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82-27

Third in a Series:

Jury Out on America's Position
In Midst or Start of Awakening

AP
By Walker L. Knight

Is the United States in the midst of a spiritual awakening? Unfortunately, it's not a "yes-or-no" question with a simple consensus, and the answers fell into four categories:

- Yes. The spiritual awakening, which started with the Jesus Movement, will continue for at least 20 years.
- Maybe. According to how you define "spiritual awakening," especially in sociological terms.
- No. Figures point to a leveling off of spiritual growth, especially with most of the mainline denominations.
- Not now, BUT Signs point to a coming awakening; the times are ripe for the intervention of God in a significant way in the affairs of humankind.

One thing is certain, more Southern Baptists are talking about a spiritual awakening today than at any time in the past 50 years. More than 2,000 Southern Baptist churches have groups praying for a spiritual awakening, says Glenn Sheppard of the Home Mission Board evangelism section.

Sheppard defines spiritual awakening as "the divine intervention of God in human affairs which changes the course of history." He cites sweeping national revivals in Korea, India and Africa as indications God is moving.

Leighton Ford of the Billy Graham Association also cites growing world interest in Christianity. Ford reports the Christian population may be increasing by 60,000 a day, 1,600 new churches a week. However, he lists only isolated "revivals" in the United States.

Revivals and awakenings are not identical occurrences. Revivals alter lives of individuals; awakenings alter the world view of a whole people or culture.

William G. McLoughlin, author of "Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform," points to four previous awakenings. The first, in England, was the Puritan Awakening, 1610-1640; the next three, in America, were the First Great Awakening, 1730-1760; the Second Great Awakening, 1800-1830; and the Third Great Awakening, 1890-1920. McLoughlin thinks the Fourth Great Awakening started in the 1960s.

John Havlik of the Home Mission Board evangelism section believes four vital characteristics herald an era of awakening: --it is a time of social stress or change; --God's people have become complacent and cold; --many people have become dissatisfied with conditions as they are in society; and --thousands of people are praying for an awakening.

Statistics point the opposite direction from a spiritual awakening, especially among mainline denominations. Last reports show a continued decline in membership for most groups. Except for some of the smaller denominations, those which are growing fall below the national birth rate.

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Not reflected in these statistics is growth of non-denominational and parachurch groups. Church yearbook statistician Constance Jaquet of the National Council of Churches estimates "about five percent" of the nation's Christians, many the results of the Jesus Movement, have never been tabulated.

Evangelism professor Roy Fish says he predicted the events of the Jesus Movement, declaring in 1969 that spiritual awakening was coming. But he doesn't "see that evidence today. We're living in a much milder sociological ferment, and this affects our churches. God often moves very rapidly, so it could happen. I see a lot of hunger, and I know many, many people are praying for it."

Southern Baptist seminaries have their largest enrollments ever. Many point to this as evidence God is calling persons in preparation for a spiritual awakening.

Missions professor Jack Gray of Southwestern seminary, who witnessed the impact of the Jesus Movement on campus, thinks "it may be as powerful today as it was then. I see the beginning of renewal here, and I think it is more forceful than in the days of the Jesus Movement."

The new seminarians, Gray adds, "brought their own quality of faith and commitment. They didn't receive it here. In the 1970s the crowd was angry and unsettled, and they knew they had need. It was almost like being born again. Those here today are products of healthy churches more than products of a disturbing past."

The Jesus Movement gave Gray "a hope for a profound sweeping spiritual awakening. I've had a taste. I know it can happen. That gives me lots of hope. God doesn't have to work in our structures, and he will blow them away if we insist that he does."

Church historian Glenn Hinson agrees that Americans are wrestling with a new world consciousness, and this struggle is part of a spiritual awakening. It's not clear yet what direction it will take. "My own hunch is," Hinson offers, "we will see a new way Americans perceive their world; they will be more concerned about the hungry, the underprivileged. They will try to do something about the exploitation of people in the Third World. They will express this concern in simpler lifestyles."

A limited number of Christians are reassessing their lifestyles; their emerging answer is a move toward greater simplicity. A growing core of Christians, including many Southern Baptists, see the necessity of living within perimeters set by the world's limited resources; their lives reflect efforts to achieve an ecological balance, a willingness to share their abundance with others. Hunger offerings from Southern Baptist churches exceeded a record \$6 million a year.

