



--FEATURES

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'Pennysaver' Page Gives
California Church Boost

By Gigi Schrader

TUSTIN, Calif. (BP)--Although he's in California five miles from Disneyland and ten miles from the beach, Frank Minton believes the idea can work elsewhere, too.

It's certainly working for The Church on Red Hill in Tustin which in eight months has nearly tripled its worship attendance--something it had been unable to do for 23 years.

What made it happen? A step of faith and one page of the weekly shopper.

When Minton came as pastor 11 months ago he and the church began looking for a vehicle to get their message across "instead of just waiting for people to come to the church building."

Television and radio were too expensive. Newspaper was expensive also and didn't reach the whole area. Then, Minton said, God gave him the idea with his morning mail. At the bottom of the stack sat the Pennysaver shopper. Why not print a church newsletter on one page of the shopper? An emergency deacons meeting was called, the church loved the idea and The Church on Red Hill was in print.

Now through the Pennysaver weekly shopper the church can reach the 400,000 people in 60,000 homes that live within a five-mile radius of the building.

And reach people it does, Minton stressed. Although it took a step of faith to initiate the idea, the pastor said "the faith element is over with because it has proven itself: it works. It works in people making decisions, visitors, community acknowledgement and money.

"If it didn't get results, forget it," he continued, "but we know the results are here. We used to be a little church." When Minton arrived last September the church was averaging 110 in Sunday School and 120 in worship service. Now the Sunday School attendance is averaging 250 and worship 300--and some Sundays the preaching crowd has gone as high as 552.

It took three months before the church saw its first "Pennysaver visitor" join. But now people who have heard about the church through its weekly page join almost every week.

And people are continuing to visit. By a short questionnaire on the back of each visitor's card the church has been able to document how many people visit the church because they were interested in what they read in the Pennysaver.

On the average three new families visit each week after seeing the church page.

"People will read it for weeks before they ever come to church," the pastor said. "But when they decide to go to church they come to our church. Then when they do come they feel like they belong. They know who the pastor is and they know what we are doing."

The church page also gives the church recognition in the community. As Minton put it: "It puts us on Main Street. The entire community can look over our shoulder and see the heartbeat of the church. It somehow puts us a cut above the others and we need that here in California," he added, explaining that in California the name Southern Baptist is a cultural barrier.

Each week the California church spends \$500 to put their page in the Pennysaver. They were spending \$125 weekly to print a newsletter to send to church members.

"Why do you want to print up a little newsletter to talk to yourselves when you can talk to the whole community," Minton asked. For Minton and his church the answer was 'We don't.'

They opted for the shopper page instead because it pays off--not only in visitors, more decisions (97 baptisms in 11 months compared to a total of 28 in two previous years) and community acknowledgement but in dollars and cents. Last year, said Minton, the church received \$2,800 weekly in offerings. Now the church averages \$4,500 a week.

But the best thing about the weekly page is not all those other things, noted Minton. The best thing is any church in the country can do it no matter what size.

"That is why I am so excited about it--because even a little church can do it," he said. In many cases, he added, it would not cost as much as it does his church because it wouldn't be sent to as many homes. "It costs us 43 cents per family per year--even bulk mail letters are 5.9 cents each plus printing and paper!"

What advice would Minton give churches who would like to do this kind of thing?

He said one of the most important things is to be open and honest with the shopper people--let them know the material printed will proclaim Jesus and talk about salvation.

Secondly, Minton stressed the need to "be exciting," especially in the pastor's column. "Do not preach. I do not preach directly," he said. "Indirectly, yes; directly, no. You can't do this just to advertise your church--you must minister to the needs of the readers."

Most of all Minton said the pastor needs to make the page a "major emphasis of his time to do the best he can. "I am very intense on getting good material," he explained. "I feel it is one of the most important things I do all week. It is almost as important as my Sunday morning message. I am preaching to more people than I ever do on Sunday morning.

"It is the best money we spend in our budget," he concluded.

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(Gigi Schrader is a news writer for Word and Way, newspaper for the Missouri Baptist Convention)

More Weapons Means More Insecurity
Sisk Tells U.S. House Subcommittee

By Duann Kier

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WASHINGTON (BP)—Military spending for more nuclear weapons does not increase security and is inflationary a Southern Baptist ethicist told a House of Representatives subcommittee on defense appropriations.

Ronald D. Sisk, director of program development for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, told the representatives, "Southern Baptists are patriotic. We support a strong defense. We have offered ourselves and our willing tax support in defense of America whenever it has been called for in the past. There is nowhere a wavering note to indicate we will not continue to do so in the future.

