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Call Still Rings Clearly
For Christian Life Leader

CO
By Tim Fields

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Foy Valentine received a clear and unmistakable call to preach as a 17-year-old Depression era farm boy in east Texas.

Forty-one years later the executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission says that call is as clear today as it was then.

Valentine, after 22 years at the helm of Southern Baptists' moral concerns and Christian social action agency, is the dean of SBC agency heads, serving longer than any other current agency director.

Valentine's long tenure as a preacher and champion of Christian social ethics has been marked with both accomplishment and controversy as he has worked to move Southern Baptists toward a "truly biblical expression of commitment to the whole gospel."

The commission's staunch stands on race relations, peace with justice, authentic Christian citizenship, and family issues such as equality for women often have made Valentine a figure of controversy.

Some have branded him a "liberal" and others an "ultra conservative." Still others have called him "a burr under the saddle."

"I despise labels and reject them," Valentine says firmly. "I believe Jesus Christ is Lord, I believe the Bible and I am a committed Southern Baptist. God is our judge and when we use labels we are tending to do God's work of judging."

Valentine hopes the current craze to label is an ugly stage through which Southern Baptists will quickly pass. He says he has never intentionally set out to offend anybody or grate on their nerves or be a burr under anybody's saddle.

"I have never felt that I was right and everybody else was wrong," he stresses. "I have kept working in the conviction that my job was to speak for God to others with the understanding that some of the seed would fall on fertile ground even though sometimes I, by some personal error, would get some tares mixed up with the good seed.

In spite of his aversion to labels, Valentine doesn't mind being known as a hard worker committed to long hours on the job or an earnest Christian and solid Bible scholar. He became the youngest doctoral recipient in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's history when he received the Th.D just weeks after his 26th birthday in 1949. In 1970, he was given Southwestern's distinguished alumnus award.

"My mother and father without a doubt have had the greatest influence for good on my life," he remembers. "That influence was started before I can remember and lasted until they both died in their 80th years not long ago.

"My mother carefully studied the Bible and conscientiously sought to lead me to do so too. My father, sometimes to my dismay, would talk with me from time to time about honesty, race, morality, character, uprightness and integrity. Both of my parents carefully and responsibly sought to lead their two sons to believe and behave. Not a day now passes but that I rise up and call them blessed."

As a student of Southern Baptist ethicist T.B. Maston, Valentine says he learned the value of creative tension in support of moral values and ideals. He doggedly presses to maintain this tension by preaching on ethical issues an average of two to three times a week. He has authored seven books and hundreds of articles and guest editorials.

His attraction to a long work day is well known by his family and staff who accuse him of being a workaholic.

He readily admits that over the past 22 years he has "generally worked from 7:30 to 5:30 when at the office and then from after supper to the wee small hours."

Valentine is well known for his quick wit and keen sense of humor, especially during trying times. Typical is his quip at one Southern Baptist Convention where the messengers had just defeated a motion to abolish the commission. "Thank you for my annual call," he told them.

His specialty is the fine tuning of commission pamphlets, editorials, speeches and articles utilizing his skills as a wordsmith. His talent for refining phrases and his acute ability for spelling, diction and word usage spills over into his recreation and family time.

He plays frequent games of Scrabble with his wife, Mary Louise, at their Nashville home or in front of a roaring pinyon fire at a mountain cabin he built himself in 1958 at Red River, N.M. He enjoys trout fishing and trail drives in his 1946 Jeep.

Valentine admits that his heavy preaching, writing and travel schedule kept him from spending as much time as he should have with his wife and his three daughters who are now grown.

"If I had it to do all over again, I would have spent more time with my children when they were quite young," he says. "As they grow older I wish I had made more opportunities years ago to be a better husband and father."

Valentine's other pastimes include preparing homemade chili for staff or friends, charcoaling pork chops on his back porch grill or making homemade strawberry preserves to give away.

Valentine's after-hours-office at home is lined with shelves of books and an incredible number of "fascinating" rocks he has collected from all over the world. His red-carpeted study also sports a telescope which he uses to look at the "marvelous craters on the moon and the splendid rings of Saturn."

