

# (BP)

New Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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New Evangelism Leader  
Stresses Family Role

AB  
By Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP)--Family is priority for Bob Hamblin.

Concern for family relationships has shaped and molded some of the views of evangelism of Hamblin, elected last month vice president of the SBC Home Mission Board and director of the SBC's nation-wide programs of evangelism.

Hamblin is deeply committed to what he calls "relational evangelism" in which Christians share the gospel with members of their immediate families as well as friends and co-workers who are part of the larger "family" with whom they regularly relate.

His concern stems from his first experiences as a Christian when his sister was instrumental in leading him to Christ.

Hamblin was 12 when he went to a Presbyterian revival and felt he ought to become a Christian. He talked to his older sister (now Mrs. Elsie Langham of Memphis) who read the Bible to him, told him "how to be saved," and urged him to join Merten Avenue Baptist Church, Memphis, where she was a member. By the time he was 16, Bob was teaching a Sunday School class of 12-year-old boys at Hollywood Baptist Church, Memphis, and working with the same kids in Boy Scouts. That year, he personally led each of the boys to believe in Jesus Christ.

"That experience really turned me on spiritually, and gave me a deep, burning commitment to personal witnessing," Hamblin recalled.

At 17, he felt God calling him into the ministry and after preaching his first sermon in 1946 at Hollywood Baptist Church his mother and father came down the aisle. His Methodist mother wanted to become a Baptist; his father said, "Son, I've tried all my life to be good enough to go to heaven, but I realize now just 'being good' is not enough."

During his 22 years as pastor of Harrisburg Baptist Church, Tupelo, Miss., each of Bob and Ruth's three daughters, Bobbye, Karis and Carole, accepted Christ under their father's preaching. Carole, 19, a student at Mercer University, Macon, Ga., says she's never heard another preacher's sermons as good as her father's.

Hamblin led another sister, Ethel, to believe in Christ just before she died in 1973. When Ethel was hospitalized in Hamilton, Ohio, the Hamblins' hometown, Elsie wrote to her every day about her faith and Ethel asked her Bob to come see her. Hamblin flew immediately to Ohio, visited her in the hospital, read the Bible, and Ethel "asked the Lord to come into her life." Two days later, Ethel died.

As a result of such experiences, Hamblin is convinced effective evangelism must be based on personal relationships. "Evangelism is best done person to person, not pulpit to person. I want to show people that Jesus is Lord by what I am, what I do, and what I say," he explained.

Many people have the idea evangelism is "buttonholing people, even strangers you've never met, and going through a set of steps to lead them to believe in Jesus as Savior but to hit people with the gospel without first establishing a personal relationship is usually unsuccessful," he said.

During his 34 years as pastor of churches in Tennessee, Texas and Mississippi, Hamblin has sought to put that principle into practice, demonstrating God's love by ministering to needs.

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While pastor in Tupelo, Hamblin got a midnight call from the chaplain at the University of Mississippi informing him the brother of a church member had committed suicide. Hamblin spent all night with the family after breaking the news and visited them frequently afterwards. Two months later, the youth's mother, father and brother accepted Christ.

"We've got to demonstrate that we love people, that we care enough to meet their personal needs, and in doing that, let the love of Christ come through us," he says.

Hamblin says all too often non-Christians don't see love, only bickering and fighting, among Baptists. He is deeply concerned about the effect of denominational squabbles on nonbelievers. Although he describes himself as "conservative" theologically, Hamblin shews labels and code words (such as liberal, conservative, moderate or inerrant) which are used by some in current Baptist bickering over the Bible and are often misinterpreted.

Instead he says he has three priorities in his ministry: personal witnessing and telling others about Jesus; preaching the Gospel and the Bible as God's word; and teaching other Christians how to share the gospel effectively.

He thinks Southern Baptists have the best program available to teach Christians to share their faith and praises the new Continuous Witness Training (CWT) plan of the HMB as "the finest program ever developed" to teach Christians effective evangelism. Hamblin feels evangelism materials developed by parachurch (nondenominational) groups are good, but Southern Baptist materials are "much better."

Not only has Hamblin taught church members evangelism methods, he has also led the church in establishing mission efforts and social ministries to meet human needs.

Harrisburg church, which designates 20 percent of its budget to the Cooperative Program, involved its members in mission trips to build churches and minister to human needs in Montana, West Virginia, Belize, Honduras and Dominica, both before and after Hurricane David devastated that Caribbean island in 1979.

The church is also involved in a meals on wheels program, ministries to senior adults, a Spanish Bible study, day care, and financial assistance for a black church. Although the church has an open door policy there are no black members. "We discovered black churches minister to black people more effectively than white churches in Tupelo, so we tried to help a black church do that," Hamblin said.

Hamblin believes the SBC has gone beyond the 1960s conflict between social ministries and evangelism. "I feel social ministry and evangelism are inseparable," Hamblin said. "I've never believed social ministry IS evangelism, but social ministry can and should be evangelistic. Neither do I believe we should do social ministries to evangelize. We should do social ministries because we love people and want to meet their needs."

