



- - BAPTIST PRESS

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82-176

No Evangelism If Liberals
Take Over SBC, Draper Claims

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (BP)--If conservatives don't fight to protect Baptists' theological integrity "there will be no evangelism" and "your (evangelism directors) jobs will be abolished," Southern Baptist Convention President James T. Draper Jr. has warned.

During the closing address to the national conference of SBC evangelism directors in San Juan Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, listed the current SBC controversy and adverse theological winds as one of nine major problems facing the convention.

"The extreme theological stance of the left will absolutely kill evangelism," Draper said. "The churches represented in the 'denominational loyalist group' are not winning anyone to Jesus and are not giving as much to missions as we are," he charged.

Throughout his speech Draper consistently identified himself with the theological conservative faction in the SBC, harshly criticizing SBC pastors and churches that are not conservative.

"It is inconceivable to me that a church can be doing what it ought to be doing in missions and evangelism and have thousands of members and a million dollar budget and go year after year with only five, ten or fifteen baptisms," Draper said.

"We're not trying to make everyone like us but if we don't have theological integrity and if we don't stand firm there will be no evangelism," he said. "Your jobs will be abolished and we will end up like Southern Methodist University in Dallas which has a professing agnostic as head of the religion department."

"Don't believe that all the controversy in the SBC is just a power play for political purposes," he said. "That's not true."

Draper, who had just returned from Israel, also lashed out at religious pluralism that believes that all religions are all right.

"The Bible doesn't know anything about a kind of pluralism that allows Christianity and paganism to settle down and be at peace with each other," he said. "We are to Christianize the world."

"If all our pastors and churches were busy witnessing, sharing their faith, winning people, going on partnership missions and giving to missions, we'd have no theological controversy," he said.

"As a denomination," he added, "we have become obese spiritually, materially and culturally and we can't win the world with business as usual," he said.

The denomination must also deal with the problem of urbanization since 35 percent of the people live in 22 cities but more than 70 percent of Southern Baptist churches are in rural America.

He warned that the suburbs are becoming "more and more pagan" and Baptist efforts in evangelism must include the suburbs as well as the inner city in dealing with the urban challenge. "It's not the Bible belt anymore," he lamented. "It's the pagan belt."

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He expressed deep concern for the breakdown of the family, citing the need for Baptist efforts to reach and minister to seven million divorced persons in America and a growing singles population.

Echoing an earlier address by American Baptist sociologist Anthony Campolo of Philadelphia, Draper decried the intrusion of secular humanism and secular values into the church saying faith should not be shaped by culture but is to be in tension with it.

"We have become too comfortable and we don't want to lose what we have materialistically," he explained.

Draper confessed he had personally struggled with his own affluent lifestyle, saying he made a "good salary" and lives in a home valued at about \$165,000. "I'm still dealing with my comfort and my affluence," he confided, "and I don't know the answer to that."

He called on state Baptist evangelism directors to provide aggressive, creative leadership, telling them, "don't wait to be pushed. Let us follow you, for you need to be taking the lead."

"It takes a long time to turn a denomination," Draper said. "It's like a battleship---you don't make a 180 degree turn very quickly. But business as usual is not going to get it done."

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Chafin Urges Strategy
For Winning USA To Christ

Baptist Press
12/8/82

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (BP)--Kenneth L. Chafin, pastor of South Main Baptist Church, Houston, called for the Southern Baptist Convention to develop a comprehensive strategy for winning America to Christ.

Despite the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust goal to proclaim the gospel to the entire world by the year 2000, "if we continue as we are now going, we will not win America to Christ," Chafin said.

The SBC must have a comprehensive, national strategy to succeed, Chafin told the annual national conference of SBC evangelism directors meeting in San Juan.

Chafin, former director of the SBC Home Mission Board's evangelism division, said it would be presumptuous for him as a pastor to come to them with such a strategy.

