



-- FEATURES
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EDITORS: Following is the fifth in a series of features on the heads of Southern Baptist agencies, boards and institutions. Baptist Press will run one each week, with photo, in no particular order. Each article has been written by a public relations person within the agency.

Family, Outdoors, Travel
Interest Stewardship Man

CO
By Ernest Standerfer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)-- A quick glance at the credenza behind A.R. Fagan's desk reveals a man interested in his family. Pictures of family members are informally, but prominently displayed. His wife, three daughters, one son, and grandchildren are obviously important to him.

Fagan, executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's Stewardship Commission, recommends prayer for help in making decisions. To illustrate, he tells of the time, during his first pastorate in Kirbyville, Texas, that he sought God's will for a wife. "The first time I saw Florrie was at prayer meeting, and I knew immediately she was the answer to that prayer." She, like Fagan, was the child of a Baptist preacher.

His roots are deep in Baptist life. Born in Richton, Miss., on New Year's Day in 1930, his father and grandfather conducted revivals with the preacher--father of Grady Cothen, president of the Sunday School Board. "Two terms" were served at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary--first, when his dad attended and then later for his own training. He wears the influence of those Texas years in his "off duty" cowboy boots and hat.

A man of varied interests, he has traveled widely. His dad's vocation as a military chaplain resulted in frequent family moves. In later years, preaching missions have taken him to South Africa, Hong Kong, Brazil and Panama.

Fagan is drawn to the outdoors. Besides his love for horses, his knowledge of all animals is quite impressive. He enjoys nothing more than tramping through the woods or waiting in the bitter cold on a hunting trip. In the summer, golf and fishing claim his attention. "I learned to appreciate the outdoors from my grandfather and was attracted to fishing and hunting because of my dad," he says.

While he enjoys the outdoors, he has developed skills in woodworking. "It is a relaxing, healing activity for me," he explains. Tables, clocks, and other furniture in the Fagan household testify to his ability. He built the horse barn behind his house.

Whatever Fagan's undertaking, hunting, fishing, woodworking, golfing, speaking, he pursues it intensely. That includes his prankishness, whether it's surprising someone with his "cat call" or kicking a chair as he passes by.

More important is his effective channeling of energies and concerns as the leader of the Stewardship Commission. "What the Bible Says About Stewardship" sets forth his stewardship convictions. He encourages churches to use commission materials to help develop their members as Christian stewards and to make the support of Southern Baptist mission ministries a priority. "Throughout my pastoral ministry, I believe the Lord was preparing me for my work at the commission," he says. "Every church I pastored had serious financial problems at the outset, but with God's help and hard work they were all able to overcome those problems."

Unafraid to take a stand on important issues, he sticks to his decisions once made. To him, believing in something makes it worthy of support. Even so, he lets others express their differences and "speak their mind."

Since becoming executive director-treasurer of the Stewardship Commission in 1974, he has been active in the Brentwood Baptist Church in Brentwood, Tenn. He has been a Sunday School teacher for several years and chairman of deacons.

While he enjoys the outdoors, delights in the element of surprise, finds satisfaction in hobbies, administers an SBC agency, some of his finest moments come as he is preaching the gospel. His years as a pastor enable him to identify with Baptist preachers, and have given him the ability to communicate with them.

A lover of life, people, and God describes A.R. Fagan.

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Standerfer is director of stewardship development at the Stewardship Commission. (BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers.

RB

They Waited 35 Years
But Got New Sanctuary

Baptist Press
2/2/82

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (BP)---The folks at Central Baptist Church celebrated their new sanctuary in December with particular zest. They should have; they waited for it 35 years.

In the mid-1940s, wealthy Southern Baptist layman Maxey Jarman twice donated funds for a new structure to replace the small sanctuary built at the turn of the century by Pablo Besson, Swiss Baptist pioneer. Besson had organized the church in 1883 as the first Spanish-speaking Baptist congregation in Argentina.

Grateful church members twice purchased property for construction. Twice they were foiled. A new city ordinance blocked displacement of residents living at the first site; the federal government appropriated the second site for a congressional library.