"While we resist government waste we strongly support the constitutional duty of government to provide for the common defense and promote the general welfare."

But Sisk pointed out Southern Baptists also believe nations are accountable to God for the methods by which they defend themselves and for the effects those methods have upon the lives and fortunes of humankind.

"Given the size and power of our current nuclear arsenal, continued construction and deployment of nuclear weapons is an indefensible redundancy and an unconscionable waste of the taxpayer's money," he said.

Sisk said the cruise missile, as a virtually undetectable potential first strike weapon, seems "destined" to increase American insecurity because it could invite preemptive attack from the other side. "It is my conviction we have reached a point where national security is best served by refusing to continue to escalate the arms race. Adding and stabilizing new weapons systems to the strategic mix is the worst thing we could do."

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Sisk argued that military spending is inflationary because it requires more and more millions of dollars for less and less product.

"We are all conscious of the recurring cost overruns for virtually every major item on the military shopping list," he told the subcommittee. "Such inflationary spending is one of the chief internal enemies which you have an opportunity to defeat in this budgeting process."

The Southern Baptist Convention at its annual meeting this past June passed a resolution which supported a program of "mutually verifiable disarmament, including nuclear disarmament."

"I submit that the reality of statements like this from a group as traditionally conservative as the one I serve signals the need for a responsible rethinking of budget priorities, both near and long-term," he said. "It is time for America to rechannel funds from efforts to build a 'fortress America' into efforts to eliminate the need for an 'American fortress.'"

Sisk told those at the hearing Southern Baptists have historically supported "peace with justice" and explained this meant peace pursuits must also include a concern for justice.

"Justice is a concept which applies both to protection from external enemies and to the preservation of internal values and priorities," he said. "We do not want you to build our military machine on the backs of the poor. It does not serve the cause of justice to reduce needed social programs in order to finance extravagantly priced military schemes."

Sisk observed that nations which have prospered most are those which have majored on the production of consumer goods rather than military hardware.

"A strong America is a working America. A sound economy is sound defense," he said. "It does not serve the cause of justice to siphon investment capital from civilian into military channels at a cost of uncounted tens of thousands of American jobs."

Sisk said the goal of any good defense budget should be peace and the more that is spent in weapons systems the more our economy is placed on a footing for war.

"The more we divert capital and resources into the production of defense material the more we become arms merchant to the world," he said. "And the more we act as arms merchant to the world the more we create the very instability and danger we seek to defend ourselves against."

"You are responsible for rejecting this madness while moving our nation in the direction of greater liberty and justice for all," Sisk told the subcommittee.

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Pastors In Need of Help
Just Like 'Real' People

By Larry Chrisman

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COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--There are smiles that show we're happy and there are smiles that show we're brave. Bill Blevins, professor of religion at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., says there are also smiles that conceal problems--especially for ministers.

Blevins, who for about seven years has dealt with personal problems ministers can have, made this point during an interview at the 12th South Carolina Baptist Conference on Bible study and preaching at Anderson College in Anderson.

During the conference he led a study on "How to Stay in Ministry Without Going Crazy."

"The topic zeroes in on a problem that exists in Southern Baptist ministry that people have been hesitant to discuss," Blevins said. "Often Southern Baptist ministers put on smiles as fronts to conceal problems. Still the problems are there and need to be dealt with."

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Blevins said Carson-Newman sponsors a "Barnabas House" ministry for Southern Baptist ministers and their families that helps pastors in several problem areas. Often the problems involve stress and pressure in the ministry. He believes Southern Baptists need a system which allows ministers to find help for their problems. "Who does a minister turn to when he needs help?" Blevins asked. "Many times there is nobody."

Blevins, a member of the Carson-Newman faculty for 17 years and chairman of the religion department, offers definite ways ministers with stress-related or other problems can receive help. First, he suggests the minister find a "significant other" (a confidant who will keep the minister's confidence and be "accepting" and "not judgmental)."

Other ways ministers may receive help include: obtain self-help books offered through the Baptist Book Store, set up an appointment or a series of appointments with a qualified chaplain in a Baptist hospital, join a "support" group composed of other ministers in his town or neighborhood, seek the help of a Christian psychologist or counselor "if the problem becomes s vere" and seek help through the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"We live in a fast-pace world," Blevins said. "Our society has built-in stress problems. The minister is no exception. The main thing he needs to know is that he is not alone with his problems. Many ministers have them. He should realize that help is available and seek it."