When reviewing his life and ministry, Valentine is thankful for the growth of the Christian Life Commission. He became executive in 1960 with a budget of \$31,500 and one part-time secretary. He now manages a 12-member staff and a budget of more than \$650,000.

He is also thankful for the increase in state Christian Life Commissions from one to nine and for "wonderful developments in the change of attitudes by Southern Baptists in their application of the gospel to daily life."

Valentine says his greatest fulfillment in life has been to do the will of God which he says he feels he has been doing since he accepted Christ as a ten-year-old.

"I have never looked back a single day to wish I had chosen some other course," he says.

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Fields is director of communications for the Christian Life Commission. (BP) photo mailed to Baptist state newspapers by Christian Life Commission.

Baptists, Jews Urged: Take
Dialogue to Local Level

By Jim Newton

AB

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--After three days of intense, frank discussion of their differences and similarities, 40 Southern Baptist and Jewish leaders ended a national Baptist-Jewish dialogue with a plea to take the dialogue to the local congregational level.

"Only as we bring dialogue to the local level to help churches and synagogues deal with these same issues we've discussed on a national level this week can we make real progress in Baptist-Jewish relationships," said Glenn Igleheart, director of the interfaith witness department for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Pointing out it has been 10 years since the last national Baptist-Jewish dialogue co-sponsored by his department and the American Jewish Committee, Igleheart suggested Baptists and Jews may be starting a new era of understanding and relationships in the 1980s. (A similar dialogue in Fort Worth, Texas, in February was between Southern Baptists and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, a separate Jewish organization).

He offered a 10-point prospectus for the future of Baptist Jewish relationships in the form of an acrostic, spelling out "prospectus."

Igleheart called for: (1) Publication of the papers and summaries of the dialogue and broader distribution to the content of the meeting; (2) joint cooperation on human Rights and religious freedom; (3) joint Overseas travel to Israel for Baptist and Jewish tour groups; (4) Study and exchange of students and professors at Baptist and Jewish seminaries; (5) Prayer and worship as a bridge to meet spiritual hunger in America.

He also suggested: (6) Expansion of the conversations to include Muslims in a Baptist-Jewish-Muslim triologue; (7) Communication to Baptist and Jewish laity of ways they can cooperate on a local level; (8) publication of Texts, books and curriculum materials on Baptist beliefs in Jewish publications and Jewish beliefs in Baptist publications; (9) greater Understanding fostered through more frequent dialogue; and (10) Service to each other, rather than serving only self-interests.

Earlier in a major paper, Rabbi Michael J. Cook of Cincinnati observed that Christian academicians and clergy are becoming increasingly sensitive to anti-Semitism, but the average Christian and church-goer usually remains untouched by whatever is accomplished on the level of institutes and dialogues such as the one at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

"History has taught Jews that when anti-Jewishness resulted in physical harm to the Jews, that harm was not inflicted directly by the church as an institution but rather directly from the Christian masses," said Cook, professor at Hebrew Union College--Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati.

Accordingly, Jews do not pay as much attention to the Christian clergy as they do to the Christian laity, Cook pointed out. He emphasized the importance of bringing the dialogue to local church and synagogue levels rather than on the clergy-seminary levels.

Cook said that after 19 centuries of history, the theological distinctions between Jews and Christians today are so formidable "that no one today can genuinely be called both a Jew and a Christian....From the Jewish point of view, a Jew who today professes belief in Jesus as the Messiah is a Christian by definition and not a Jew."

In a later address, Robert Lindsey, a Southern Baptist representative to Israel appointed by the SBC Foreign Mission Board, strongly disagreed, saying after living 40 years in Israel he considers himself a "Jewish Christian."

"My Baptist being is dependent on my self-identity as a Jewish-Baptist," Lindsey insisted. "All Jews are not Christians, but all Christians are Jews. My being is dependent upon who Jesus is, and I cannot understand who Jesus is apart from his Jewishness."

Lindsey drew sharp protests from at least three Jewish participants when he said organizations like Jews for Jesus have helped Baptists understand Jews better than anything in the last century.