After years of court battles and reimbursement negotiations, the church decided to build at the site of the original sanctuary. Yet another roadblock (or road, in this case) loomed: The city planned to extend an avenue through the church's property.

Extension plans changed, however, and Center church was spared. What's more, the local neighborhood was declared an historical area, safeguarding the church from future expansion projects. With city approval, the church voted in 1978 to begin a new building and members gave sacrificially to help finance the effort.

In December, at long last, pastor Ignacio Loredó led the 230-member congregation in inauguration and ribbon-cutting ceremonies at the new sanctuary. Municipal and federal government representatives attended, and Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries around the country sent congratulations.

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Roy L. Honeycutt Elected
Southern Seminary President

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Noted biblical scholar Roy Lee Honeycutt was elected the eighth president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in a unanimous action of the seminary's board of trustees Feb. 2.

Honeycutt, chief academic officer of the seminary since 1976, succeeds Duke K. McCall, who retired as president after 30 years of service. McCall will become the school's first chancellor.

Honeycutt said his administration would "look to the seminary's historic strength" to chart its course, "reaffirming our commitment to be rooted in the word of God, devoted to the centrality of the local church, and obedient to the call of Christ to evangelism, missions and preaching. We intend to stand upon this heritage as we reach toward the future with hope."

The new president is a native of Grenada, Miss., and a graduate of Mississippi College, a Baptist school in Clinton. He holds the bachelor of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southern seminary, and the master of theology degree from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He has also been an honorary fellow of Stizwilliam College of Cambridge University, England.

Honeycutt, 55, is a popular Bible teacher in numerous churches and at pastors' conferences, and is author of the 1982 January Bible study book on Jeremiah, currently being taught throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. He is the author of nine other books, including three major sections of the Broadman Bible Commentary, dealing with Exodus, 2 Kings, and Hosea. In addition, he has been a contributing author to five books.

Between 1948 and 1959, Honeycutt was pastor of four Baptist churches in Mississippi, Indiana and Kentucky. Over the years, he has been interim pastor of eight other churches.

He left the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Princeton, Ky., in 1959 to become a professor of Old Testament at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., where he also was academic dean from 1971 to 1975. He was dean of the School of Theology at Southern Seminary from 1975 to 1980 in addition to his duties as provost.

Military service during World War II took Honeycutt to the Philippine Islands and Japan, where he served in the 41st Infantry Division and later the 81st Military Government Team.

Honeycutt was married to the former June Marter Williams of Grenada, Miss., in 1948. They are parents of two children, Roy Lee, 26, and Mary Anne, 15.

Shortly after his election, Honeycutt was introduced to a capacity audience of faculty, staff and students in Alumni Chapel for the opening convocation of the Spring semester, observed annually as Founders Day.

McCall said his successor, "is a highly trained, widely-trusted biblical scholar, a popular Bible teacher, and one whose administrative skills have been tested and proven. He is most of all a man of integrity and quality, whose commitment to seminary education grows out of and is focused in the needs of the local church."

Southern seminary, oldest institution of the Southern Baptist Convention, was founded in 1859. It is the second largest seminary in the world with an annual enrollment of approximately 3,000. Its 15,000 alumni serve churches and agencies in all 50 states and 71 nations.

S.C. Church Finds Refugee
Ministry At Its Doorstep

By Patti Stephenson

AB

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (BP)--Members of Croft Baptist Church didn't offer to sponsor any refugees so God brought the refugees to them.

That's how pastor Norman Gardner and his wife, June, explain what happened to the 400-member congregation.

It started last summer when 300 Laotian refugees sponsored by the Tolstoy Foundation flooded into Spartanburg, fifty of the families crowding into neighborhoods around the church.

The first contact came when 100 Laotian children enrolled in Croft's backyard Bible clubs. When the children then filtered into Sunday School classes, their parents soon followed and adult Laotian classes formed. "Almost before we knew what had hit us," Gardner says Croft had organized and was sponsoring a full-fledged Laotian Baptist Mission.

As December chilled the air, church members realized the Buddhist refugees had never celebrated Christmas. "We wanted to introduce them to Christ through Christmas," June explains, but the church realized it needed help. Letters went out asking other Spartanburg Baptist churches to sponsor a refugee family for Christmas.