The challenge of voluntary reduction grows clearer and louder. As author Ron Sider says, "We're not called to simple lifestyle because poverty is good. We are committed to Jesus Christ and to being faithful participants in his mission to a lost, broken world. It is because two-and-a-half billion people have never heard the gospel and because one billion are malnourished, that Western Christians must drastically simplify their lifestyles."

Unless they—we—do, the next great awakening may occur in Third World countries, while American Christianity looks on in amazement, and in fear, of what God has wrought. (BP)

New Orleans Prof
Harold Rutledge Dies

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NEW ORLEANS, La. (BP)--Harold L. Rutledge, 69, professor emeritus of psychology and counseling at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, died at New Orleans Methodist Hospital, Feb. 17, after suffering a heart attack.

At the time of his death, Rutledge was a contract professor in the School of Christian Training on the campus and in masters-level studies at Mobile College, Mobile, Ala. He also had worked at the seminary's North Georgia Center in Marietta since it was started in 1980.

Rutledge had been associated with the seminary for 24 years prior to his retirement four years ago.

Rutledge earned two doctoral degrees from the seminary, the doctor of theology degree in 1957 and a doctor of education degree in 1970. His thesis in 1970 was a study of counseling at the Sellers Baptist Home, a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board ministry where he served for many years as chaplain.

He was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Rutledge had recently recovered from a heart attack suffered in the late fall of 1981. He had a history of heart problems.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Helen, and two daughters--Kay Lusk of New Orleans, and Sue Schmidt of Colorado--and four grandchildren.

The family has requested contributions be made to a Harold L. Rutledge Scholarship Fund, to be established at the seminary.

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FCC Rejects Random Selection
For Low-Power TV Licensing

By Greg Warner

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)-- Applications for 106 low-power television stations by the American Christian Television System (ACTS) apparently will not be determined by lottery.

The Federal Communications Commission voted 5 to 1, Feb. 8, against using the lottery as a means of determining between two or more applicants competing for the same area.

The lottery was proposed by Congress as a way to speed up the process to license low-power stations, particularly to determine between two or more applicants in the same area.

But the FCC, on the recommendation of its staff, decided the lottery was an "unworkable" solution to the problem, since the Congressional action requires the commission to screen applicants and give preference to groups under-represented in broadcasting, such as minorities.

It appears the FCC will retain some form of comparative hearing method for licensing low-power stations.

"We don't feel the statute as it was passed (by Congress) allows us to make rules that would permit a practical lottery for anything," said Commissioner Anne Jones. "It sounded as though we would have to go all the way through a comparative hearing before having a lottery."

The Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, in a legal brief filed with Federal Communications Commission in December, opposed any lottery that would not show preference to minorities and non-commercial applicants. Most other comments to the FCC were opposed to the lottery.

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The FCC has sent the lottery proposal back to Congress but it is not known what further action Congress will take.

Although the FCC would reconsider a lottery if the restrictions are lifted, Jones said it is not likely ever to be used for low-power stations. "This probably means we will not have a lottery for a low-power television," she concluded.

The final rules for low-power will outline how the licenses will be awarded, the stations one applicant can own, and what technical regulations will govern low-power broadcasting.

Jones said that while it might take several years for the FCC to distribute all of the licenses, there are no other known obstacles to awarding the uncontested applications, which might be accomplished by the end of the year. It is estimated that 1,200 of the 6,500 applications on file are uncontested, including approximately 75 of the proposed stations for ACTS.

Jones also added she expects the FCC to put no limits on the number of low-power stations that can be owned by one applicant, although a 15-station limit was originally suggested.

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Former Editor's Wife
Dies Following Stroke

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Baptist Press
2/19/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) -- Margaret McNairy Steele Owens, 84, ^{wife}widow of Richard N. Owen, former editor of the Baptist and Reflector, journal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, died Feb. 18, after suffering a stroke.

Mrs. Owens, who had travelled widely with her husband in Europe, the Near East and South America, was born in Pulaski, Tenn. Her husband was pastor of churches in Elizabethton, Milan, Paris and Clarksville, Tenn., prior to becoming editor of the newspaper.