Later in an interview, Chafin said such a strategy should be developed by the Home Mission Board evangelism section but it must be endorsed and implemented by all SBC agencies and state conventions.

In his address Chafin discussed eight major factors that must be considered in developing a national strategy of evangelism.

He called for "honest reality" in recognizing that "we are losing America. We don't want to face that," he said. "Too many times Baptists like to report stories that imply we are winning when we are not." He told of one pastor who falsely told his church that 2,000 had attended Bible study that morning, and when confronted, admitted it was untrue but said, "the people needed a victory."

"There is something essentially wrong when we feel God can bless a lie," Chafin charged. "When we don't tell the truth we depress the people who are struggling with few results for it makes them feel something is basically wrong with them," he added.

Another factor which must be considered in strategy development, Chafin said, is that the world may not believe it but the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only message that speaks to the deep and personal needs of modern people.

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The gospel, he said, meets the needs of modern mankind for love, acceptance, hope, meaning and forgiveness, even though most people don't believe this.

"The world is patronizing of preachers and feels sorry for anyone as intelligent as you who is wasting his time working for the church," Chafin said.

"The world measures success by how much money you make and how much status and power you have, so by their standards you are unsuccessful," he warned. "But don't let that intimidate you because you've got the only word that answers the real questions and problems of life."

Chafin pointed out all elements of a national evangelism strategy will succeed or fail to the extent they help local churches. "Any strategy that does not ultimately center in the local church is not a good strategy," Chafin insisted.

A national strategy must also include a never-ending effort to define a Biblical theology of evangelism, Chafin added. He warned against using "gimmickry evangelism" and marketing techniques to survey the marketplace to find out what will sell and adapting the product to what the people want.

Chafin also called for a national strategy for starting new churches and tripling the number of SBC congregations.

The Bold Mission Thrust goal of 50,000 churches by the year 2000 is not high enough, Chafin said. "There is no way we can win America to Christ without tripling the number of Southern Baptist congregations," he said.

Chafin predicted 100,000 SBC churches could baptize 1.5 million converts a year. "America will not be won by the super churches but by neighborhood churches scattered all across the country," he said.

A national strategy must also strengthen the churches' efforts at equipping the laity, added Chafin, who helped develop an SBC lay witness training program and authored Help, I'm a Layman.

The strategy must also focus on the cities, he said. "Baptists will live or die, win or lose, by their ability to reach the cities," he declared.

Finally, a national strategy must be so big and so impossible it cannot be done alone but requires every Baptist and every Christian to join hands to do it. That may be hardest of all because it is hard to get Baptists to work together on anything, he warned.

There is, however, great commitment among Southern Baptists to evangelism, for the purpose of the Southern Baptist Convention is missions and evangelism, he observed. Business as usual won't suffice because "we are losing America, but God wants us to win it."

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Membership, Training
Lead Projection Report

By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press
12/8/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Church training is projected to lead all five church programs in enrollment gains with a 5.9 percent increase as Southern Baptists edge close to the 14 million milestone in church membership.

Annual statistical projections for the Southern Baptist Convention released Dec. 8 by the research services department of the Sunday School Board also indicate the denomination's total receipts will top \$3 billion for the first time.

Total receipts are expected to increase 11.2 percent (\$311,000) to \$3,094,201,304.

A decline of 1.6 percent is projected for baptisms but the total is expected to remain near the 400,000 mark.

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This will be the third consecutive year for gains to be reported in all five church programs which include Sunday School, church training, church music, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood.

Sunday School enrollment is projected to increase by 1.8 percent, or 135,511, which is the biggest gain since 1976 for the denomination's Sunday morning Bible study program. That increase will bring the Sunday School enrollment total to more than 7.6 million.

The church training increase, the largest since 1955, represents 107,037 persons bringing the total to 1.9 million. Church training leaders attributed the substantial increase to a renewed commitment to short-term and on-going discipleship and doctrine training.

Church music enrollment is projected to increase by 2.2 percent in the 1981-82 year, a gain of 35,002 to more than 1.6 million.

