

# (BP)

Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

## -- FEATURES

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February 4, 1982

82-20

Their Front-Line Ministry:  
40 Years In The Middle East

By Martha Skelton

RB

NICOSIA, Cyprus (BP)--Scheduled to speak about missions to a large Southern Baptist church, Finlay and Julia Graham were startled when the pastor voiced his mission philosophy during dinner.

"I think you should put more missionaries where the response is greatest, to be good stewards," he said. "I don't think we should have missionaries where you are."

If the Grahams, veteran missionaries to the Arabic-speaking world, were out to win a popularity contest, they would have quit long ago.

But for nearly 40 years they have forged a coministry that withstands the mistrust of the Moslem majority in the Middle East and confronts Christians at home with the "heart hunger" for Jesus Christ they've found in the Arab world.

Finlay Graham, a square-jawed Scotsman, was an RAF navigator in the Middle East during World War II. He accepted Christ at age 19 and became a Baptist out of convictions on baptism and tithing. Everywhere he flew on RAF missions, he would ask God, "is this the place you want me to be?"

After the war, again he asked God about his future, this time in a visit to the garden tomb in Jerusalem.

"I can't explain exactly what happened," Graham says now. "But three hours later when I came out (of the tomb), I was convinced that the Arabic-speaking world was my calling."

Julia Saccar Graham, a Texas redhead, came to Palestine in 1945 to work with Arabic peoples along with her first husband, Henry Hagood. Six months after they arrived, Henry died of a sudden illness.

"In the Arab world, a widow doesn't get to herself during the period of mourning," Mrs. Graham says. "But I went into the bedroom, locked the door and asked the Lord what to do." He brought to her mind, "just like on a screen," her commitment to God's call to missions while studying a mission book at age 10. "He knew what I would need was that definite call."

The Grahams met during language study in Jerusalem and were married in 1947.

Theirs has been a ministry with a backdrop most people only know from newspaper headlines--creation of the state of Israel, plight of the Palestinian refugees, civil war in Lebanon.

They've faced danger many times.

For six months after their marriage, the Grahams worked at the George W. Truett home in Nazareth. One night a young man came to warn them--they had been denounced as spies and the home as a Zionist storage place. Three men were being sent to kill them.

The Grahams knew if they fled, the charges would be substantiated. Instead, when three visitors arrived the next day, they gave them refreshments and a tour of the home. As they entered each room, Mrs. Graham opened the closets, cupboards and drawers.

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The three left, expressing gratitude for what was being done for their people.

For 28 years, the Grahams worked in Lebanon, evangelizing, starting churches and teaching. Graham was a professor and president of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut before being appointed the Foreign Mission Board's associate to the director for the Middle East in 1976.

"I have never seen Finlay alarmed or worried," fellow missionary Jim Ragland observes. He remembers returning from furlough during the Grahams' early years in Lebanon to find that uneasy, tense days in Beirut had decimated the faculty and threatened to close Beirut Baptist School.

"Finlay had scraped together a faculty and got school started," Ragland says. "The bus driver refused to go into certain parts of town, so Finlay drove the school bus and took the kids home.

"Finlay is tough, all grit and gristle."

Another graphic illustration of the tensions in the area the Grahams serve is their relocation to Cyprus in 1977. "I feel like a fish out of water, not being in the Arab world," Mrs. Graham admits. But travel for them into Arab countries and Israel would be difficult residing anywhere but a neutral base such as Cyprus.

While work in the Middle East is definitely a matter of "handpicked fruit," as Graham describes it, both of them see a strong gospel witness to the Arab world as essential.

They respond, as they did years ago to the pastor who voiced his mission philosophy: "In a war, where the opposition is the greatest, you put in your best-trained troops."

"What we have done as Southern Baptists," Mrs. Graham points out, "is put in the fewest and spent the least money."

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Adapted from Commission magazine.

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

Murri Dies  
In Florida

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CARBONDALE, Ill. (BP)--B. J. Murrie, editor of the Illinois Baptist newspaper 1939-1956, died in his sleep Feb. 2 at his winter home in Lake City, Fla. He was 81.

Murrie became editor just after the Great Depression had decimated the newspaper's circulation and it was down to 1,500. When he resigned in 1956 to enter private business, circulation was 14,000.

Murrie drew the floor plans for the first office building of the Illinois Baptist Association in Carbondale in 1954 and for several months acted as construction superintendent.

He is survived by his wife, Frances, and two daughters, Mattie Lou and Doris.

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# BAPTIST PRESS

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Telecommunications Progress  
Reported to Board Trustees

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Trustees of the Baptist Sunday School Board heard a progress report on the board's satellite telecommunications network and approved retaining outside consultants to review decisions on technology and related issues.

The network is expected to be operational early in 1984.

In other actions, trustees approved an average increase in church literature prices of 9.4 percent effective April 1983; elected Alton McEachern, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greensboro, N. C., chairman; and promoted Douglas Anderson to secretary of the family ministry department.