She was a graduate of the University of Tennessee and Whites Bible School in New York. She was a counselor with students in Virginia and at the University of California in Berkeley before marrying in 1923.

Survivors include ^{her husband,} a son, Richard Jr., of Santa Marta, Columbia, and a brother, William T. Steele of Nashville, a retired Methodist minister and former missionary to China.

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Dallas, New York Broadcasters
Win Top Abe Lincoln Awards

D/S

Baptist Press
2/19/82

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--John P. Criswell II, anchorman reporter and producer for Dallas' WFAA-TV, and Rick Devlin, vice president and general manager of WOR-AM, New York City, won top Abe Lincoln Awards for excellence in broadcasting.

They received the honors Feb. 11 in the 13th National Abe Lincoln Award program for broadcasters, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission to urge broadcasters to enrich their local communities through programming.

Criswell and Devlin were among eight finalists from across the nation. The two top winners were not named until the awards were presented before a crowd of nearly 800.

Criswell's award was the first time a Dallas broadcaster has won the top Abe Lincoln honor since the initial Abe Lincoln program in 1970, when Norvell Slater of WFAA-AM-FM received the first Abe Lincoln award.

John Chancellor, anchorman and editor of "NBC Nightly News," was the keynote speaker and received the distinguished communications medal, the highest award the RTVC gives.

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Grady Nutt, humorist of Louisville, Ky., and regular on the television show, "Hee Haw," received the Christian Service Award.

Criswell was honored for encouraging citizen participation in fighting crime and for his efforts to help deaf people and children with special needs.

Devlin was cited for an unusual contribution toward improving the environment of his city, especially through the clean-up campaign, "New York Sweeps."

The other six finalists in the competition were: Eleanor Curry, KSOL-FM, San Mateo, Calif.; Jeff Davidson, WXIA-TV, Atlanta; Ike Newkirk, WOXI-FM, Atlanta; Ethma Elaine Odum, KALB-TV, Alexandria, La.; Elizabeth H. Sheahan, WPLO-AM, and WVEE-FM, Atlanta; and Walter M. Windsor, WFTV-TV, Orlando, Fla.

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Smith's Statements Improved
Jewish Relations, Rabbi Says

By Jim Newton

AB
Baptist Press
2/19/82

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)-- Explosive remarks by Southern Baptist Convention President Bailey E. Smith 18 months ago that "God Almighty does not hear the prayers of a Jew" have helped improve Baptist-Jewish relationships, a leading rabbi says.

Smith's remarks caused "a lightning flash that illuminated the entire landscape of Baptist-Jewish relationships, prompting sudden heat and light that comes only once in a generation," James A. Rudin, associate national director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, told a national Baptist-Jewish dialogue at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

The dialogue was jointly sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and the Interfaith Witness Department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Although he explained he is not a "Pollyanna who sees cotton-candy good emerging from a highly negative episode," Rudin observed that Smith's remarks "have placed Southern Baptist and Jewish relations on a much more realistic and much more mature basis. We both know how far we have to go, how painful has been the hurt and it has moved us to a deeper understanding of dialogue."

Rudin added: "Smith's remarks have forced Baptists and Jews to re-examine their deepest and most profound religious commitments. The remark angered and dismayed Jews who felt Smith had de-legitimized Jewish life. If there is no legitimacy to Jewish prayer, then there is no legitimacy to Jewish religious life, and then the next step is to say, 'There is no legitimacy to Jews.'"

During the dialogue, an Oklahoma Baptist pastor, Travis Wiginton of Norman, said he disagreed with Smith's statements but said the SBC president is "a sincere, honest person who believes what he believes and thinks you ought to share what you believe. It was an honest, sincere statement, not made with malice."

Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., was not present for the dialogue because of a schedule conflict.

SBC First Vice President Christine Gregory of Danville, Va., presided at one session, calling on one of the rabbis to lead the invocation: "I'm one who believes God does hear the prayers of a Jew."

Gregory said in an interview that one of the most moving moments of the dialogue came during a small group discussion when one of the Jews confided how deeply he was hurt and offended by Smith's remarks, made in August of 1980 at a National Affairs Briefing in Dallas.

