



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

-- FEATURES

produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

April 29, 1982

82-67

Rush Wants To Be
"Chaplain To Dakar"

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Warren and Joannah Rush were about to call their youngest daughter, Deborah, last summer when the phone rang.

It was Deborah. "Daddy, guess what happened," she blurted excitedly. "Freddy and I have surrendered to missions and we want to go to Japan."

"Oh really?" Rush replied. "Guess what happened on this end of the line." Already grandparents, the Rushes had just made the same decision--to become foreign missionaries.

Deborah, 26, and her husband, Freddy Davis, then pastor of Sabal Palm Baptist Church, Tallahassee, Fla., were appointed missionaries to Japan in December by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. They arrived in Tokyo April 15, two days after her parents were named Southern Baptist missionaries to Senegal, West Africa, at a service in Birmingham, Ala.

A 60-year-old Alabama native, Rush led Parkway Baptist Church in Tallahassee for 20 years as pastor before returning in 1978 to guide Bethlehem Baptist Church in Laurel, Miss., a congregation he had served in the mid-'50s.

Why mission service now? "We were thinking about what we wanted to do if the Lord let us retire," Rush says. "The first thing we thought of was to take off and start traveling. But the Lord spoke to us and said, 'That's nothing but selfishness.' With all the experience we've had in our ministry why put it on the shelf? So we decided we'd be volunteer missionaries."

Then they learned that the age limit for applying to the Foreign Mission Board's missionary associate program had been extended by a year to 60, making Rush eligible. Candidates for the associate program, which employs missionaries for renewable four-year terms, include applicants past the age of 45, the age limit for appointment as a career missionary.

The Rushes were the only grandparents named missionaries in Birmingham; the 31 other new missionaries were closer to daughter Deborah's age. But the senior couple's energy and excitement left some of the younger crowd panting.

"People say I'm crazy, but don't blame me," states Rush. "We just put ourselves on the altar and said, 'Lord, we're here. We're available.' The Lord answers prayer, you know."

The pair will leave Mississippi this fall for three months of orientation in Pine Mountain, Ga., before going to Senegal. The move marks a return to Africa for Rush, who spent the better part of two years in tanks, chasing Rommel's German desert fighters in North Africa during World War II.

He expects his Senegal assignment to be far happier. He'll lead the International Church of Dakar, an English-speaking congregation in the capital city of 800,000. An estimated 12,000-15,000 English-speaking people live in Dakar, including members of the diplomatic and business communities and students.

Rush dreams of becoming "something of a chaplain to Dakar," establishing relationships with diplomats, government officials and business leaders.

He's no stranger to public officials. As pastor at Parkway church in Tallahassee, Florida's capital, he dealt regularly with state legislators and city leaders. For 18 years he

-more-

was chaplain to the Florida Highway Patrol, and for 10 years chaplain to the Tallahassee Police Department, counseling both officers and offenders. "I was able to get down to the nitty-gritty with the police," he says.

The Rushes got down "to the nitty-gritty" at home too, according to their missionary daughter. "They taught you to practice what you preach," Deborah says. "Everything that my parents preached to others, they did at home. They stressed that no matter what I did in life or what I wanted in life, Christ was always to come first."

The Rushes' three grandchildren as well as two of Rush's older brothers, ages 80 and 78, witnessed their appointment. "I'm the baby of the family," Rush says.

-30-

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

SBC Home Mission Board
Commissions 54 Workers

Baptist Press
4/29/82

ATLANTA (BP)--Concluding an intensive orientation for new missionaries, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board commissioned 54 missionaries for service in 22 states and two provinces of Canada.

The commissioning service, one of two held each year by the board, took place at Second Ponce de Leon Baptist Church.

Home Mission Board Vice President Gerald Palmer said it was significant the service was held at a church which so strongly supports missions, "because it really is the 36,000 churches of the Southern Baptist Convention that are the real commissioners of missionaries.

Palmer and Irvin Dawson, director of the HMB department of missionary personnel, presented certificates to the new missionaries, most of whom have been on the mission field for several months.

Seven missionaries were commissioned for church extension work, most classified as church planter apprentices. Louis and Betty Demster were commissioned as church planters for the Utah-Idaho Baptist Convention in the Boise metro area.

Commissioned as church planter apprentices were Glenn and Betsy Akins of Mecklenburg Association, Charlotte, N.C.; Stephen and Shelia Sheila Holbrook of Bend, Ore.; Edward King of West Central Association, Terre Haute, Ind.; Robert Willis of Omaha, Neb.; Dorothy Williamson of Suffolk, Va., and James and Dianna Yow of St. Joseph, Mo.