Hamblin is deeply concerned that there must be a great spiritual awakening in America and believes Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust, the SBC's plan to proclaim the gospel to every person by the year 2000, may be the impetus for such an awakening spreading to other Christian groups. "I don't think any great awakening in the later part of the 20th century could be just a denominational movement. It must be a Christian movement," he says.

Hamblin said his two years of intense study of evangelism and church growth as a professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary convinced him Southern Baptists need to broaden their perspective and be less provincial. Southern Baptists are basically a rural people, and "we need to learn from others how to reach the cities."

Teaching evangelism "from a practical not an academic viewpoint", enabled Hamblin "to organize in my mind and in my theological perception what I had experienced for a lifetime."

While excited about his new role, he is both awed and challenged by the responsibility. "We face today the greatest opportunity ever known to evangelize," he points out. "It's exciting to be part of that challenge."

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Baptist Press

Home Board Elects  
Three Staff Members

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ATLANTA (BP)--The executive committee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board filled three staff positions during its September meeting.

Newly-elected staff members are Wallace W. Buckner of San Francisco, Calif., director of multiethnic ministries and Ronald J. Lawson of Kansas City, Mo., director of media production. Leonard O. Hinton Jr., HMB evangelism researcher since 1979, was named associate director of the evangelism support department.

Buckner, pastor of Grace Baptist Mission in San Francisco, will administer the programs of international ministries and ethnic studies through the language missions division. A graduate of William Jewell College and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, he was minister of adult education at First Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas, and Pleasant Valley Baptist Church, Liberty, Mo. He is a native of St. Louis, Mo.

Lawson will create and produce media products in the HMB's media department. He is a graduate of Oklahoma State University and worked as a producer/director for OSU's Educational TV Services and for KAUZ-TV in Wichita Falls, Texas. A native of Oklahoma City, Okla., he is former minister of education and music at First Baptist Church of Bethel, Kansas City, Mo.

Hinton will assist with renewal evangelism and supervise US-2 and student summer missionaries appointed to evangelism. Before his present position, Hinton was director of evangelism survey and analysis in the evangelism section and research consultant in the planning and coordination section. He is a graduate of Georgia Tech and Luther Rice Seminary.

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HMB Directors Approve  
58 For Mission Service

AB  
By Patti Stephenson

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ATLANTA (BP)--Fifty-eight persons were approved for mission service by directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board during their September executive committee meeting.

Included were 10 missionaries, 19 missionary associates, 25 to receive church pastoral assistance and four to get language pastoral aid.

Appointed missionaries were Willie and Kathy Berry of Richmond, Va.; Andrew and Edith Chan of Alhambra, Calif.; William and Mary Heck of Austin, Texas; Charles and Lois Holmes of New Orleans, La., and Jerry and Lela Purkaple of Glendale, Ariz.

Missionary associates are Steve and Tamara Belden of Melbourne, Fla.; Mark and Helen Caldwell of Mill Valley, Calif.; Gerald and Jane Edwards of Corpus Christi, Texas; Michael and Doris Freeman of New Orleans, La.; Joe and Rebecca Gardner of Topeka, Kan.; Lawrence and Lisa Heskett of Fort Worth, Texas; James and Jessie Perry of Brushton, N.Y.; Jonah and Doris Reynolds of Golconda, Ill.; Groover Thomas of Decatur, Ga., and Stephen and Frances Waddle of Mannington, W. Va.

The Berrys will move to New York City where he will be co-director of the Baptist Center. Both are graduates of Bluefield College, Virginia Commonwealth University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and were summer and US-2 missionaries. He is the former coordinator of social services of Baptist Center Ministries in Louisville, Ky., and she is a former staff writer for the Western Recorder.

The Chans will continue to live in California where he will be Chinese growth consultant in Los Angeles. He holds degrees from Alliance Bible Seminary in Hong Kong, Canadian Bible College, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Bethel Baptist Theological Seminary and Azusa Pacific University. Since 1978 he has been pastor of Chinese Grace Baptist Church in Los Angeles. Mrs. Chan is a graduate of East Los Angeles City College and works as a secretary for the U.S. Department of Labor.

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The Hecks will move to Florida where he will direct Christian social ministries in Orlando. He holds degrees from Carson-Newman College, Southern Seminary and the University of Louisville. She is a graduate of Carver School of Missions and Social Work. Heck is former director of Christian social ministries for Austin Baptist Association and has been self-employed in sales since 1977. Mrs. Heck is a secretary at Texas State Teachers Association.

The Holmes will remain in New Orleans where he becomes associate director/chaplain of the Baptist Rescue Mission. He is a graduate of William Carey College and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He came to the Baptist Rescue Mission in 1974 as a counselor and became assistant director in 1975.

The Purkables will continue to live in Arizona when he becomes director of missions for Little Colorado and White Mountain Baptist Associations. He has been director of education for Phoenix's Central association since 1979 and is a graduate of University of Texas and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been minister of education in churches in California, Texas and Arizona. Mrs. Purkable is a graduate of Texas Tech University and is a former teacher.