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In a prepared paper, summarizing the current state of Baptist-Jewish relations, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Bob Adams said such relations have always been guided by the way Baptists answer four questions: "These questions concern the validity of Judaism as a religion, whether or not Jews should be free to practice their religion, whether or not Christians should seek to evangelize the Jews and what place Jews should occupy in the political, economic and social structures of society.

"Probably most Baptists would in some sense question the validity of Judaism, ... and most would probably consider Judaism as preparation for Christianity," Adams said.

He added, however, that Southern Baptists aware of their history will unhesitatingly affirm and defend the right of Jews and all religionists to practice their beliefs.

Stressing the Baptist belief that the only right relationship with God can be through Jesus Christ, Adams said this belief is so strong that to withhold the gospel and to exempt Jews from witnessing attempts would be understood by Baptists "as the worst kind of anti-semitism. To ask Baptists to forego witnessing is to ask them to leave off one of their reasons for being."

In his presentation, Rudin, rather than emphasize the negative, stressed five things he said Baptists and Jews have in common: 1. similar congregational structure with emphasis on local rather than hierarchical control; 2. deep respect and reverence for the authority and integrity of the Scriptures; 3. an abiding commitment to the security and survival of the State of Israel; 4. a shared commitment to separation of church and state in the United States; and 5. mutual involvement in the struggle to achieve human rights and religious liberty, especially for Christians and Jews in the Soviet Union.

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Annuity Board Official
Enters Private Business

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Baptist Press
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DALLAS (BP) -- Harvey H. Kennedy Jr., senior vice president and director of operations at the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, has resigned effective Feb. 28, to enter private business as a computer consultant.

Kennedy came to the board in 1969 from the IBM Corporation to direct the electronic data processing system. In 1970, he became vice president and director of management systems. He has held his present post since 1979.

Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan, said: "Harvey's loss will be greatly felt at the board, but we are thankful that he has consented to remain with us as a temporary consultant."

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Corrections: In (BP) story mailed Feb. 8 entitled "Annuity Board Adds Programs, Approaches \$1 Billion in Assets," please change graph 14, last sentence to read: "13th check" bonus in their monthly checks.

In (BP) Southern Baptist Convention program, mailed Feb. 11, on page 3, 9:30 a.m., Thursday, change Karlene (Mrs. E. M.) Koch to Darlene.

Thanks,

Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"Invitation to Life" the Radio and Television Commission's pilot for prime-time evangelism, was a successful test of both a new television tool for local church evangelism and a new telephone counseling strategy, according to RTVC President Jimmy R. Allen.

The program for the proposed American Christian Television System (ACTS) was shown in five markets during January, testing both local church use of the program as an evangelism strategy and new methods of counseling viewers who responded by telephone.

"While there are a lot of things that will sharpen the program, we now know that it will work, that there are people who want to see and hear it, and that there are opportunities for the church to use it in evangelism," Allen concluded. "I felt very good about it because it did accomplish what we were trying to learn and affirm the direction in which we are moving."

For the pilot, revival services were videotaped in two Southern Baptist churches and edited into four one-hour programs shown during four weeks in January on the stations. The revival preacher was John Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church, Houston.

The RTVC aired "Invitation to Life" on television stations in Atlanta, Asheville, N.C., Bakersfield, Calif. Midland-Odessa, Texas, and Orlando, Fla.

A number of churches used the program in their evangelism by organizing viewing groups. East North Street Baptist Church, Greenville, S.C., a 300-member congregation, for example, arranged a pizza party for 122 youths who viewed "Invitation to Life" on a large screen TV. Afterward, 11 of the young people accepted Christ and 18 more made other decisions.

Preliminary Arbitron share figures, which estimate the percentage of households using televisions that are tuned to a specific program, revealed a wide spread between markets for "Invitation to Life." The largest market, Atlanta, had the highest average share of 13.75. That included the highest single night, when "Invitation" had a 19 share on NBC affiliate WSIA-TV against CBS's "Dukes of Hazard" and ABC's "Benson" and "Bosom Buddies."