Enrollment for Woman's Missionary Union is projected to increase by 3.0 percent, or 33,434 to almost 1.15 million. For Brotherhood the increase also is expected to be 3.0 percent, or 15,387 to a new total of 528,287.

Mission expenditures in Southern Baptist churches are projected to increase by 9.5 percent, or almost \$42 million for the church year to more than \$483 million.

The projected total for church membership is expected to increase by 206,844, or 1.5 percent to a total of 13,996,424.

Projections are based on uniform church letters from 26,058 Southern Baptist churches, according to Martin Bradley, secretary of the research services department. He added that statistical sampling error could cause projected totals to vary slightly from actual totals.

Bradley said the only changes in this year's letter were the addition of two items under church training that identify MasterLife and other in-depth training courses.

Approximately 36,000 churches are expected to be involved in the final statistical report which will be released in February 1983.

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Student Leaders
Cite Three Priorities

By Gail Rothwell

Baptist Press
12/8/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention student leaders have reaffirmed their commitment to Bold Mission Thrust and agreed their work is focused on the three priorities of reaching students, developing believers and strengthening missions.

"It was providential that the SBC should vote to enter Bold Mission Thrust (the SBC effort to share the gospel with every person by the year 2000) because strengthening missions has been the heartbeat of Southern Baptist student work for nearly 60 years," said Charles Johnson, secretary of national student ministries of the Sunday School Board.

He noted in 1981-82 students gave nearly \$1 million to missions and 5,388 students were involved in summer missions and other short-term mission projects. In addition 10,187 students were involved in some type of community missions during the 1982 school year.

Earlier in the three-day meeting state student directors, National Student Ministries personnel and representatives from three agencies and two state conventions discussed the need for more seminary trained, full-time student workers in newer convention territories.

Nine million of the nation's 13 million students are located in SBC new work areas.

Jack Greever, director of student work for the Baptist General Convention of Texas and president of the state student directors association, said the personal need in newer convention territories is for "seminary trained, full-time student workers."

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At the same time, Greever noted, "We're having to say to a growing score of prepared student ministers that there is no place for you to serve on a full-time salaried basis. That's a tremendous frustration."

Nevada convention student director Rudy Duett said, "We need veteran student directors on the two campuses in Nevada. The people who are going to win Nevada to Christ are on her campuses today."

In other sessions directors celebrated the 60th anniversary of student work, heard reports on a national mission conference and on a yearlong emphasis on discipleship and participated in a session on priority planning.

NSM mission consultant Rollin DeLap announced a national missions encounter for students, Mission 85, will be held Dec. 28-31, 1984, at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville.

He said more than 100 home and foreign missionaries will be a major part of the program, conducting conferences and talking with students. The conference will be sponsored by National Student Ministries in cooperation with the Home and Foreign Mission Boards, Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood Commission and the six seminaries.

Milt Hughes, NSM discipleship consultant, reviewed progress on 1983-84 plans to conduct a yearlong campus emphasis on discipleship. The emphasis will be launched during the 1983 student conferences at Glorieta and Ridgecrest conference centers.

A seminar to train student directors in conducting the emphasis will be held Jan. 10-13, 1983, at the BSSB. This will be followed by six regional discipleship conferences for students in late 1983 and early 1984.

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WMU Headquarters
Sell for \$3 Million

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--The national headquarters building of Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, was sold Dec. 7.

The purchasers met the asking price of \$3 million and WMU will hold a mortgage for part of the cost. Proceeds from the sale will provide a substantial part of relocation funds.

In September WMU broke ground for a new headquarters building on a 26-acre tract of land in Shelby County, Ala. The new site is approximately 12 miles from the present WMU building in downtown Birmingham which WMU purchased in 1952.

WMU staff expects to occupy the new 125,000 foot square building in the early part of 1984. It can continue to occupy the old building for 18 months under terms of sale.