In separate presentations on Baptist and Jewish views of "Mission, Witness and Conversion," a rabbi strongly opposed any attempt by either Jews or Christians to evangelize the other, while a Baptist pastor said evangelism is an essential part of Christian belief.

Saying that Judaism has not been a missionary religion for 16 centuries, Rabbi Martin S. Weiner, of San Francisco's Sherith Israel Congregation, argued that even though "bearing witness is integrally a part of the Christian soul," that compulsion "can truly infringe upon my spiritual rights as a Jew. I am troubled by it. I am often deeply offended by it."

Weiner said he is especially offended by Christian evangelism efforts aimed at troubled Jewish teenagers and college students going through periods of doubt and questioning. Such youth could very easily find their way back to Judaism given time and sensitive religious guidance, he said. Weiner also opposed evangelism aimed at so-called "secular Jews," estimating that 60-70 percent of Jewish people are not active in a synagogue or congregation.

In contrast, Joseph R. Estes, pastor of Beechwood Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., and former director of the SBC Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department, insisted mission is inseparable from the church's being or essence. "It is not something we can escape. Asking Christians to forego it is to ask them to cease to be authentically Christian," he said.

The dialogue ended with a summary by Judith Banki, assistant national director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, who observed the participants had been deeply moved, had experienced real fellowship, and had clarified understandings of each other through the dialogue.

"True dialogue creates its own hunger for more," she said. "It is a holy experience, a soul-nourishing experience."

The challenge now, agreed Igleheart and Banki, is to move from a national level to a local level in experiencing the same kind of dialogue between Baptists and Jews.

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First \$100 Million
SBC Budget Okayed

CO

Baptist Press
2/24/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The first \$100 million-plus budget in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention has been approved by the SBC Executive Committee.

The \$106 million Cooperative Program Allocation Budget will be presented to messengers of the 1982 annual meeting in New Orleans for final action.

Adoption of the budget by the 67-member Executive Committee "is only one step in the multifaceted Cooperative Program budgeting process," said W. Dewey Presley, a Dallas banker who is chairman of the committee's program and budget subcommittee.

He explained the budgeting process began last September, when agency executives of the SBC's 20 agencies listed priorities and needs. Then, in a subcommittee meeting in January, a more detailed presentation was made, and the budget proposal drawn, Presley said.

Presley noted "the entire budget supports Bold Mission Thrust, the denomination's plan to present the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000."

The budget provides \$96,635,000 as the basic operating budget; \$3,365,000 for capital needs, and \$6,000,000 as the challenge phase.

That compares with the 1981-82 budget of \$93 million, of which \$83,400,000 was the basic operating budget; \$3,000,600 was for capital needs, and \$6,599,400 was the challenge phase.

Under the proposal, the Foreign Mission Board will receive \$47,839,300, a 17.06 percent increase over the 1981-82 allocation of \$40,866,000. The Home Mission Board will receive \$19 million, a 16.83 percent increase over the \$16,263,000 last year. The Annuity Board will receive \$478,000, a 26.46 percent increase over the \$378,000 last year.

The six seminaries will receive \$20,520,600, a 13.26 percent increase over the \$18,118,900 last year.

Golden Gate seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., will receive \$1,917,049; Midwestern seminary in Kansas City, \$1,775,896; New Orleans seminary, \$3,437,840; Southeastern seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., \$3,201,053; Southern seminary in Louisville, Ky., \$4,497,014; and Southwestern seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, \$5,691,748.

The seminary allocations are made under a complicated formula based in part on full-time equivalency enrollment and per student costs.

Other agencies:

Southern Baptist Foundation, \$213,450; American Baptist Theological Seminary Commission, \$203,450; Brotherhood Commission, \$758,100; Christian Life Commission, \$562,800; Education Commission, \$378,400; Historical Commission, \$328,000; Radio-Television Commission, \$4,229,000; Stewardship Commission, \$344,500; and Public Affairs Committee, \$357,400.

The Southern Baptist Convention Operating Budget received an allocation of \$1,422,000, a 13.94 percent increase over the \$1,173,000 last year.

The Executive Committee also adopted a 1982-83 SBC Operating Budget, for presentation to the 1982 annual meeting in New Orleans.

