

(BP)

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Nobody Loves
Like 'Efee' Does

By Erich Bridges

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—A few scrupulously courteous colleagues call her Miss Dawkins. A host of others call her "Efee," an affectionate nickname that stuck years ago.

Co-workers at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board used to tease Edna Frances Dawkins, who retires in December after 35 years of service, about having "1,001 best friends." The joke is now an understatement.

"She knows everything about every missionary everywhere," says Bobbie Sorrill, education division director at Woman's Missionary Union. "If you mention a missionary name, she knows the life history."

Longtime Foreign Mission Board colleague Elmer West insists Efee "knows more information about more missionaries than any other person ever related to this board. She's a computer with compassion."

West has been Efee's boss twice, first in the missionary personnel selection department and now in the ministries and deputation department. There Efee nurtures the Foreign Mission Fellowship, a contact network of retired and former missionaries and returned journeymen which she almost singlehandedly constructed over the last decade. Membership in the Fellowship nears 2,900, only a few hundred short of the total active mission force overseas.

The Fellowship exists not only to meet needs of returned missionaries but also as an informal "think tank" for mission support and a grassroots way of promoting missions in local churches and associations. What's more, the rate of former missionaries returning to active service overseas has roughly tripled since the Fellowship began.

That statistic may in part reflect Efee's one-woman crusade to dispel the stereotype of resigned missionaries as "quitters" and establish their position as invaluable mission supporters on the home front.

"People used to treat you like some sort of pariah if you resigned," said Rudolph Wood, former missionary to Luxembourg and Belgium, at a recent foreign mission fellowship get-together in Fredericksburg, Va. "But Efee helped change that. In her own personality she's been the stimulus that brought about a different attitude."

Efee says she doesn't stop being friends with missionaries when they leave the field. As for the fellowship she says it "just sort of happened." In fact it's the result of a lifetime of carefully cultivated relationships, correspondence kept up and an intense work schedule.

The North Carolina native herself felt a call to missions in China as a young woman, breaking a marriage engagement in the mid-1940s to pursue it. But M. Theron Rankin, then foreign board executive secretary saw her talent for personnel work. She had earned a master's degree in personnel administration and worked as assistant dean of women at her undergraduate alma mater, Meredith Colletge in Raleigh, N.C. He invited her to join the board staff in 1947.

During the early '50s Efee, West and two secretaries handled all correspondence, contacts and missionary applications related to missionary service. As the personnel staff grew she eventually specialized in unmarried and medical mission candidates but her workload didn't decrease.

"It wasn't a healthy life because I worked day and night for years," she says. "I'd take candidates' life histories home to read, maybe three people in an evening." Histories ran 25 to 30 pages each accompanied by as many references. "I don't recommend it but I was privileged that I got to know every missionary."

By the time she left the personnel department 25 years later she knew virtually the entire postwar generation of foreign missionaries—their personalities, strengths, weaknesses, hurts and dreams.

Missionaries say Efee does not use that memory to pry into their lives but to care deeply and specifically about them and their families.

"Above everybody at the board I've felt she cared," says Martha Franks, emeritus missionary to China and Taiwan. She makes you feel you're No. 1."

Retiree Lorene Tilford remembers the major operation she had in 1974 and the special trip Efee made to Atlanta to be with her. "We don't forget things like that," she says.

Helen Jean Parks, former missionary and wife of Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks, remembers the vacation time Efee took to care for the Parks children while their parents traveled.

In her book, "The Gifted Woman I Am," Marjorie Rowden Kelly suggests Efee has used the spiritual gift of friendship by developing "a capacity for sharing herself with others to the total abandonment of her own needs." That intensity occasionally results in exhaustion, but Efee has no regrets.

Nor does she apologize for demanding similar commitment from co-workers.

Bill Marshall, board vice president for human resources, notes Efee is "unthreatened when she feels she is right"—unthreatened by the boss, the president or the chairman of the board.

Neither does she deny the reputation she earned as a "hard" personnel secretary in her early days. She seldom hesitated to discourage a mission volunteer she felt lacked qualifications. Today, she says, some of those she turned down are among her closest friends.

"She'll tell you what you need to hear," Mrs. Parks explains. "It may hurt, but she does it in love. Nobody loves like she does."

