



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Craig Bird, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367. Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201. Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234. Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230. Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. Telephone (202) 544-4226

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Southern Baptist Appointed Chaplain
Director For Federal Prison System By Charlene Shucker

ATLANTA (BP)--A Southern Baptist minister has been named director of chaplains for the federal prison system for the first time in the department's history.

Charles Riggs, 47, appointed by the Department of Justice Bureau of Prisons, will assume his duties in Washington, D.C., this summer.

"Honestly, I was surprised when I got the news. I've only been in prison service eight years as a full-time employee. I did not seek it but I felt that I should take it," Riggs said.

Since 1981, Riggs has been southeast regional chaplaincy administrator for the Bureau of Prisons, working with chaplains in six states, including Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina and Tennessee.

In his new post, 69 chaplains working in 43 federal prisons will report to Riggs. "Our chaplains represent nearly all mainstream denominations: Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal, Catholic, Assembly of God, Church of Christ, Disciple of Christ and Jewish. Also, we have several women chaplains, two of whom are Southern Baptist," he said.

Riggs' duties will include training chaplains, developing policies for inmates and acting as a resource person on all religious matters.

To inmates, a chaplain often represents the one area, spiritual fulfillment, that has the greatest need for response, Riggs said.

"A chaplain uses his counseling gifts to listen, love and help inmates work through prison paranoia. You treat them as real men with real problems. A good chaplain is really no more than a good pastor," he said.

Once in Washington, Riggs would like to effect a more positive image of chaplaincy work. "It has yet to be seen what contributions chaplains can make in our prisons if fully supported by executives of the institution. It is obvious rehabilitation has not worked," he said.

"There have been some instances where secular leaders have taken a purely administrative posture toward inmates, which did not leave room for spiritual values and maturity through faith. In those cases, chaplains have to determine if their commitment and calling is important enough to stand in a situation without bitterness, anger, hostility and frustration overtaking them."

Riggs added: "Chaplains have a unique role in the prison system. Often staff personnel may think he is too much for the inmate while the inmate thinks he is too much of a staff person.

"He (the chaplain) has to have the autonomy to walk in his own shoes, to be his own person and to fulfill his vocation with a sense of satisfaction."

The establishment of better reference materials is another project Riggs will sponsor. "With so many religions it is difficult for a chaplain to know all the celebrations, diets and holidays. These materials will help chaplains make decisions when inmates make a request," he said.

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Riggs, a native of Kentucky, said his interest in prison ministry began in 1959 when he was pastor of Faith Baptist Chapel in Louisville. "It was nothing unusual to minister to jail folks. Sometimes we were the only people they could call," he said.

A few years later, Riggs influenced the townspeople in Lewisport, Ky., to replace an old, deteriorated, county jail with a modern facility. After five years as pastor of Lewisport Baptist Church, Riggs moved to Georgia where he was pastor 16 years at Confederate Avenue Baptist Church in Atlanta. "To make ends meet I had to make some tents somewhere," he said. For five years Riggs worked 20 hours a week as a staff chaplain in Atlanta's federal penitentiary.

"As chaplains would come and go, I stayed. In 1975 I was appointed full-time chaplain at Atlanta Pen and went part-time with the church," Riggs said.

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Urban Ministry Demands
Baptist Commitment To People

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptists cannot afford to believe in the Bible without practicing its message in the city, a Chicago seminary professor says.

Raymond J. Bakke, professor of ministry at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Lombard, Ill., told Southern Baptist urban pastors and directors of missions urbanization of the world is a reality and Southern Baptists must accept responsibility for urban needs.

With 232 world class cities with populations in excess of 1 million people "it's obvious that God is urbanizing the world," said Bakke. And, he added, God "is internationalizing every major city."

He noted that in his Chicago neighborhood, 60,000 people representing 17 different nations live in the one-mile-square area. In addition, of the 232 nations in the world, 52 of them are represented in the public school attended by his children. Such pluralism, said Bakke, has implications for Southern Baptist missions.

The foreign board and the home board are going to have to cooperate," he said. "Everything we've learned about international ministry now needs to come out of Atlanta and all the stuff your Southern Baptist missionaries need to know overseas they ought to be taught during their furloughs by being cycled into urban research and development at home.

"The day when missionaries come home and trot around to churches and talk about what they do overseas to a group of people who ought to be doing that very same thing within a mile of their building is over," he asserted.

Bakke said Southern Baptists must develop educational and ministry models for the city and suggested that the Baptist Sunday School Board designate a tithe of its budget to create models for urban ministry. But, he added, Baptist agencies, like other denominational agencies, claim to be support bases for churches doing ministry instead of "doers" of ministry.