The relocation committee is refining plans for the new building while site development proceeds.

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Grady Nutt's Friends
Establish Memorial Fund

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Friends of humorist Grady Nutt, who died Nov. 23 in a plane crash, have begun a permanent memorial fund in his name at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Nutt, 48, received the master of divinity degree from the seminary in 1964 and began work after graduation as director of alumni affairs. He was employed by the seminary until 1968 when he turned a hobby into a career and became a professional humorist and public speaker.

Those who wish to have a part in the memorial fund should address their contributions to Treasurer, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, Ky. 40280.

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Walker Knight Retires
To Start National Paper

By Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP)--Announcing plans to begin a new national newspaper providing a forum for issues facing the Southern Baptist Convention, Walker L. Knight has asked the SBC Home Mission Board for early retirement, effective March 1, 1983.

For 23 years, Knight has been director of the HMB editorial department and editor of Missions/USA (formerly Home Missions) magazine.

During the HMB's executive committee meeting the day after Knight requested early retirement, HMB President William G. Tanner commended Knight for his integrity and courage, saying he is "in a class by himself" in religious journalism.

Tanner especially commended Knight for the way in which he dealt with the race issue in the 1960s, saying he stood in the breach and never backed down, was never unChristian or judgmental but was always fair and loving.

Knight said he would be seeking financial support for starting a new national publication for Southern Baptist leaders, with plans for the first issue in April.

Knight said a final decision had not been made on the name of the new publication, but it would be published by a private, non-profit corporation with a board of directors. Such a national publication dealing with SBC issues has been a long-time dream of Knight's.

Despite increased postage and printing costs, he feels the timing is right for such a publication to fill vacuums in SBC life.

"Southern Baptists do not have a national publication that reaches all pastors, SBC leaders and a significant sector of the laity for the discussion of issues," he said. "Some state Baptist papers foster dialogue on SBC issues, but there is no national publication."

Although Knight emphasized that the new national publication will not be in competition with the state Baptist papers, he acknowledged that because of postal increases, some of the state papers are having to cut back on the frequency of publication and space devoted to national issues. Knight said the paper will reprint for its national audience much of the opinion and editorials in state papers on issues facing the SBC.

The publication will seek to provide "a cross section of what is being said by large numbers of opinion leaders," carrying both "pro and con articles" on the issues. "Opinion change will require that any significant issue be discussed over a long period of time, allowing a free exchange of opinions to build consensus," he said.

Knight, as editor, will take positions on the issues editorially, but he will seek to provide balance in news coverage to provide space for expression of all viewpoints on the issues covered, he said.

The publication will also provide comprehensive news coverage through Baptist Press, Religious News Service, and other news sources to give readers a national and world perspective.

Knight said news coverage would seek to interpret what is happening in the SBC. "Because it will not be tied to any institution and will approach news from a national viewpoint, it will have a perspective and a freedom which is not present in any Southern Baptist publication," Knight said.

Knight denied the publication would be a mouthpiece for liberals in the SBC, or that it would be designed to counteract such SBC conservative publications as Southern Baptist Journal or Southern Baptist Advocate.

"This will not be a single-issue publication," Knight insisted. Although it will deal with the current SBC theological controversy, it will cover numerous other issues, he said.

Such issues, he predicted, might include separation of church and state, Baptist distinctives, new forms of evangelism, women's role in the church, soul competency and the scriptures, abortion, urbanization, world peace and world hunger.

Knight, a deacon and long-time member of Oakhurst Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga., said he would also be offering his services to Seeds, a world hunger magazine published by the church.

Unlike Seeds and the Baptist Peacemaker, published by Deer Park Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., the new national publication edited by Knight will be published by a private corporation and will not center on one particular issue.

Knight said he hoped the new publication would be financed by private contributions, advertising and subscriptions priced at about \$10 a year. Initial plans call for the 24-page tabloid to be published monthly, but Knight hopes it could become bimonthly or weekly.