Now retirement approaches but not inactivity. She's a deacon at her church and active in a professional women's organization. Efee plans to write a book about her experiences, travel to China in the spring of 1983, and teach missions the following fall as a visiting professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. She even contemplates volunteer service overseas, perhaps as a mission station hostess, guiding visiting Southern Baptists and other volunteers.

A light shines in her eyes as she talks of the volunteer possibility. Fellowship with missionaries on the field, she says, is "the nearest thing to grace of anything I can describe."

Former missionary Paul Bell says: "I hope the Foreign Mission Board can hire 20 people to do what she has done."

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

'Moderate' Pastor
Withdraws From Trip

Baptist Press
10/18/82

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—C. Welton Gaddy, one of the few "moderate" representatives on a proposed trip to Israel arranged by Southern Baptist Convention President James T. Draper Jr. has informed Draper he will not participate.

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Gaddy was one of 17 Southern Baptist leaders invited by Draper to participate in the trip in late November under the sponsorship of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, a Jewish laymen's organization.

At the time he announced the participants, Draper said they represented the "full spectrum" of the current SBC political scene, and added he was interested that "these men from the diverse groups within the SBC have a chance to develop friendships and relationships."

In making public his decision not to participate in the study tour, Gaddy said he has "hesitation" to participate in an event sponsored by the B'nai B'rith.

"Though I am appreciative of B'nai B'rith and the Israeli government for their willingness to host a group of Southern Baptists, I am uncomfortable with that arrangement," Gaddy wrote in his church newsletter. "Many of Israel's military actions and policy decisions within the immediate past are simply indefensible (and reprehensible) in my opinion. I do not feel good about any identification with Israel, overt or implied, which could be misinterpreted as support for such strategies. That is simply a matter of conscience."

Gaddy also cited other reasons for withdrawing, including vacancies in the educational staff at his church, Broadway Baptist in Fort Worth, reluctance to miss the first Sunday of Advent in church and an opportunity to preach a revival meeting at Broadway's sister church in Brazil.

He said the change in plans does not change his willingness to work with Draper or anyone else to resolve differences and restore unity and cooperation within the convention.

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Baptists Aid Victims
Of Liberian Mudslide

By Mary Jane Welch

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Baptist Press
10/18/82

MONROVIA, Liberia (BP)—Southern Baptists have sent \$17,000 to help victims of a mudslide, which killed at least 55 and injured another 35 in a mining area on the Mano River near the western border of Liberia in early October.

The money will be used to provide food and housing for victims. The mudslide occurred when the side of a mountain, where iron ore was being mined, collapsed into a ravine where a dam held back slush, iron ore, mud and other mining debris. The slide caused the debris to overflow the dam and sweep through the valley, washing away homes and covering people as it went.

Rescue workers uncovered entire families killed in their sleep when mud covered the area about 2 a.m., said Ed Laughridge, Southern Baptist missionary who lives about a mile from the slide site.

Rescue workers gave up digging for bodies after four days and some bodies may never be found, he said.

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Draper Wants Parity
Of Views On Faculties

By Philip Poole

Ed

Baptist Press
10/18/82

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention President James T. Draper Jr wants a "fair representation of all (theological) views" in the classrooms of Southern Baptist colleges, universities and seminaries.

Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, told a faculty dialogue at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary he has confidence in the seminary faculty, but noted there are problems on the university level which might be spilling over to some seminary campuses.

The SBC president, however, said he does not want anyone fired because of their teachings.

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"Most conservatives would be happy with parity in our classrooms," Draper said. "We would be happy with a fair presentation of all views, but we should make a concerted attempt to bring known conservatives to our faculties."

With proper planning, he said, this could be achieved through normal attrition.

Commenting on recent meetings with various convention groups, Draper said nothing he did seemed to please "the Shermans," but he was glad the meetings were held. He referred to brothers Cecil Sherman of Ashville, N. C., and Bill Sherman of Nashville, leaders of a moderate faction in the denomination.

Draper mentioned three major conclusions which emerged from a Dallas meeting Oct. 5 of several leaders in the denomination.

He said the group concluded there are healthy differences in theology within the convention, but that the convention did not always have parity or balance. Draper said he felt the group agreed there was room for everyone to be involved as Southern Baptists and the main question was "what do we do now?"

Draper said the first step in resolving controversies is by communicating. He noted Southern Baptists have distinct theologies within the convention and that they should communicate their differences and move on.