The price increases are due in large part to postal rate hikes for nonprofit mailers enacted by Congress and effective Jan. 10. For 1981-82, board postage costs are expected to increase 57 percent over the budgeted figure of \$965,581, to \$1.5 million.

Board President Grady C. Cothen said the communications network to churches, the Radio and Television Commission network into homes and progress in Bold Thrust cause him to believe "the Southern Baptist Convention is on the verge of the greatest breakthrough in missions in Christian history."

He outlined plans to begin this summer videotaping selected sessions at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center for potential use in programing.

He announced that program content will be developed within departments such as Sunday School, church training, church music and church administration, under the overall direction of Morton Rose, vice president for church programs and services.

Program production and distribution of hardware and software have been assigned to the Broadman division, under the direction of Jimmy Edwards, vice president for publishing and distribution.

In addition to training and resource assistance, Cothen said programing might include a monthly pastors' conference where SBC leaders could share information and answer questions.

He said participation of associations in the network will be the key for getting programing to as many as 20,000 small churches which may lack funds to purchase their own satellite receiving dish and other equipment.

"My concern is that these (small churches) are the people we ought to be able to give the most help to if we can get to them," said Cothen. "I am very much committed to trying to make it available to as many people as have need for it or want to use it."

While initial programing will be produced through local production companies, the Radio and Television Commission and other groups, Cothen said the board may eventually need its own production facilities.

Noting that the board is "alive and well," Cothen said two priorities of the remainder of his tenure will be trying to establish a dynamic and growing concept of the board's ministry in the name of Jesus Christ and to saturate the Southern Baptist mind with the true mission of the churches."

Trustees also appropriated up to \$550,000 to update the Glorieta waste water treatment plant or to build a new plant if determined to be more feasible.

John Daley, pastor of Brook Hollow Baptist Church, Nashville, was elected trustee vice-chairman and chairman of the executive committee. Sidney Waits, pastor of Hickory Hills Baptist Church, Memphis, was elected secretary.

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Roselle To Retire  
From Student Helm

By Gail Rothwell

BSSB  
Baptist Press  
2/4/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn (BP)--Charles Roselle's introduction to Southern Baptist student ministries came long before his official duties began in 1941.

Roselle, who retires March 31 as secretary of National Student Ministries of the Baptist Sunday School Board, grew up one block from the Central Missouri State University campus in Warrensburg. There campus life became a part of him as he came in contact with the college students his father taught in Sunday School.

Roselle graduated from Central Missouri State where he was active in Baptist Student Union, then he earned a master's degree in mathematics at Louisiana State University. While at the University of Illinois, working on his doctorate, W. O. Vaught resigned as student director in Missouri.

"Vaught called me and asked if I'd be interested in being his successor," Roselle explains. "A move like that wasn't unusual in those days."

No longer struggling with his commitment, Roselle accepted the call to full-time student ministries. He finished out the semester at Illinois and moved to Missouri to succeed Vaught.

Since that move 41 years ago, Roselle also has been city-wide Baptist student director for Nashville, Tenn.; local student director at the University of Missouri-Columbia and Auburn University, Auburn, Ala.; and then for 15 years state Baptist student secretary for Tennessee.

Fourteen years ago Roselle became secretary of National Student Ministries of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. But his heart remains on the local campus.

"As I look back over the years I think the thing I have enjoyed most has been my involvement with students on the local campus. To watch them grow and develop was exciting for me," he says.

As state director, Roselle most enjoyed involvement in student missions, a commitment that has been a priority during his years at National Student Ministries.

Student involvement in missions and mission activities increased dramatically in the last few years.

Results from the 1980 NSM Bold Mission Thrust report indicate student baptisms jumped 55.8 percent during the year, up from 7,048 to 10,984.

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At the present growth rate, student participation in short-term mission service will total more than 25,000 between 1979 and 1982. This figure represents one-fourth of the denominational goal of 100,000 persons involved in some type of short-term mission service for the same period.

Looking back over the past 41 years, Roselle said the basic emphases and goals of student work have not changed. The goal is to reach college students, introduce them to Christ and help them develop in Christian service through the church.

Roselle said an increase in seminary-trained workers is one major change he has seen in student work. "When I first went into student work only pastors and missionaries went to seminary," he says. "But during recent years there has developed a large corps of seminary trained campus directors."

Roselle has not detailed plans for retirement, but he has hinted to staff members that he can most likely be reached on a fishing boat on Center Hill Lake near Smithville, Tenn.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press.

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CORRECTIONS: In (BP) story, dated Jan. 25, entitled "Liberian Baptists Find Renewal, New Outlook in Coup's Aftermath," please change wording in graph five to read: Imogene Collins, who was named interim president shortly after the coup and is now national WMU vice president.

In graph 18, please change "no funds" to "few funds," and in graph 19 add to the end of the graph, the attribution, says Hill.

In (BP) story, mailed Feb. 3, entitled "Who Will Follow Smith? History May Offer Clue," in the factors at the end of the story, under No. 2, Adrian Rogers, not James L. Sullivan, was the last Tennessean to be president. He served 1979-80.

Thanks,

Baptist Press