One church, First Baptist of Valley Falls, purchased shoes, toys and clothing for two families. They also bought a Christmas tree and helped the families decorate it, June says, and then gave a special dinner for the refugees at the church. On Christmas Day, the refugees opened dozens of gifts, "from a can opener to a vacuum cleaner," she adds.

The churches' response provided toys, furniture, clothing and food for every refugee family. Each young Laotian girl also received a special gift--an Asian doll. "I stepped out on faith and ordered \$400 worth of dolls," June says, "and the churches came through."

One refugee, a Buddhist priest for five years, "had wanted nothing to do with Christians," Gardner recalls. "But because the church had helped his family so much, he said he had come to believe in Jesus Christ." He, a former witch doctor, and 15 other refugees were baptized at Croft two days after Christmas.

The Gardners say their church has learned that "ministry means helping the Laotians with little things, like getting to the doctor or paying their bills." The church holds two English classes each week, and 11 members have taken literacy training.

Ministry also has meant standing up in court with Laotian men charged with hunting out of season. Gardner says, "They thought they had followed the law by buying a license--the only problem was it was the wrong season." He helped interpret what was happening for the Laotians and vouched for their character. An understanding judge reduced their fines to \$25 each.

In January, the South Carolina convention's missions department rented a separate building to house the Croft Laotian mission and to serve as a weekday refugee center sponsored by the Spartanburg Baptist Association.

Another mission started at Cedar Spring Baptist Church will merge with the Croft group in their new quarters. Worship remains a combination of simple English and elaborate hand signals led by layman Ken Page. June adds: "Even though we don't speak the same language, we communicate."

Gardner has been proud of his church's response to the refugees. "I told our people the Lord would hold us accountable if we didn't minister to these people he brought here," he explains. "Already we can see it's harder to reach those who have adjusted without any help from a church. The churches that are dragging their feet are losing out."

June adds: "Baptists here have never personally known someone who speaks another language. We're the ones who are getting the most joy out of this ministry."

Senate Panel Sees Problems
In Tax Exemption Proposal

By Larry Chesser

WB

WASHINGTON (BP)--The problems of tax-exempt status for private schools that discriminate continued to surface as the Senate Finance Committee opened hearings on President Reagan's proposal to bar such exemptions through legislation.

Committee members who expressed unanimous abhorance of racism recognized the First Amendment religious liberty problems inherent in legislation dealing with the politically sensitive issue. That, plus the view of some members that such legislation is unnecessary, casts doubts about the future of the Reagan bill.

"Despite my conviction that discriminatory schools should be denied tax-exempt status, we must be careful that our zeal to eradicate racial discrimination does not result in any infringement on religious freedom, an equally strong tenent of American democracy," declared Chairman Robert J. Dole, R-Kan.

Dole said the issue becomes more difficult the more it is examined, and warned that if Congress legislates in this area, it "needs all the guidance it can get concerning how to resolve the conflict between nondiscrimination objectives and First Amendment religious liberties."

The Kansas Republican expressed hope that the Supreme Court would yet rule on the Bob Jones University and Goldsboro Christian Schools cases "so that Congress can benefit from the Court's wisdom on these difficult constitutional issues."

Those separate cases on racial discrimination and its relationship to tax exemption were pending before the high court when the Reagan Administration reversed the 12-year Internal Revenue Service policy of denying exemptions to private schools that racially discriminate and asked that rulings against the schools in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals be declared moot. Later, the administration announced it would ask Congress to enact legislation barring exemptions to schools that discriminate on the basis of race.

Witnesses from the Treasury and Justice departments and the IRS appeared at the hearing to explain the administration's policy reversal and its support for the legislation. The administration contended that there is no statutory authority for the IRS policy and is thus asking Congress to provide it.

Chances for the administration's bill are further complicated by the view of some senators and representatives that present law authorizes and requires the IRS to deny tax exemptions to private schools that discriminate on the basis of race. Resolutions expressing the sense of the Senate and the House at this point have been introduced by Sen. Gary Hart, D-Colo., and Charles B. Rangel, D-N.Y.

Dole indicated that further hearings are likely, though not certain.