Knight said he is seeking to enlist a corps of volunteer Baptist journalists, many of them members of Oakhurst Baptist Church, to assist in writing and production of the new publication.

Knight said he is excited about the new publication but is experiencing a lot of grief in leaving the HMB after 23 years. From 1950-59, he was associate editor of the Baptist Standard in Texas.

"I realize there are a lot of risks involved but I am willing to even risk failure," he said.

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HMB Approves Staff Changes;
Purchases World's Fair Carillon

By Patti Stephenson

Baptist Press
12/8/82

ATLANTA (BP)--In its December session, the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board shifted personnel assignments and voted to purchase the carillon and bell tower erected at the Baptist Pavilion during the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tenn.

The carillon and bell tower will be installed on the Home Mission Board's property as a "visible and audible religious symbol" to the surrounding business community and to thousands of motorists who pass the HMB building daily on an adjacent interstate highway, according to William G. Tanner, HMB president. Funds for the purchase will be provided from the Cecil B. Day fund established in memory of the Days Inn founder.

The committee approved three staff changes related to the HMB's evangelism section. Joe L. Ford, director of the evangelism development division, was named associate vice president of evangelism. Fred E. White, director of the direct evangelism division, will fill Ford's position as director of evangelism development division. Bobby M. Sunderland, director of the mass evangelism department, was chosen to replace White as director of the direct evangelism division.

The executive committee also elected George W. Bullard Jr. assistant director of the metropolitan missions department. Bullard, a national consultant for the HMB's MEGA focus cities strategy since last year, will continue to assist major metropolitan associations in developing mission strategies for reaching cities above the million population mark.

Bullard has also served as director of mission ministries for the Mecklenburg (N.C.) Baptist Association and as a consultant for Maryland churches in transitional communities. Bullard earned a B.S. degree from Mars Hill (N.C.) College and the M.Div., Th.M., and D.Min. degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He and his wife, Betty Jane, have two children.

In other action, the committee approved James O. Coldiron as a regional planning coordinator for Region II, which covers 10 states.

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Coldiron has served as director of evangelism for the Baptist State Convention of Michigan since 1974 and was director of missions for two Michigan associations. He was also director of missions in Toledo, Ohio, from 1965 to 1972 and pastored churches in Ohio, Kentucky and Missouri. He is a graduate of Georgetown (Ky.) College and Southern seminary. He and his wife, Bonnie, have three children.

The committee granted early retirement to James L. Nelson, who leaves the HMB after 18 years to become director of missions for Marshall Missionary Baptist Association in Albertville, Ala. Tanner also announced the resignation of Walker L. Knight, director of the editorial department since 1959 and senior editor of Missions/USA (formerly Home Missions), the HMB's magazine. Knight also requested early retirement in order to publish a national newspaper for Southern Baptists.

Tanner declared the two HMB veterans' absence would leave a large vacuum, but praised their "openness to tackle new challenges."

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FMB Names 62 At Lottie's Church,
Passes 400 Level For Year's Total

By Eric Bridges

Baptist Press
12/8/82

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (BP)--In the church where Lottie Moon was baptized the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board named 62 new missionaries breaking the 400 mark for the first time in missionary additions in a single year.

New missionaries approved in 1982 totaled 406, a 14.4 percent increase over 1981's record 355. The number includes 230 new career missionaries (another record, up 22 from '81), 40 missionary associates, 99 two-year journeymen, 24 reappointed missionaries and 13 special project medical workers.

One of the 62 named Dec. 7 at First Baptist Church, Charlottesville, was Peggy Smith, Virginia Woman's Missionary Union staff member, assigned to work with Baptist women in Brazil. Smith said she felt "surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. How could I not, standing in the church where Lottie Moon made her commitment to Christ?"

Moon, a Southern Baptist missionary to China for nearly 40 years before her death in 1912, first challenged Southern Baptists to give a special offering for foreign missions. The annual offering which bears her name and the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program support Southern Baptist missionaries in 96 countries.