The budget, based on total income of \$2,144,500, provides \$631,900 for convention operations, which includes general operations, the SBC building in Nashville, the annual meeting and expenses of SBC committees.

Convention administration is budgeted for \$908,300; public relations at \$308,500, and the Baptist World Alliance contribution at \$295,800.

In the Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the capital needs section provides \$201,400 to Golden Gate seminary for construction of child care facilities; \$306,000 to Midwestern seminary for a student center and energy package; \$1,000,000 to New Orleans seminary for a student center and cafeteria; \$1,365,000 to Southeastern seminary for a student center and other building renovation; \$221,000 to Southwestern seminary for a resources and research center and building renovation and \$271,600 to the Radio-TV Commission for tape duplication and TV equipment.

Phase One of the Challenge Budget provides \$500,000 to the six seminaries.

Phase Two provides \$2,750,000 to the Foreign Mission Board, representing 50 percent of the total of \$5,500,000. The Home Mission Board would receive \$1,200,000, or 21.82 percent.

Others included in Phase Two are the SBC Operating Budget, \$200,000; seminaries, \$600,000; Christian Life Commission, \$75,000; Historical Commission, \$50,000; Stewardship Commission, \$45,000, and Public Affairs Committee, \$30,000.

Executive Committee Votes
Continued Building Study

By Norman Jam son

CO

NASHVILLE, Tenn.(BP)--Any decision on a new Southern Baptist Convention building is at least 15 months away, although half the agencies that would be housed in such a building told Executive Committee members they desperately need more space.

The SBC Executive Committee, in its February meeting, authorized its long range study committee to continue to develop a plan to provide adequate space for the agencies involved. The committee will report in September, but it is anticipated no final action will be taken before the 1983 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Pittsburgh.

The long range study committee, then chaired by Knoxville businessman William A. Fortune, proposed in September that a new Southern Baptist Convention building be built for approximately \$6.5 million. Fortune's company would do the construction which would be through industrial revenue bonds.

Fortune was elected vice chairman of the Executive Committee in September, so resigned from the long range study committee. Since September, new long range committee chairman, Rodney R. Landes, of El Dorado, Ark., has tried to answer questions that arose from the surprise announcement of the new building plans.

Failure to document need for additional space was a primary criticism. Landes countered that by bringing the agency executives to project their 20-year space needs at the February meeting.

Three organizations currently housed in the SBC building--the Christian Life Commission, Seminary External Education Division and Stewardship Commission--say they are desperately overcrowded.

The other organizations housed in the building--the Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Foundation, Education Commission and American Baptist Theological Seminary Commission--indicated they have no great space needs.

The Historical Commission, currently housed at the Baptist Sunday School Board, has asked to be an occupant in any new SBC building. It "must have additional space if it is to fulfill its assigned task," said director Lynn E. May Jr.

The Historical Commission, said May, has nine people working in an office designed for six, has two people with offices in a storeroom and one works in a hallway. The commission was designated by convention action in 1981 as the repository for all SBC historical records. As such, its storage space is being rapidly consumed.

Commission records now occupy 4,531 square feet at the board, and May anticipates increased need to 11,000 square feet by 1990.

The Seminary External Education Division, with over 10,000 students in center or home study courses, is "terribly overcrowded," said director Raymond M. Rigdon.

The Stewardship Commission has expanded from five to 26 employees in its 20-year existence. Their present space is "certainly not adequate" said director A. R. Fagan.

Foy D. Valentine, executive director of the Christian Life Commission, said staff expansion from two to 12 in the past 20 years has cramped his space. Projecting, he said the commission should expand its services even more in the next 20 years.

Valentine also asked for a clear understanding of proprietorship among the agencies which would occupy a new building. In the current budget year, funds to operate the building have been diverted from the agencies' budgets to the Executive Committee for central management.

Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary of the Executive Committee, said he feels a strong need for additional common space and parking.

Bennett said he would like to see a building with three large conference rooms seating 75 to 100, and three to six small conference rooms. The major auditorium, now seating 60 at desks and 164 in gallery seating, should be increased to 100 at desks and at least 300 in gallery seating, Bennett said.