The largest group was commissioned for Christian Social Ministries in Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Nevada, Virginia, Michigan, and the Western United States. They are Dick and Virginia Davis, CSM director in Gainesville, Ga.; Ovis and Virginia Fairley, director of a pilot project at the state prison in Parchman, Miss.; Gerry and Vicki Hutchinson, CSM Director for New River Baptist Association, Jacksonville, N. C.; James and Jennie Royston, CSM directors in Charlotte, N.C.; Sharyan Lott, director of the women's shelter, Tulsa, Okla.; Mike and Sarah McCullough, CSM director for Nevada Baptists; Ann Putnam, CSM director for Mt. Vernon Association in Alexandria, Va.; Sandy Smith, assistant director of the Baptist Center in Detroit, Mich., and Lester and Donna Merriwether of Mill Valley, Calif., literacy missions coordinator for the Western United States.

Language missionaries were commissioned for three states and one national consultant: Bill and Nancy Hern, former missionaries to Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt who now direct North Carolina Baptists' work with Arabs and Middle Easterners, Raleigh, N. C.; An Mihn and Nang Vo Phan, Vietnamese missionaries for Mt. Vernon Association, Clarendon, Va.; Harold and Janet Webb, Spanish missionaries in Trinidad, Colo.; and Peter and Luan Golinski, Canadians who spent 25 years in Haiti, as national consultants with Haitians, Miami, Fla.

-more-

Eight missionaries were commissioned for metropolitan missions as directors of associational missions: Charles and Evelyn Aiken for Continental and Pike's Peak Association, Colorado Springs, Colo.; George and Gwendolyn Arthur for Montgomery Association, Rockville, Md.; Darwin and James Bacon for Syracuse Association, Syracuse, N.Y.; and James and Maxine Willey for metropolitan Baltimore, Md.

Eight missionaries also were commissioned for rural-urban missions: Terry and Dianne Douglas of South Central Association in Lititz, Pa.; Hugh and Patricia Morgan of Trinity Association, Palm Springs, Calif., area; Garland and Helen Wilkerson of West Central Sidney, Ohio, and Jack and Faye Conner of Wheatland Association, which includes Manitoba and Saskatchewan in Western Canada.

Three couples were commissioned for evangelism and special mission ministries: Curtis and Barbara Griffis, metro evangelism in Chicago; Bill and Cindy Black, directors of Smoky Mountain Resort Ministries, Gatlinburg, Tenn., and Ron and Betty Jo Sanders, student workers at Illinois State University, Normal, Ill.

-30-

First Greek Baptist Church
Constitutes in Chicago

Baptist Press
4/29/82

CHICAGO (BP)--The First Greek evangelical congregation in the United States to align with Southern Baptists recently constituted as a church, according to John Paul Holsey, director of church extension for Metropolitan Chicago Baptist Association.

Born Again Baptist Church, Harry Michaelides, pastor, petitioned to affiliate with the Chicago association after Tim Terry, former associational language missions director, and Ignatius Meimaris, Greek catalytic worker, discovered the small band of evangelical Greek-Americans meeting for worship and Bible study.

The congregation formed six years ago around a nucleus of three members, including Michaelides. The church, which now has 12 members meets in the facilities of Jefferson Park Evangelical Free Church. Attendance averages 40 each Sunday.

After initial contact, Holsey met with the group to explain Baptist doctrine and the concept of cooperative missions. "These are Greek-Americans who were already teaching baptistic doctrines," Holsey explained. "They decided they wanted to be a part of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Michaelides, a dentist by profession, said his members are "happy and enthusiastic" about the SBC affiliation. "We know of what good Southern Baptists are doing all over the world, and now God has led them to us," he reported.

Many of the Greek church's members are newcomers from Greece and all share a nominal Greek Orthodox background. Holsey noted, "We're being sensitive to their history, realizing they're just beginning to understand what it means to be Southern Baptist."

Oscar Romo, director of language missions for the Baptist Home Mission Board, stressed that "Southern Baptists did not establish this congregation, but rather responded to its members' interest in Southern Baptists. Our task now is to undergird their spiritual growth."

Baptist leaders emphasized the voluntary alignment of Born Again Baptist Church with the SBC in light of controversy stirred in 1979 after the appointment of Meimaris and his wife, Parthena, to minister to unchurched Greek-Americans.

Officials of the Greek Orthodox Church of America labeled the appointments as "blatantly unchristian" and "nothing short of proselytism." Home Mission Board leaders defended the appointments with assurances the Meimarises would focus their ministry on reaching Greeks not actively involved with any church.

-30-

Religious Publishing House
Loses Supreme Court Appeal

WASHINGTON, D.C. (BP)--A nondenominational, fundamentalist religious publishing company failed to convince U. S. Supreme Court justices to review the revocation of its tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service.

