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Walker Resigns Hawaii Post Takes HMB Consultant Role

HONOLULU, Hawaii (BP)--Edmund Walker, executive director of the Hawaii Baptist Convention for 19 years, has resigned to become a national consultant on senior adult ministries for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Walker, 63, said his resignation will be effective on the election of his successor, or when the Hawaii convention meets in November, whichever comes first.

Clifford Hoff, pastor of Olivet Baptist Church, Honolulu, has been named chairman of a seven-member search committee to recommend a new executive director to the Hawaii convention executive board.

Walker will move to Sacramento, Calif., where he will help the Home Mission Board Christian social ministries department develop state, associational and local church ministries to senior adults, especially in the area of housing, according to Paul Adkins, director of the HMB department.

Walker also will work closely with the SBC Sunday School Board family ministries department, SBC Christian Life Commission, Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union on senior adult ministries, Adkins said. The SBC is beginning this year a major denominational emphasis on strengthening families, including the needs of senior adults, Adkins added.

Walker said he would spend a great deal of time during his first year in study and research on needs and trends for senior adult ministries, especially in housing, and on what is already being done and models for effective ministries for churches, associations and state conventions.

Walker said needs for ministries among senior adults are changing rapidly because of Reaganomics and new federal policies affecting American senior citizens.

He is a native of Arkansas and was pastor of churches in Modesto and El Monte, Calif., and assistant secretary and director of missions for the Southern Baptist General Convention of California before going to Hawaii as executive director.

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Number Of Unchurched Americans
Increasing Faster Than Baptists

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press
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GLORIETA, New Mexico (BP)--The number of unchurched Americans increased almost twice as fast as the number of Southern Baptists during the decade of 1970-80, the director of the Home Mission Board's research division told more than 1,900 persons attending Home Missions Week at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

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Orrin H. Morris said recent research indicates Americans who are not affiliated with any religious group increased by five million, or 23 percent, from 69 million in 1970 to more than 84 million persons in 1980.

The number of Southern Baptists, however, increased only two million or 15 percent to 13.6 million in 1980.

Morris said the data indicates Southern Baptists are going to have to work harder to keep up with the increase in unchurched Americans if the denomination is going to meet the goal of Bold Mission Thrust.

Pointing to another research report, Morris said the number of new churches established by sect groups in America increased by more than 30 percent during the past decade, compared to only four percent for Southern Baptist churches.

Sect groups established more than 3,800 new churches during the decade, compared to a net gain of only 1,400 Southern Baptist churches, Morris said. All other Baptist groups in America reported an increase of 6,300 churches during the decade.

During the same period, however, the number of evangelical churches in America declined by 1,400 congregations; other Protestant churches decreased by 2,700; and the number of all types of Catholic churches decreased by 1,100.

Morris commented Southern Baptists must put more emphasis on establishing new churches, rather than building "super churches," or building cathedrals.

He also called for more emphasis on meeting the needs of people, both the rich and poor. Morris said Baptists seem to have neglected ministries to both the "up and out" and "down and out."

He cited research which indicates the poor are especially responsive to the gospel. A recent Gallup Poll asked Americans to rate the degree of importance they placed on 19 social values, including participation in church activities. Among the poor, 46 percent said they value church activity, compared to only 29 percent of the wealthy. The same pattern was followed in education level, with 55 percent of those with a grade-school education indicating they value church activities, compared to only 29 percent of those with a college education.

Morris said the simplest data indicate that one of the most effective ministries churches can do is to help adults, especially immigrants, learn to read and write.

Census data reports one million Americans cannot read or write in any language, but Morris said other research studies indicate the number of ethnics who cannot read and write is closer to two million. Four million ethnics reported on the census that they speak English "not well" or "not at all," including almost half the Koreans and one third of the Portugese, Spanish and Chinese.

Census reports indicate 18 million persons in America speak some language other than English, including nine million Spanish, 1.4 million Italian, 1.3 million Greek, one million French, 700,000 Polish, 400,000 each Chinese, Filipino and Japanese.

Morris said research reports show there are about 130 million persons in America over 10 years of age, "who are without a saving faith in Jesus Christ."