There were 44 career missionary evangelists (the Foreign Mission Board's first-priority assignment) appointed equaling last year's record mark.

Winston Crawley, board vice president for planning, projected a year-end overseas force of 3,217, a net gain of 81, or 2.6 percent over 1981. He said the increase keeps Southern Baptists "on target to reach 5,000 missionaries (overseas) by A.D. 2000."

But Crawley also reported 143 career missionary resignations for the year, a sharp increase over the 95 in 1981. "This is the highest resignation rate in recent board history--at least in the last 40 years," Crawley said.

Reasons for missionary resignation are varied and complex often involving health problems, adjustment difficulties, family needs and return to new ministries in the United States. The Foreign Mission Board is trying to decrease resignations, however, through such things as periodic missionary evaluations, increased personal development opportunities on the field and during furloughs and a revamped orientation program.

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Those named as missionaries during the Dec. 7 service were: Ron and Debbie Rogers Baker of Arkansas, assigned to Indonesia; Ken and Doreen Hamilton Branton of Canada, to Zimbabwe; Dorothy Bryant, Alabama, to Brazil; Tim and Charlotte Cushing Cearley, North Carolina and Alabama, respectively, to Zimbabwe; David and Peggy Robertson Clark, North Carolina and Texas, to Mexico; and Howard and Joyce Nighbert Clark, Tennessee, to Spain.

Also named were Ray and Ginny Schlatter Davidson, Virginia and Kansas, to Liberia; Bob and Marsha Waldrep Ford, Florida and Louisiana, to Scotland; Frank and Josie Sessoms Garver, North Carolina, to Japan; Mark and Pam Gardner Grumbles, Virginia, to Costa Rica; Tom and Martha Neal Hocutt, Alabama and Georgia, to Israel; Ed and Nan McKennon Jordan, Louisiana and Missouri, to Japan; and Linda Lanham, Indiana, to Mexico.

The board also named Jim and Jani Johnson McDonald, Texas and Alabama, to Venezuela; Rick and Jackie Richardson Miller, Iowa and Missouri, to Uruguay; Kenny and Jeanne Gullede Mills, North Carolina, to the Philippines; Dave and Millie Bagwell Moreland, Louisiana and Mississippi, to Upper Volta; Sonny and Susan Smithson Pritchett, Alabama, to Thailand; Carl and Lillian Pevey Prewitt, Mississippi, to the Philippines; and Frank and Snow White Serda, Alabama and Kentucky, to Kenya.

Also named were Jim and Donna Maggard Shemwell, Kentucky, to Togo; Jim and Kathy Lieb Sibley, Louisiana and Texas, to Israel; David and Marsha McNeely Smith, Alabama and Kentucky, to Israel; Peggy Smith, Indiana, to Brazil; David and Mary Lynn Perkins Southerland, Florida and Mississippi, to Belgium; and Bob and Judy Hudgins Standardn, Texas, to Zimbabwe.

Other new missionaries named were Paul and Margie Harris Thibodeaux, Louisiana and Massachusetts, to Eastern Europe (based in Austria); Gus and Eleanor Reynolds Verdery, Georgia and Kentucky, to Switzerland; Gerry Volkart, Illinois, to Jordan; David and Kathy Swiger Weng, Ohio, to South Korea; Bill and Rebecca Howard Whittaker, Kentucky, to the Philippines; Chris and Gwen Smith Wilkinson, Florida and Tennessee, to Liberia; and Bob and Elaine Daugherty Wood, Michigan and Alabama, to Liberia.

The board also reappointed Anna Lee Painton Shelton of New Mexico as a missionary to Peru. With her late husband, Keith D. Shelton, she formerly served in Peru for 13 years before their resignation in 1978. Also reappointed were Rodney and Virginia Caraway Irby, Texas, to Chile. The Irbys formerly served in Chile and Venezuela for 11 years before their resignation in 1980.