The Beldens will remain in Florida as church planter apprentices. He earned degrees from Carson-Newman College and New Orleans seminary and has been a pastoral intern at First Baptist Church in New Orleans. Mrs. Belden is a graduate of Brevard Community College and is employed as a secretary.

Mark and Helen Caldwell will stay in California as church planter apprentices in West El Camino. He is a graduate of Furman University and Golden Gate seminary and has been supply pastor and director of music at Nineteenth Avenue Baptist Church, San Francisco, since last year. He was a Mission Service Corps volunteer in Bangkok, Thailand, 1978-79. Mrs. Caldwell is a flight attendant for Delta Airlines.

The Edwards will move to Florida where he will be church extension director for Gulf Stream Baptist Association. He is a graduate of Lamar University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and has been pastor of Texas churches since 1968. She is a graduate of Lamar University and has taught in Texas since 1964.

The Freemans will move to Bloomfield, Ind., as church planter apprentices. Both are graduates of Houston Baptist University and he also earned a degree from New Orleans seminary. He is a former Christian social ministries intern at Baptist Friendship House in New Orleans and was minister of youth at Lakeview Park Baptist Church in Humble, Texas. She is a former HMB summer missionary.

Joe and Rebecca Gardner will move to Adel, Iowa, as church planter apprentices. He has been pastor of two Missouri churches and is a graduate of Union University and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She is a graduate of Union University and the University of Missouri at Kansas City, and has been employed as a teacher since 1979.

The Heskettts will work as church planter apprentices in Clintonville, Wis. Both are graduates of William Jewell College and Southwestern Seminary. He was a summer church planter for the HMB in 1979.

The Perrys will remain in New York where he will become missions director for Adirondack Baptist Association. He is a graduate of William Carey College and has been pastor of First Baptist Church, Brushton, N.Y., since 1980. He also has been pastor of churches in Alabama and Mississippi.

The Reynoldses will remain in Illinois where he will become missions director for southeastern Illinois. A graduate of Southwest Baptist College and Eastern Illinois University, he has been pastor of Golconda First Baptist Church since 1980 and was director of missions for Antioch Association 1979-80.

Groover Thomas is a graduate of the University of Georgia and Southwestern Seminary. He will become a church planter apprentice in Lawrenceville, Ga. He has been summer youth director in Georgia and Arkansas churches.

The Waddl s will remain in West Virginia as church planter apprentices. Both are graduates of Campbellsville College and Southern Seminary. He became pastor of Mannington Baptist Mission in May.

Those approved for church pastoral assistance were Simanu and Margaret Afoa of Ewa Beach, Hawaii; Wayne and Sharon Benack of Coaldale, Pa.; Robert and Brenda Dodridge of Mesa, Ariz.; Gordon and Susan Erickson of Portland, Ore.; Dale and Jettie Harlan of Boone, Iowa; Fred and Maxine Jolly of Monaca, Pa.; Robert Nagamine of Waimanalo, Hawaii.

Steven and Janet Nerger of Beaver Meadows, Pa.; Jesse and Martha Ryals of Tucson, Ariz.; Dennis and Katheryn Shaw of Wonder Lake, Ill.; Timothy and Carol Simpson of Columbia, Md.; Richard and Judith Thompson of Ford City, Pa.; and Jimmy and Penny Wilson of Findlay, Ill.

Approved for language pastoral aid were Jerry and Elva Alcorta of Devine, Texas, and Yau-Sun and Ruth Ann Wong of Peoria, Ill.

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Gospel Is Affirmation,  
Self Tells Single Adults

By Duann Kier

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Decrying the stereotype that single adults are half-persons who achieve wholeness only through marriage, an Atlanta pastor emphasized that singles, like all persons, become whole through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

William Self, pastor of Wieuca Road Baptist Church said, "You are persons in your own right. Anyone who uses the gospel to 'de-affirm' people is not using the gospel. The gospel is affirmation."

More than 2,200 persons attended the Single Adult Labor Day Conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center; a simultaneous conference at Glorieta (N.M.) conference center drew 2,400 participants. Both were sponsored by the family ministry department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Self urged participants to develop specific goals for their lives and help other people even when they are hurting.

"Most people only know what they don't want out of life," Self said. "They know they don't like what they've got but they don't know where they want to go."

He noted that "the one universal thing that brings all people together is the fact that we'r all hurting. Don't wait until you get perfect to serve."

"Serve while you're hurting. The pain won't go away, but you won't be looking at it all the time when you feel the power of God working through you with others," Self said.

He warned that people must change their attitudes toward their problems rather than wishing the problems would disappear. "Hell is portable," he said. "You'll never get rid of all your problems."

Ann Alexander Smith, conference coordinator and consultant in the family ministry department, said more than 100 persons made public decisions during a Sunday night creative worship service directed by Neal Knighton, minister of single adults at First Baptist Church, Columbia, S.C.

"The positive, affirming, accepting climate that developed during this conference provided the healthiest community we've had in the five years I've been directing these conferences," Smith said.

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