Carrying out the conference theme, "All These People," a father-son preacher combination from Dallas, Jaroy and Billy Weber, challenged participants to minister to the needs of hurting Americans by telling them the good news of Jesus Christ which provides stability in a fast-changing technological society.

Former Southern Baptist Convention president, Jaroy Weber, president of Church Ministries Association, Dallas, and retired pastor of First Baptist Church, Lubbock, said Americans are living in such a rapidly changing world, most people can't change fast enough to keep up with society and thus lose their footing and are in danger of falling without secure moorings.

"We live in a throw-away society, in which there are throw-away diapers, throw-away cups, throw-away plates, throw-away marriages, and throw-away families," Weber said. Most Americans have such disregard for anything that is permanent and lasting, they have difficulty in accepting religious values, Weber said.

He called for Americans to return to the absolute values proclaimed in the Bible, which he said provide the foundation in which mankind can find spiritual moorings that will give stability in a fast-changing world.

In one of his six evening messages, Weber preached on the inspiration of the scriptures as the infallible word of God, stressing "we don't need to defend God's Word, we need to proclaim it, adding Southern Baptists "don't need factions and divisions over the word of God, but rather people who will live the word of God."

In the daily morning Bible studies, Billy Weber, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in an lite section of North Dallas, said it is more important to help people in need than to communicat the truth of the Bible. The younger Weber called for changes in the attitudes of Christians, saying non-Christians too often perceive Baptists as negative and constantly bickering over beliefs instead of demonstrating in their lives the attitudes and spirit of Christ.

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Ward Hildreth To Supervise
Orientation Center Facilities

Baptist Press
7/16/82

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Ward Hildreth has been named facility director for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission board's new missionary orientation center under construction near Richmond, Va.

Hildreth will live at the 233-acre site, and will be on call 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week to direct the physical operation of the center, relieving the program managers of the day-to-day logistics. Beginning in September and continuing through the two-year construction time, he will be the board's on-site construction representative.

Hildreth, a native of Bridgeton, N.J., has been the board's director of the information management department under the office of management services since 1980. He joined the board in 1962 as graphic arts director and became assistant business manager in 1970.

He is a graduate of Richmond Professional Institute (now the Academic Division of Virginia Commonwealth University.)

He is married to the former Peggy Bryant of Hampton, Va., and they have three children.

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(BP) photo to be mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Piland Urges Starting
Outreach Study Groups

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
7/16/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--While involving people in Bible study on Sunday mornings should be the first priority of the Sunday School, Harry Piland believes churches also must find ways to reach those who would not come to a church building.

One solution, he says, is church and Sunday School-sponsored outreach Bible study groups meeting during the week in homes, apartment complexes, offices and recreation centers.

"For us to really have a continual penetration of the society in which we live, we must never neglect the church at study and worship on Sunday," said Piland. "But we must be constantly alert to opportunities to go beyond it."

Piland, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday School department, said he hopes that in the next 10 years Southern Baptist churches will begin thousands of small Bible study groups "to introduce people who are not Christians to scriptures and get them involved in Bible study."

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Noting evangelism, outreach and ministry are primary purposes of Sunday School at the church building, Piland said, "A lot of people are difficult to reach on Sunday morning in a structured class. But they could be reached initially through an outreach Bible study in a home, office or other location and later encouraged to participate in Sunday School and church activities."

As to structure for the groups, Piland envisions workers enlisted by the church as a part of the total Sunday School outreach effort. For example, a couple might be enlisted and trained to invite five unchurched families in their neighborhood to participate in a group in their home.

"I see these groups being sponsored by the church through the Sunday School," said Piland. "This will provide an administrative framework a record system and help in workers being enlisted and trained by and through the church."

As the groups begin, Piland said the focus would be on scripture study and the meaning of being a Christian, with little emphasis on inviting people to church. However, as the group progresses and Christians share the meaning of Christ and the church in their lives, they should "seek to invite and enlist these persons into the Sunday School and church," he noted.

In this way, Bible study groups for outreach would become "feeder lines" into the church. "If these groups truly reach out, involve people and lead them to Christ, many of these persons will enroll and attend on Sunday mornings and become a vital part of the church."