Reemployed as missionary associates were Lawrence and Alice Boen Hardy, Georgia, to Liberia, where they formerly served from 1967 to 1977. Carol Fairley of Kentucky was employed as a special project medical worker, assigned to Ghana.

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Times Require
Creative Evangelism

By Jack Brymer

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--"Howdeeeee! I'm just so proud to be here!"

A roar of applause from the audience welcomes Cousin Minnie Pearl. But it's not the Grand Ole Opry. Nor a state fair.

The star-studded program also includes the Queen of the Cowgirls, Dale Evans. And Jerry Clower, just to mention a couple.

No, it isn't Hollywood or a television special. It's an evangelistic crusade except it's not in a church. It's in a football stadium and would you believe they don't take an offering?

The event is called Starlite and is sponsored by Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham as an instrument of evangelism to reach non-church oriented people.

According to pastor Charles Carter, the Starlite idea is not original with Shades Mountain Baptist Church. He led the church to use the concept after the Bold Mission Thrust of the Southern Baptist Convention was adopted.

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"Many non-church oriented people will never come into a church setting," said Carter. "We will reach more people in a neutral setting such as a football stadium, coliseum or arena."

Starlite is not in competition with any church, Carter pointed out, but is primarily a mission outreach and ministry to the community rather than the local church.

"This year, for example, we sent referrals to 52 different churches as a result of 166 decisions," he said, explaining that each person who responds to the invitation receives counseling from a staff trained by the Home Mission Board. Average attendance for the week-long crusade is from 2,300 to 2,600. One night this past summer 3,500 attended.

According to Carter the church, which has underwritten the costs for the past three years, sees Starlite as a priority ministry and it will continue to be as long as the church feels the lives of the people are being changed and the goals of Bold Mission Thrust are being reached.

A church must recognize that a non-traditional approach to evangelism has both assets and liabilities, he warned. "Something as big as Starlite involves a lot more people than a regular revival service," Carter cautioned. "It also requires a greater financial commitment because of the logistics, advertising and talent."

An asset to such a program is that people become really committed to it and this tends to carry over into the life of the church. The more people you involve the more of these dedicated members you have working in the programs of the church, Carter explained.

Carter warns that a church must be mature and "elastic" when it reaches out into the community through a program like Starlite.

"If we are serious about Bold Mission Thrust we must address the racial issue," said Carter, a member of the Foreign Mission Board of the SBC. "Most of the world is non-white and non-Christian and we've got to be ready to accept and minister to all people."

While utilizing new and creative approaches to evangelism Carter feels the traditional approach is still effective if properly planned and used.

"For the last two decades the greatest weakness in evangelistic efforts has been the lack of preparation," Carter claims. "Not the lack of good music, not the lack of good preaching--but the lack of intensive preparation."

"Pastors are not planning the date until the last minute--maybe three months in advance," he continued. "Some set the date and name a team and that is all they do."

Carter said it took two years to get ready financially for Starlite. Three months of intensive preparation--spiritual development, publicity, logistics, creating a systematic way of promoting attendance, training teams to go into homes for prayer and invitation to meetings--goes into each campaign. Without such an effort almost no lost persons will attend.

According to Carter there is no "the way" method of evangelism except personal evangelism but he cites Sunday School as still the church's greatest evangelistic arm.

Whatever the method, Carter believes it must be tied to the local church. "The local church is where the action is," he said emphatically. "Para-church groups will never win the world to Christ and while the electronic media may be used as a tool of evangelism, the electronic church will never win the world to Christ."

The church is also important because evangelistic efforts must be balanced by wholesome discipleship and Bible study.

Carter plans to continue the emphasis on local church revival but at the same time try to be sensitive to new ways of accomplishing goals of evangelism through creative means.

"If every church properly implements, selectively or totally, 1) personal commitment, 2) Sunday School enlistment, 3) local church revival efforts and 4) creative, innovative methods, we can win the world to Christ," said Carter.