a unique way developed by Ben Loring, the RTVC's vice president for counseling services. Each area will have at least one local telephone number, such as the associational office, where relay operators will answer calls from viewers who respond to the show's evangelistic appeal.

The operator will record the caller's name and phone number, then relay the information to a trained counselor waiting at home. Using his own phone the counselor then telephones the viewer to offer decision counseling and later reports back to the central office.

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Loring said this method will not only save the cost of a large phone bank or WATS line, but also will center the counseling in local churches and utilize trained lay workers. In addition, a follow-up strategy will be used in each area.

In another effort to use the broadcasts evangelistically, the associational directors are encouraging churches and their members to organize viewing groups. The groups will be of two types: home viewing groups and age/interest groups.

Church members are forming groups in their home by inviting lost or unchurched neighbors, friends or relatives to view the program, which will provide a witnessing opportunity. The age/interest groups will be conducted at local churches for a specific group of people each night, such as youth, church prospects and single adults.

"Invitation to Life" is the latest of the television pilots designed to be used on the ACTS network of low-power stations. The RTVC will furnish programming by satellite transmission. Applications for the stations are awaiting action by the Federal Communications Commission.

The RTVC also has begun work on pilots for a children's show, a magazine program and a sports interview show. Others are being planned.

As the network's primary evangelistic effort, "Invitation to Life" will fill a strategic slot in ACTS' weekly schedule of programming, said Jimmy R. Allen, commission president. It will be shown during prime time one night each week to offer Southern Baptists a regular evangelistic tool through television.

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First Quarter Gifts
Move 12.9 Percent

CO

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1/4/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A modest December increase in undesignated gifts through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program raised receipts for the first quarter of the fiscal year to \$20,628,934, an increase of 12.9 percent over the same period last year.

December's undesignated gifts of \$6,766,658 were just 4.3 percent ahead of December 1980.

"The small percentage increase in Cooperative Program receipts for December at first appears quite low," said Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee which distributes the funds. "But when compared to the decreasing consumer price index, total receipts are encouraging.

"A large number of state conventions will increase Cooperative Program percentages to the SBC beginning in January. I'm encouraged by the numerous comments I've received from pastors and church leaders who are increasing their gifts to world missions through the Cooperative Program."

Designated gifts, which fluctuate widely throughout the year, nearly doubled the previous December's gifts. December 1981 receipts totaled \$1,409,660, a 95.3 percent increase, pushing year to date designated receipts to \$3,690,966, a six percent increase for the same period last year.

Total designated and undesignated receipts for the first quarter are \$24,319,900, an 11.8 percent increase over the same quarter last year.

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New Orleans Seminary Special
For Cross Country Walkers

CO
By Norman Jameson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The burly redhead stood firm as the girl walked toward him, a bucket of water in her hand and fire in her eyes.

When the cold water crashed around his head, he swooped upon the mischief maker and dumped her in the sink where he hosed her down.

She reached behind her, grabbed a handful of homemade ice cream and smeared it into his curly red beard. He applied a generous coating to her face.

Later, around a dormitory table at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, the redhead explained that he was Peter Jenkins and he was walking across America. Would anyone be willing to show him around New Orleans? To his delight, the antagonist, Barbara Pennell volunteered.

Six years later, her advice to others if a man comes on campus and says he is hiking across America is to "stand back."

Jenkins, who started from Alfred, N.Y., Oct. 15, 1973 to find himself among the vagaries of a continent, did not leave New Orleans alone. After a tumultuous and dramatic courtship, Barbara, a religious education student at the seminary, walked west at his side.

Jenkins' first book, "A Walk Across America" detailed his 1,900 miles from Alfred, through Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, to New Orleans.

If Jenkins, then a recent college graduate and just divorced, left looking for a new life, he found it in Mobile, Ala., where he was born again at a James Robison crusade. With an invitation to spend time at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, he went there to write an article on his trip for the August 1977 National Geographic in what has become one of their magazine's most popular stories.

It was a story of America and the countless "American heroes" Jenkins found. Though he went through 13 pairs of track shoes and boots from Alfred to New Orleans, he did not just walk. He stopped to work with people, to live with them and to observe how their microscopic contribution effected the life of the animal America on which all are parasites.

He lived with a mountain man in Saltville, Va.; stayed five months with a black family in Murphy, N.C., where he worked in a veneer mill; stayed on The Farm, a commune in Summertown, Tenn.; and met with Alabama Governor George Wallace, who told his state troopers to keep an eye out for Jenkins.

His book sold 500,000. He wrote it while he and Barbara wintered in Lake City, Colo. for eight months. When they finished the walk, Jan. 18, 1979, they entertained 30 offers for movie, television and series rights.

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Then they went to Smithville, Tenn., to write the story of the second half. First printing for "The Walk West" was 110,000. A good first printing for any book is 25,000 and already their story is among the nation's best sellers.

It is an adventure story. Walking over frozen mountain pass, Barbara nearly slipped over a cliff; she was hit by a car in Utah and they were threatened by three drunken men at the Colorado-New Mexico border. They herded cattle, worked oil rigs, hunted alligators and waited tables.

Mostly though, the Jenkins are glad their story found acceptance in America because in a secular forum, they are able to demonstrate the difference that Jesus makes in their lives.

"It's easy to be a Christian when you have plenty of food, thermostats, and are comfortable," said Jenkins when his promotion tour took him and Barbara through Nashville. "The book is a tribute to faith. There were so many times that we were right at the end of the rope and God had to come through right then, not next week or next year."

Jenkins walked from Mobile to Florence, Ore., in the shoes of a Christian. That fact changed the way he saw people and experiences. But it did not cause him to avoid those Americans who lived in a manner now foreign to him.

After seeing the country as no others, two questions beg answers. One, where will they live, and two, what would they want to change?

They most loved the physical beauty of Colorado and Idaho, but chose to live in the south, first in Louisiana, then in Tennessee because of the spirit of the people.

They most want to change the paucity of good, wholesome stories in the media, and the attempts of government to control lives of individuals.

A letter from a 94-year-old lady illustrates the extent Jenkins' first book captivated America. "I hope I live to read what happened to you," she wrote.

And for their next book? "We're going to swim underwater across the Atlantic."