"So what happens is that everybody uses cities but nobody ministers to them," said Bakke. Instead denominations establish "clubhouses," or headquarters in cities and use city services, public transportation and schools for their children but "they do all their ministry somewhere else.

"We're not reaching the cities," claimed Bakke. "In fact our presence there is probably keeping us from seeing what we ought to see. We live out (in the suburbs) and we commute in and do our thing and go back. Our products are so diffuse but we've never defined the turf where the 'clubhouse' is as a recipient of our ministry. We've no plan to penetrate and to saturate the area."

Bakke noted that urban centers are attracting ethnics, further illustrating that English-speaking people are the minority of the world. With a United States hispanic population greater than the total population of Canada, Bakke stressed that America has already become a bi-lingual nation.

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But, he said, Americans tend to hold to a "melting pot" theory of assimilation, a theory which derives its image from steel-making where the goal is to burn off impurities. "How is an ethnic with an accent or with a color (-ed skin) supposed to view melting pot assimilation theory except to see it as, under pressure, knocking off their distinctives?" questioned Bakke.

One pastor suggested viewing cultural assimilation as a "stew pot" being "spiced and enriched" by ethnic culture. But Bakke warned that western culture may instead be flavoring ethnic value systems with devastating results. He noted that Orientals place strong emphasis on the elderly, with younger generations bearing responsibility for parents and grandparents.

"The American value system encourages the Oriental to throw away their grandparents or to give them to the government or to warehouse them," explained Bakke. "The church is going to have to be a buffer and design new caring systems for Lao, Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese and other Orientals."

Bakke noted foreign missionaries are required to learn the language and culture of the people with whom they work and he suggested those requirements now have implications for home missions. He applauded the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's language missions division for being "light years ahead" of most denominations in providing resources for cross-cultural ministries.

Yet Bakke feared Anglos' insecurities may prevent churches from becoming involved in ethnic ministry. "I think one of the reasons that (homogeneous) church growth theory is being received right now with such enthusiasm has to do with the psychological need of whites to feel big," said Bakke. "The internalization of our own 'minorityness' is starting to get to us. We've never felt like to was necessary to have 5,000 seats in a sanctuary before.

"But why are we pushing to have these bigger and bigger barns?" said Bakke. "Is it really church growth or is it our need to feel big in a society in which we are increasingly marginated because our culture is threatened?"

Although he admitted there is truth in church growth principles, Bakke questioned whether churches weren't "building walls and resegregating the church in the name of homogeneous units."

Bakke said reaching cities requires that Christians become personally involved again with people in the inner-city. "When I went to Chicago I saw churches backing out of the city and all the time claiming to have the answer in an inerrant Bible," he recalled.

During the late 60s he noticed church strategies for urban ministry began to imitate Vietnam War strategies. U.S. planes would fly from Guam on bombing runs, then return to the Pacific island for "a night's sleep," said Bakke.

Similarly, suburban churches organized evangelism "explosions" and "crusades" as a way to do urban ministry. "We (the church) had abandoned relationships in the city and were retreating to programatic and impersonal media and blitz strategies to cover the tracks of a fleeing church," said Bakke.

In the more than 1,400 biblical references to cities Bakke noted that Jewish priests lived and worked in cities while prophets took responsibility for ministry outside the cities. Bakke said associations should fill the prophet's role but pastors need to have a "theology of place" that will lead them to put down roots and stay in the city.

Bakke was pastor of an inner-city Chicago church for 10 years before becoming a Northern Baptist seminary professor. Working with only 11 adult church members of Swedish descent, Bakke led the church to begin seven mission chapels, organize groups for relocating persons burned out of inner-city apartments by scores of arson fires and establish a Spanish language seminary which now boasts more than 100 students. During Bakke's tenure at the Fairview Avenue Baptist Church, membership increased from 50 resident members to more than 400. He also helped members develop strategies for personal evangelism "to scratch people where they itched in the name of Jesus."

"It's not by having super-duper programs and inviting people to the sanctuary that we're going to reach the cities," said Bakke, "but by allowing laypeople to identify their primary relationships and then evangelizing in those networks."

Bakke added equipping laypeople for ministry will require that urban pastors re-define their role in church leadership.

"The pastor's job is not to run the church but to empower folks so that they can take charge of their ministry as God is calling them," said Bakke. He added that models where the pastor directs all church activities resembles "heavy parenting," and church members' ideas serve to threaten the pastor. But, said Bakke, to be effective in urban ministry pastors must be willing to lay aside authoritative and paternalizing forms of leadership. The result, he added, will set people free to live rather than telling them how to live.

