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**Don't Despise 'Rescue Work'
Miller Tells SBC Educators**

By Lonnie Wilkey

DALLAS (BP)--Southern Baptist educational institutions have a dual commitment to answer ignorance with education and to provide emptiness with meaning, says a leading Southern Baptist author and writer.

That was the central idea expressed by Calvin Miller during the 1983 H.I. Hester Lectures at the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools' annual meeting in Dallas. Miller, pastor of Westside Baptist Church, Omaha, Neb., and author of 15 books of popular theology and inspiration, spoke on "Real Education--The Great Integration" and "The Dream of Elitism."

Christian educators must infuse the learners committed to their instruction with more than data, logic and empiricisms, he said. "We want to say that being, not knowing alone, is the real subject of Christian education, 'To know' may be lawless, egoistic and destructive, but 'to be'--in its best sense--is Christian."

According to Miller, there is a developing trend which fears the direction of higher education because it seems to prize the intellectual. "We retreat into our fears and traffic in naivete and ignorance...for the sake of common identity with common man. There is something in our grass roots pride that makes us sneer at too much education...."

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Miller said, the neglect of faith as meaning is becoming an increasing problem in academic environments. "We must not allow God and his created world to become too separate...and we must not be ashamed to speak of faith in simpler words. "The Word, Jesus, must be a welcome word in academia."

What is needed, he explained, is a whole view of man that sees no contradiction in pulling students from computer lab to sing "Jesus Saves" in chapel.

"We must commit ourselves to teach in such a way the student knows we have seen him or her as a child of God and in this marvelous perception we can rejoice together, not as we widen only the student's world view, but our world views together."

Teachers who cannot locate meaning for themselves cannot give inner meaning to their students. "The best education faces the nature of the learner. Man cannot be fully man without honoring origin in God," Miller said.

Miller also warned the educators of a dangerous drift toward elitism common to all schools, universities and seminaries. He stressed the drift does not begin in the theology or philosophy departments, but begins instead in the deepest layers of every ego.

He noted how educational institutions, schools which originally began as Bible colleges, have stepped toward elitism and cited examples of Ivy League schools.

"We have moved from calling ourselves academies to institutes to colleges to universities. We fund lectureships with names of none-too-intelligent benefactors looking for tax-shielded investments and spawn departments with small enrollments so the catalogues will read right."

If schools move away from their basic charters--which were usually written by a grass roots constituency--they create a gap between themselves and the grass roots from which they drew their first students, he pointed out.

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"The integrity of a school should always demand its theology remain in concert with the charter of the school where it is taught, or the school should change its charter," he said.

He noted the best argument for keeping a Christian school Christian is remembering the challenge, "Christian education is not education which is named Christian but one where the educators themselves are Christian."

Miller concluded by urging the educational institutions to join hands with the churches.

"However much we learn, the Christian campus, like the church itself, must not despise the oars and boats by which we row the rough waters in search of lost humanity. Education, like the church, must help with the nasty business of rescue work.

"If it grows intellectually proud and despises the lowly work of redemption, then already it has exalted itself above the Lord.... The campus must remember our shoe soles walk the same earth as His sandals once did and for the same reasons."

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Southern Baptist Teen
Earns Nationwide Recognition

By Pat Ford

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PENSACOLA, Fla. (BP)--Dung Nguyen, a Southern Baptist Acteen, grabbed national headlines recently when she graduated as valedictorian from Pensacola (Fla.) High School.

When Dung (pronounced Zoom) arrived in America in May 1975 from Vietnam, the only English word she knew was "no." Eight years later, when she graduated at the top of her class, Dung had earned a straight-A average.

President Ronald Reagan, who called Dung on her graduation day, told her, "You're good for the country. The whole country is proud of you." All three major television networks covered her graduation. She was interviewed on ABC's "Good Morning America" and NBC's "Today Show." National wire services picked up her story, as did nationally known radio commentators Charles Osgood and Paul Harvey.

How did this 17-year-old respond? For Dung it was not a problem. Her philosophy is, "You accept the good and the unpleasant in your life in the same way--very calmly."

Her life has had a lot of unpleasantness. When she was nine, she and her family left Vietnam by boat and headed to the Philippines. From there they flew to Guam and then on to the United States where they were housed in tents at Eglin Air Force Base until sponsors were found. Three American families co-sponsored the Nguyen family.

Within two months after moving in with her sponsors, Dung was speaking some English. After another few months she was conversing. She had to study extra hard to catch up with fellow students, and she studied even harder to surpass them.

Most evenings found her studying in the public library until 8 p.m. She didn't participate in as many extracurricular activities as her fellow students because of the time and money involved.

In their modest apartment, the Nguyens maintained traditional Vietnamese values. Dung's mother, Lai, wore Vietnamese dresses to church. It was difficult not to look back with nostalgia to the days when the meals were prepared by a cook.

Today, the family enjoys eating Vietnamese food with chopsticks but Dung is just as comfortable eating pizzas and hamburgers with her friends.

A week after graduation, the family moved to Garden Grove, Calif., where Dung's older brother, Sieu, lives.