The lowest average shares were in Orlando and Midland-Odessa. In Orlando, where "Invitation to Life" was aired on independent Christian station WOFL-TV, it had a 5.5 average share. On Midland-Odessa's ABC station KTTX-TV, the figure was 6.5. Allen said the Midland-Odessa share may reflect an oversaturation of religious programs in that market.

The program was also on NBC station KERO-TV, in Bakersfield, where it averaged a 12.25 share. In Asheville, where ABC station WLOS-TV also covers the cities of Greenville and Spartanburg, S.C., "Invitation to Life" had an average share of 12.

The average for all five markets was a 9.95 share, meaning "Invitation" garnered nearly 10 percent of the audience each night. That was good enough to rank third in most markets most nights. "In most of these markets we not only maintained our initial audience from the first night, but gained audience during the four-week run," Allen observed. "That implies many viewers liked what they saw, came back the next week, and brought others with them."

While he was pleased with the rating figures, Allen cautioned against too much optimism. "I don't think we ought to tie ourselves simply to Arbitron ratings. The fact is the Gospel needs to be preached through television whatever the rating of a particular program is.

"Some television ministries are allowing their marketing reports to tailor their message," Allen remarked. "That is the scary part of religious television. We may package our message to get the attention of the secular man, but we will be very careful not to alter the contents of the gospel.

"I am convinced that the local church needs a television instrument for evangelism, and we are on the right track, Allen said, adding that, "the bottom line is whether people who are being touched are coming into local New Testament churches, making professions of faith, and being baptized and nurtured. Is the church receiving this tool and using it to win people to Christ? That is the bottom line for all evangelism. Anything short of that is inadequate."

Allen said it is too early to tell if "Invitation to Life" was successful in bringing people into Southern Baptist churches, although there are some reports of that happening. Ben Loring, RIVC vice-president of counseling services, who designed the telephone counseling strategy, said 1,553 phone calls have been reported. Half of the callers asked for counseling, Loring said, adding most of those made decisions for Christ or other spiritual decisions.

Atlanta reported 870 phone calls in response to the program. Asheville, Greenville and Spartanburg received 379, Orlando 151, Bakersfield, 102, and Midland-Odessa had 51. Loring said the totals would probably increase when final reports on in.

The phone calls were not the only evidence of the program's spiritual impact, Loring added. He told about a high school senior in Pinehills, Fla., who watched "Invitation to Life" Monday, January 4.

"During the program, she became convicted by the Holy Spirit of her need for Christ," Loring said. "She telephoned the pastor of First Baptist Church, who had been witnessing to her, and made an appointment for Tuesday evening. During the appointment, she made her commitment to Christ and her mother rededicated her life.

"A former member of First Baptist Church, Midland, had moved to Alaska and gotten out of the church and away from the Lord," Loring related. "He recently moved back to Midland and heard the program advertised. He watched it, rededicated his life, and he and his family joined the church the next Sunday."

Loring said a total of 1,204 volunteers were involved in the counseling strategy through local churches and associations in each area. "I think one of the most successful elements of the pilot was the cooperation we received from all these volunteers," Loring added.

Allen said he and his staff encountered no serious problems with the pilot. But they did find many places to improve, he said, since it was the first program of its kind by the RIVC.

The quality of the production could be improved Allen said. When the show is on the air permanently, it also will allow for more effective advertising and promotion. And now that the counseling method has been tested, the RIVC can better estimate the number of phone operators and counselors needed, he said. While these details were of some concern during the test, there were things the Commission expected to learn only from the pilot, Allen said.

All those who participated in the pilot project on a local level will be asked to evaluate the strategy now, Allen explained, providing more input for improvement.

"The purpose is not simply to produce a high quality television program," he explained. "The purpose is to communicate the truth of Christ and the context of the local church experience. Authenticity is what we're after."

Allen said, "Invitation to Life" is one of several styles of preaching and teaching programs planned for the ACTS network. He said evangelism on the network will differ from other television evangelism in that it will avoid appeals for money and be centered in the local church.

The average viewer may not have seen those differences immediately in the recent pilot, Allen said, but the impact is there.

"This is direct teaching about the gospel, but indirectly we're telling the viewers a whole lot about the nature of the Christian family--the church."