Piland emphasized that outreach Bible study groups are not a new idea but that few Southern Baptist churches are presently using the concept on a large scale to reach people. "We haven't grasped the way to convey to the churches that this is a viable way to reach people, witness to them and win persons to Jesus Christ," he said.

Graceland Baptist Church in New Albany, Ind., is one exception, he said. Of the 2,100 persons who attend Sunday School, approximately 900 attend one of 40 locations in nursing homes, buses, apartment complexes and recreation centers away from the church. During the week approximately 50 share groups of 10-15 members each meet in homes. Many persons involved in share groups have become Christians and active in the church.

Participants in the Sunday morning groups are reported in the Sunday School attendance as the outreach division. More than 100 workers are involved at the 40 locations.

Pastor Elvis Markham said both approaches are helping the church penetrate a part of the community he calls the "hidden people. There are a lot of people who won't come to the church so we have taken the church to them."

Piland emphasizes that accurate and up-to-date records of persons participating in the groups must be maintained if the outreach purpose is to be accomplished.

"Records tell me if people are being reached, the depth of the approach being used and how wide an area is being touched," said Piland. "Records about people give a sense of direction to our work and tell us what we need to change."

"If you don't know where a person lives or how to get in touch with him, you have no way to express interest to him or to minister to his needs," said Piland.

British, Argentine Baptists
Reconciled During BWA

By Robert O'Brien

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--Emotional delegates spontaneously burst into chorus after chorus of "Alleluia" after Argentine and British Baptists leaders clasped hands at the Baptist World Alliance Meeting.

The celebration occurred as both Samuel Libert, a pastor from Rosario, Brazil, and Bernard Green of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, seconded a motion that Baptist youth of the world go ahead with plans to hold their meeting in Buenos Aires as originally scheduled, but postpone it one year, until July 1984.

"The overriding concern for Christians is the peace of the world," Green said. "Some have suggested cancellation, I say we must go because we bear witness to Christ's reconciling power, and the greatest sovereign of all is God's sovereignty over the world."

"We love the British people and the American people, but we hate war," Libert, a past president of the Argentine Baptist Convention, said. "We in Argentina hope to have justice, peace, freedom and light. We love our brothers in Christ everywhere." He was baptized 40 years ago by a British Baptist missionary.

The motion, which was adopted with the same emotion as it was seconded by Green and Libert, was presented by Bob R. Taylor, BWA youth department chairman and a Southern Baptist from Nashville, Tenn. He told delegates to the General Council of the worldwide body of 30 million Baptists that the committee proposed the delay "to give time for feelings to mend and for anxieties and conditions to improve," following the conflict between British and Argentinian about sovereignty over the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands.

He said the youth committee felt that moving the meeting from Argentina would "create misunderstanding and lack of trust" and send the wrong message to South America about the attitude of world Baptists.

Later, in a separate vote, the General Council decided to hold its own meeting as previously planned in July 1983 in Buenos Aires, subject to conditions. The council also passed a resolution commending the Christian attitude British and Argentine Baptists have maintained toward each other.

During the heat of the South Atlantic crisis, Argentine Baptists took a vote favoring their government position but urging a peaceful solution. Before the actual conflict began, the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland urged the British government to seek a peaceful solution and negotiate through the United Nations.

But, while differing politically, Baptists in the two countries, who have had relationships for years through the Baptist World Alliance, never wavered in their concern for each other and the sorrow felt by families of both nations, the two leaders said.

Argentines, meeting in their annual convention, rose to cheer and applaud after receiving a letter from Green during the crisis which said British Baptists "are one with you in prayer for a peaceful solution. Our sympathy is with you for the families of both nations who are suffering sadness."

Both Libert and Green said they anticipated no visa problems for citizens of any country, including Great Britain and the United States, which sided with the British.

Taylor said program leaders for the 10th Baptist Youth World Conference July 11-15, 1984, plan to make it a "symbol of Christian healing of relationships, reconciliation, peace. It will allow world youth to demonstrate oneness in Christ and present a Christian witness to South America in general and Argentina in particular."

The youth meeting, sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance, is held every five years.

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CORRECTION: In Baptist Press 7/14/82, "Carrolls Face Robbers But Vow To Persevere," please change name in second graf to Jennifer (not Jeffifer), and in 15th graf to Jacki (not Jacki I.). Thanks BP