Meetings of the Executive Committee, especially, have attracted growing numbers of observers. In February 1964, there were 63 visitors and 55 Executive Committee members. February 1981 saw 169 visitors and the Executive Committee, because of growing Southern Baptist witness in new states, has increased to 67.

The current building has 60 parking spaces. Bennett said there is a regular need for 100 spaces and, for special meetings, 140 to 150 spaces.

Landes reported the long range study committee has rejected industrial revenue bonds as a means of financing the building, and instead favors use of regular SBC capital needs funds.

He said the building will be in Nashville, although the specific site is still being studied. The Sunday School Board has offered a site adjacent to its building, and Landes said that "option is still open."

He also released a 1979 appraisal on the value of the SBC building: \$2,464,390.

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Fewer Social Cuts Urged
By SBC Hunger Specialist

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
2/24/82

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Southern Baptist hunger specialist warned a House budget panel not to overrate the religious community's ability to compensate for large cuts in federal social programs for the needy.

Appearing before a budget committee task force considering the Reagan administration's proposal to cut entitlement programs by some \$50 billion over the next three years, SBC Home Mission Board Domestic Hunger Consultant Nathan Porter called for more emphasis on human needs in budget considerations.

Porter, who emphasized that neither he nor anyone could speak for all Southern Baptists, declared that SBC churches "must increase their concern and efforts to minister to the needy of our nation."

"However," he added quickly, "let's not fool ourselves with myths. Religious charity and the mission of the church cannot cover up national injustice by government. Human need and social justice cannot be sacrificed at the altar of economic programs and military might."

Asked to testify on the impact of budget cuts on the needy, Porter brought mini-reports from HMB field personnel and other Baptist leaders.

One report came from Bill Sumner, a missionary who works in a seven by 12 block area of New Orleans with a population of 52,000 and a poverty level of 60 percent. Faced with growing requests for assistance--especially from families headed by women--Sumner declared, "Budget cuts and fear of future cuts are making our situation absolutely serious...we will not be able to fill the gap."

Another New Orleans missionary, Lillian Mitchell, pointed to growing referrals from the food stamp office. "We are facing a serious crisis already," she warned, "and the situation will get worse if more budget cuts are implemented."

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Missionary Glenn Harrada described the impact of the budget cuts in Hawaii as "fantastic." "There is no way that we can fill the gap," he said. "Southern Baptists just don't have the money in Hawaii. I am frightened for the needy people in our state."

In Knobb County, Ky., where unemployment is 14 to 16 percent, missionary Larry Baldrige said, "The church is being asked to help in ways we have never been asked before. The budget cuts are producing an intolerable situation which is destroying the human spirit."

Porter further cited a statement by David Lockard of the SBC Christian Life Commission which declared, "When 63 percent of the total budget cuts are related to programs that primarily serve the poor, it is time to ask some honest and disturbing questions about this administration's priorities."

Lockard said the time for responsible spending is "long overdue," but emphasized that the time has not come "to abandon our compassion, our ideals and our commitment to justice."

He further challenged the administration's claims of making significant budget cuts, saying the latest budget proposals reveal cuts "that do not reduce the budget."

"Those 'cut' funds are relocated in the most massive military build-up budget in our nation's history and the most irresponsible transfer of help to the rich."

"This administration's 'safety-net' is leaking badly," Lockard added, "and seems destined to leak more."

Porter also reported the position of HMB Missions vice president Gerald Palmer, who said: "It is not a good thing for government to get out of the business of helping people," and warned that to do so is a "terrible step backward."

Porter concluded by relating a message he had received along with a donation for hunger causes from an eight-year-old Baptist Trent Coker, from Newton, Texas, who wrote: "If any of your helpers can talk the hungry people language, tell them I said 'hi.'"

"I join Trent in challenging the people of our nation and government officials to 'talk the hungry people language,'" Porter told the task force chaired by Rep. Paul Simon, D-Ill.

The hearing was the first of three Simon scheduled to review the impact of last year's budget cuts in entitlement programs and the potential impact of the proposed additional cuts. Entitlement programs include areas such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, unemployment compensation and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).