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WMU Explores New Program:
Two Employees In One Job

By Johnnie B. McCracken

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Woman's Missionary Union has instigated a job-sharing program thought to be one of the first of its kind among Southern Baptist Convention agencies.

"We have been thinking about it for about two years," said Bonnie Shields, WMU personnel director. "We'd worked out all the details and were waiting for the right opportunity."

Opportunity arrived when Janice Wood, artist for Discovery and Aware magazines decided she no longer wanted to work full time. "I thought the only alternative was to resign and I was afraid I would lose touch with the creative art field," Wood said. "I really wanted to work part time but I thought I would have to free lance.

The time was right to test the job-share program.

Shields and Wood did not have to look far to find the other half of the team. Georgia Meador, a former full-time WMU artist with two preschoolers, was already doing part-time free lancing. "When Janice approached me with the idea I jumped at it. The only work I could find was paste-up and mechanical," Meador said. "But in this job we are given magazine copy and we decide what the illustrations and format will be. The editor has the final word but she leaves the art ideas up to the artists."

Both women met with the staff they would be working with to go over the details of the one-job-shared-by-two. Benefits are divided. Each has half the vacation time and WMU pays half of the health insurance premium for each artist. Retirement benefits are based on 10 percent of the salary.

The pay period covers two weeks so each can work two days one week and three days the next. This enables both to have a full week's pay at the end of each pay period. They are also free to trade out days if they choose.

"This way it seems I have a week off at a time. If something is bothering me about the assignment I can have the time off to think it through without pressure," Wood said. "Then when I come back to it I have a fresh approach."

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This aspect of the job-share program is one of the big plus factors that Shields sees. She said everyone has strong and weak points no matter what the job. "This way we can draw on the strengths. With two people sharing one job they balance each other," Shields explained. "We've really got something better than one person; we have the best of two."

There has been no conflict on the job. "You feel a sense of pride," Wood said. "Yet there's none of that 'my magazine, my work' feeling between us."

Meador agreed, "I enjoy my time with my children (ages 2 and 4) a whole lot more. The stresses of a job and of a family are different so I can be more understanding with the children if I can be away from them part of the time."

All agree there are prerequisites for success in such a program. The people must be compatible, have similar styles and be flexible. "The complications are there," Shields said. "But everyone involved is committed to making it work—and it is working."

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Texas Baptist Group Missed
Kenyan Coup Attempt One Day

By Jerilyn Armstrong

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WACO, Texas (BP)—One day made all the difference for a Texas Baptist group touring Kenya the first week of August.

The 16-member group, led by Eula Mae Henderson, former executive director of Texas Woman's Missionary Union, visited Switzerland and two African countries before flying into Nairobi, Kenya July 30. Henderson, interviewed at a Texas WMU Houseparty in Waco, described how altered plans kept the group away from the gunfire and lawlessness that accompanied the unsuccessful takeover attempt by the Kenyan Air Force.

"All our travel plans had been set for quite awhile but just before we left Dallas I was notified that our safari tour would be moved up a day. This meant we would leave the downtown Nairobi Hilton on Saturday morning instead of Sunday August 1. I had no idea at the time the difference that one day would make," Henderson said.

Sunday morning the attempted coup took place with much of the fighting and looting occurring near the Hilton hotel, "but through the Lord's guidance we were removed from that chaos and very safe," she said. Saturday the group left the city and on Sunday morning began making their way to Mt. Kenya. At 9 a.m. they stopped for a short break at Aladere Country Club where they were detained.

"At the country club our tour guides informed us there was some unrest in the country and we could not travel for awhile. Although we did not know any specific details we were reassured that everything was alright," she said.

"At 11 a.m. we were still waiting so we brought our group together and John Meadors, a Southern Baptist missionary journeyman we had recently met, lead us in a worship service. "Through his message the group turned its thoughts away from selves and personal worries to the missionaries and the people of this beautiful country.

"It was very uplifting, and following the message the group sang several stanzas of God Is So Good and immediately received word we would continue our journey," Henderson said.

As it traveled the group found roadblocks along the way guarded by soldiers with machine guns but made its destination safely. When the Texas Baptists returned to Nairobi on Tuesday morning they saw firsthand the destruction of several downtown stores and found windows barred to prevent further looting. For the remainder of the stay in Nairobi the group visited with local missionaries and observed the 6 p.m. curfew.

"Looking back it is interesting to realize our greatest concern before the trip was entering the country of Zimbabwe following the kidnapping of several Americans. But truthfully I was never afraid. I knew we were all Christians, people were praying for us and the missionaries were in continual contact with us," she said. "With all of that support, I could face anything!"

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