"The gospel is news and not advice," concluded Bakke. "Ann Landers offers advice but to make it functional you have to do something.

"Jesus offers news, which is something that's already been done for you. Announce that news, and people hear that Jesus loves them, cares for them and suddenly they get the energy to transform their prison called the ghetto. Tell them good news and then help them work out how to deal with the consequences of the news, which is to change social structures and to bring freedom."

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Woman's Task Force
Plans Pittsburgh

By Tim Fields

Baptist Press
3/23/83

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--A diverse group of 34 Southern Baptist women has named a task force to plan a pre-Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Pittsburgh for women involved in ministry roles.

The group, which met in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission annual seminar in Louisville, also enlisted the help of the commission to sponsor and promote the meeting.

According to coordinators of the Louisville meeting, the nine-member all women task force will set an agenda for the pre-convention meeting to provide a forum for discussion which will possibly lead to the formation of a steering committee on women in ministry.

Other expected agenda items include the sharing of ideas on ways to improve the role and status of women in ministry, the possible formation of an ongoing professional association or network and ways to encourage SBC agencies to give additional support to women in ministry.

Members of the task force include: Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union; Lela Hendricks, special project coordinator for the Christian Life Commission and the Home Mission Board; Nancy Hastings Sehested, associate minister of Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga., and Ann Neil, retired missionary and visiting professor of missions at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Other members are: Jenny Weisz, an attorney from Chapel Hill, N.C.; Ann Davis, associate professor of social work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville; Sarah Frances Anders, professor of sociology at Louisiana College; Evelyn Stagg, freelance writer from Bay St. Louis, Miss., and Reba Cobb, minister to younger youth at Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville.

The task force is expected to announce plans for the pre-convention meeting in a few weeks.

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NOBTS Trustees Meeting
Held March 18, 1983

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A record \$5.734 million budget was adopted and an 18 percent base salary increase for all New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary faculty members was approved by the seminary's board of trustees during its annual meeting March 15-16.

The faculty salary increase coincided with the board's approval of a dual track program allowing students to complete a seminary degree program by taking courses at night. Faculty members are therefore compensated for the extra teaching load.

Cliff Amos was elected vice president for development for the seminary and Jo Morton Bevington was elected assistant professor of childhood education. Amos has been director of development for the past two years. Bevington will join the faculty in July after three years at Biola University in Los Angeles where she is assistant professor of education.

M. Thomas Starkes was named professor of Christian missions and also designated Chester L. Quarles Professor of Christian Missions. C. Ferris Jordan was promoted from associate professor to professor of adult education.

Professors in the School of Christian Training were granted rank on the seminary faculty. SCT Director Jerry Breazeale was granted full professor status as professor of New Testament. Charles E. Graham was elected associate professor of Old Testament; Robert Barnes, associate professor of church history, and Luther M. Dorr, associate professor of preaching.

In response to a request from the student body the board approved a \$218,000 proposed expansion of the seminary owned telephone system to include telephones in dormitory rooms and guest housing.

William M. Hamm, president of Berg Mechanical, Inc., Shreveport, La., was re-elected president of the board. Frank Gunn, pastor of First Baptist Church, Biloxi, Miss. was elected vice president. Fred J. Vogel, professor emeritus at the University of New Orleans, was elected secretary. Joyce Fox of Lafayette, La. was elected treasurer.

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W. Douglas Hudgins
Dies In Jackson

Baptist Press
3/23/83

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--W. Douglas Hudgins, 77, executive secretary emeritus of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, died March 23 in Mississippi Baptist Medical Center of a pulmonary embolism.

Hudgins entered the hospital March 9, and underwent surgery March 10 for replacement of an aortic valve in his heart.

He was born May 4, 1905, in Tennessee, and was a graduate of Carson-Newman College and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Hudgins was named acting executive secretary of the MBC in July 1968, after the executive, Chester Quarles, died in Peru. He became executive secretary in February 1969, and retired in 1973. Prior to assuming the post, he had been pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson, where he served 1946-1969.

He also was pastor of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, 1936-43, and First Baptist Church of Houston, 1943-46. Hudgins had been chairman of the SBC Executive Committee and president (now chairman of the board) of the Foreign Mission Board. He was vice chairman of the special committee which wrote the Baptist Faith and Message Statement, adopted by the SBC in 1963. He was first vice president of the SBC in 1958.

Memorials are requested to First Baptist Church of Jackson, to be used for the W. Douglas Hudgins Chair of Preaching, which was established at the church in 1982.

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