The Gospel Worker Society, organized in 1906 for Christian single women devoted to gospel tract distribution and street evangelism, lost its tax exemption in 1978, when IRS ruled it no longer was operated for exclusively religious purposes.

At the time, IRS officials noted that the society was conducting a commercial printing business, United Gospel Press, in Cleveland, Ohio, in competition with non-exempt companies in the religious literature field. Society records show that for the past decade, income has amounted to about \$650,000 yearly, with an accumulated total of more than \$5 million. Society officers maintain the money has been set aside for expansion of printing facilities.

But IRS officials convinced the high court not to review decisions of a federal district court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upholding the revocation. Among its written arguments urging denial of the appeal, the government noted that present society membership consists of 23 women, most elderly and living in a Cleveland home maintained by the organization.

Attorneys for the society argued without success that its plan to expand printing operations is no different from those of other tax-exempt groups planning similar enlargements.

-30-

History Forgotten as 'Wall'
Falls Between Church, State

Baptist Press
4/29/82

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--Baptists cannot have both freedom and special privilege from the state, says James Dunn, and those who want both are embracing doctrines long resisted.

Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, D.C., addressed about 100 participants in the North Carolina Christian Life Commission church-state conference.

"They want no government intervention, but they'd like prayer in the public schools and tax credits for children in parochial schools," Dunn said. "We cannot have it both ways."

"Listen to the first person singular pronouns in the diatribes of television preachers," he said. "Hear their appeals to their own narrow experience as authority. Recognize that what they want is not a free nation but a theocracy, and each of them would like to be Theo."

Bill Elder, who began the Christian Citizenship Corps when he was with the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, said "too many well-intentioned Southern Baptists are being lured into the Right Wing fold for lack of an alternative."

He said Jerry Falwell did "remarkably well" in obtaining extensive funding for his Moral Majority organization and admitted that far more Southern Baptists "were attracted to Moral Majority than was the case with our own denominational mechanism, the Christian Citizenship Corps. That should not be."

Elder, pastor of St. Charles Baptist Church in New Orleans, La., said when Southern Baptists embrace their own mechanisms for expressing Christian citizenship, then Right Wing para-churches will face "organizational and financial trauma."

Elder urged conference participants to work on behalf of Christian Citizenship on at least three levels:

-more-

--Rather than provide the Religious Right with any more attention and clout by painting them as the enemy, "We need to be assisting our people in discerning and shewing civil religion, inauthentic discipleship, and those factors which undermine religious liberty."

--To step up efforts to channel and give legitimate expression to the political commitments of Southern Baptists by providing "alternative action networks."

--To find ways to "sensitize our people to biblically prioritized human values. We need to do some fresh thinking about how to speak persuasively, powerfully, and ethically to the widespread anxieties as to economic and military security."

-30-

Peruvian Baptists Plan
To Triple Membership

Baptist Press
4/29/82

LIMA, Peru (BP)--Baptists in Peru hope to triple their membership and double the number of churches by 1984 under a new program called "Advance Misionero Audaz-Tres."

The plan, literally "Bold Mission Thrust-3," is similar to Southern Baptists' own Bold Mission Thrust, which is intended to motivate Southern Baptists to share the gospel with every person in the world by the year 2000. The Peruvian program's abbreviated title, AMA-3, incorporates the Spanish word for love, "ama."

Herbert Garcia, coordinator of the three-year program, says Peruvian Baptists realize their work had stagnated and they wanted to do something about it. The turning point for the convention came at a pastor's retreat in April 1980 at which Southern Baptist missionary James Crane of Mexico (now retired) and Francisco Aular, evangelism director for the Venezuelan Baptist Convention, spoke. There AMA-3 was born.

Initially, convention leaders worked to generate interest in the program among Peruvian Baptists. Now the emphasis is on discipleship training for members, with training seminars being held across the country, with revivals and evangelistic rallies planned in 1983 as a natural outgrowth of the training.

The convention also wants to double the number of missions, preaching points, seminary students, pastors and national missionaries. "Hopefully, we can more than double the number of national missionaries. Right now we have two. We ought to have between six and nine national missionaries working in new fields," says Garcia.

"It seems to me that our program of Christian education through our Sunday School will have to change," he adds. "We must give more attention to preparing our teachers. We must have specialists in Christian education to help us." Garcia sees "very urgent" needs for missionaries to serve in music, social work, medicine and literacy.

The 15,000-membership goal is realistic, he says, since attendance in the 56 Peruvian Baptist churches already is double the 4,016 members reported for 1981.

To finance AMA-3, convention churches are being asked to give an additional three percent of their budgets. They give 10 percent of their budgets for convention causes now.

AMA-3 is vital in Peru, Garcia says, because of the political and economic stresses which buffet the country: "I beg my Christian brothers around the world to join us in prayer for our country that is in such great need of the gospel."

-30-