Calling the current convention climate "extremely explosive," Draper said he believed the denominational leadership did not fully understand the relentlessness of the troops on both sides. He said the situation had gotten out of the hands of the leaders and some of the persons involved were "extremely hostile and angry" about the direction the convention was headed.

"If there can be an acceptance of the true diversity of our convention, then I can be optimistic about our future," he said.

Draper said struggle sometimes is necessary and that Southern Baptists had become careless and complacent in their work. "We had just about broken our arms patting ourselves on the back," he said.

He said Southern Baptist laity is getting tired of paying for the preachers' annual "fiasco" (convention) and they will react to convention controversy, adding he hopes to help ease the tension by appointing people who are conservatives and not identified with any political faction.

Draper told the Southwestern faculty new guidelines for resolutions hopefully will lessen controversies about that process at future conventions. He plans to use a revised process at the 1983 SBC meeting in Pittsburgh where resolutions are brought to a table on the convention floor and registered with the resolutions committee rather than being presented from the platform.

Draper said he is asking the resolutions committee to meet at least one month in advance of the convention to prepare for possible topics to be addressed by the convention.

A current study by the SBC Executive Committee should bring proposed bylaw changes which would change the resolution process and limit the extent of their content, he said, adding, "We're out of our bailiwick with political statements of national and international consequence."

Draper said he expects opposition at the Pittsburgh convention to his bid for re-election to a second term as convention president. He said the most liberal elements of the convention are within driving distance of Pittsburgh and are making well-organized plans. He said a second term would give him the opportunity to complete some projects.

"Right now people are saying 'We've been down this road before,'" Draper said. "I need a second year to prove that what I'm doing is real and not just a political ploy."

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Draper said he is trying to talk to all people in the convention. "I have confidence in our convention leadership," he said. "It's good and strong and most of our leaders are young."

He said reaction to his first appointments had been good, although he had received some criticism for not appointing more people from east of the Mississippi River. "I couldn't appoint someone I didn't know," Draper said.

He said he plans to carefully screen all his appointments to make sure they are solidly Southern Baptist.

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Baptist Ministries Day
Observed At World's Fair

Baptist Press
10/18/82

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KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptists presence at the 1982 World's Fair was spotlighted Oct. 11 when Knoxville International Energy Exposition president S.H. (Bo) Roberts led "Baptist Ministries Day" ceremonies at the fair.

Southern Baptist and World's Fair officials attended the ceremony held at the Tennessee Amphitheatre, followed by a presentation of "Love, You Spoke a Word" by PowerSource, the Baptist performing team which has attracted capacity crowds for daily shows at the Baptist Pavilion since the fair opened in May.

David Peach, executive director of Baptist Ministries for the 1982 World's Fair, expressed appreciation for fair officials' openness to the presence of the Baptist Pavilion and other religious exhibits at the fair. "Without their support and interest," he said, "we could not have achieved such a positive witness in a secular setting."

Peach projected that by the fair's end Oct. 31 more than 400,000 fairgoers will have attended a performance by PowerSource and seen the multi-image show "The Word Is ... Energy," which examines the Christian response to energy needs. Many others will have visited a display of rare Bibles and viewed puppet shows given by Baptist Ministries volunteers, he added.

As a result, Peach said, Southern Baptists have met and exceeded their aim "to proclaim the good news of Christ" through their presence as a corporate exhibit at the World's Fair.

Other Southern Baptist dignitaries present for the ceremony included Ted Huckaby, director of missions for Knox County Association of Baptists, and Ansell Baker, pastor of First Baptist Church in Athens, Tenn., representing the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

An estimated 3,500 visitors attended special added performances by PowerSource at the Tennessee Amphitheatre as well as regularly scheduled shows at the Baptist Pavilion during Baptist Ministries Day.

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CORRECTION: In BP mailed 10/15/82, in "Board Allocates Record Amount For Relief Ministries In 1982" please correct fourth graf to read "Although the Foreign Mission Board lagged in spending during years when Southern Baptist giving to hunger relief surged, it has allocated all money received so far in 1982 plus more than \$2 million (not \$22 million, as sent) accumulated in earlier years." And sixth graf, second sentence, to read: "From that, \$25,000 went to repair Beirut (Lebanon) Baptist School which was damaged and vandalized during the recent military conflict, \$5,000 went for flood relief in India and \$50,000 went to help refugees in El Salvador. (Inserting deleted material). Thanks, BP.