A member of First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Dung joined Acteens, the WMU organization for girls in grades 7 through 12 because she wanted Christian friends.

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She says she enjoyed the closeness of the group. Her group was aware of her desire to be valedictorian and prayed weekly she would reach her goal. In January 1983, Dung was selected as a national Acteen Top Ten for her accomplishments in Acteens.

During her three years in Acteens, she only missed four meetings. Each absence was preceded by a note explaining why she could not attend. Many evenings during her final school semester, she went straight from Acteens to the library to study.

Three years ago when her Acteens group was encouraged to read through the Old Testament, another member overheard Dung say she did not have a Bible. The Acteen purchased the Bible for her, and since then, Dung has developed the habit of daily Bible study.

Her former teachers respect her. Her fourth grade teacher, who attended her graduation, said, "Even in the fourth grade it was apparent Dung would be an exceptional student."

Two high school teachers who had the greatest influence on Dung are Southern Baptist. Linda Thomas, a member of First Baptist, Pensacola, helped Dung obtain a four-year scholarship to Baylor University.

On Dung's bedroom door is a poster that reads, "You are never given a dream without the power to make it come true." When she enters Baylor University in the fall, she will be working to make another dream come true--that of becoming a doctor.

In her valedictory address, Dung urged her classmates to set high goals. She said, "My friends, go and use your wisdom to steer your own course and never settle for anything less than your very, very best."

This summer Dung and her sister are in Baton Rouge, La., selling books door-to-door. On Aug. 21, Dung will be back in her Acteens group to speak at the Acteen, Girls in Action and Royal Ambassador Recognition Service in her church. She plans to use the opportunity to encourage these young people to give their very best.

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(Pat Ford is a free lance writer in Pensacola, Fla.)

Carol Henson's Work
Child's Play In Chile

By Bill Webb

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SANTIAGO, Chile (BP)--Starting churches is child's play for Carol Henson.

Entering a Santiago neighborhood, the Southern Baptist missionary arms herself with games, not tracts. Instead of knocking on doors to invite adults to Bible study or worship, she cruises parks and playgrounds in her mission station wagon, on the lookout for children.

Her strategy is to observe long enough to identify the meanest boy in the group, the one causing all the problems. "Everyone knows him and he knows everybody," she explains. "You make a friend of him and get him to go visiting with you. Once that child is with you, you've got an open door to invite other children."

Henson is confident beginning with children is the most effective way to start a church from scratch. Adult work is phase two.

For six weeks, the Ooltewah, Tenn., native gathers the children for games and creative Bible classes--enough time for the group to stabilize. Then she contacts their parents; by this time she knows the children come to her classes with their parents' approval.

She knocks at each door and introduces herself as the children's Bible teacher--simple introduction, no invitation. The second time she knocks, she usually is asked inside. Then she invites parents to an adult Bible study.

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"If you are a friend of the child, you've got a wide open door to any home," she maintains. "I would say 90 percent of the time the adults you reach are the parents of children who are coming."

Henson doesn't view the children as pawns to reach adults. When a nucleus of adults is identified, other missionaries or members of another church usually help with them. She continues with the children. "My teaching is basically to see the children saved," she explained. "But I do not give invitations to children in groups as a general rule."

"For example, I've had these children about a year and a half now and Sunday we had gone through a unit where I had explained salvation. I felt some might really be interested. I invited those who had questions about it to come talk with me in the room afterwards. Out of 50 children--ages 11 through 14--seven came.

"They were all interested but none really made a profession of faith. I want them to do it when they're ready, but I want it to be genuine. I'm not one who comes out and says, 'Well, I had 50 children and 49 professions of faith today.'"

Currently she works with missionaries Jim and Fern Bitner at Santa Carolina Baptist Mission. In this case they began with an adult Bible study and later invited Henson to join them to help with children's work, Sunday school and WMU.

On a warm afternoon at the house where the mission meets, she unloads her portable playground and classroom from her car--boxes of toys and teaching materials and a set of colorful, stacked chairs she built herself. The children take turns playing games. She greets them, then takes her turn at table-top tennis. Everyone gathers around. She plays to win but loses this time.

Henson doesn't underestimate the value of playing time. "It ties the group together," she explains, "and it gives them a chance to put into practice Christian principles we're teaching in th class."

The shift to Bible class is subtle as youngsters take their seats in a semicircle. Instead of a Bible, Henson uses Bible games, most of them created in her spare time. The children, bright-eyed, sit at the edge of their seats, anxious to toss a bean bag on a playing board and answer the Bible questions there. A few games later, everyone gets a candy reward from th teacher.

When everything is neatly packed in the car, she admits what has been obvious: She had as much fun as the children, even though she has repeated this routine hundreds of times with thousands of children during the past 15 years. Starting work this way is her first love.

Her primary role in Chile now is national Vacation Bible School director. She coordinates training for workers and produces materials for 25,000 participants a year. For her first 10 years in Chile, she was dean of women and Christian education instructor at Baptist Theological Seminary in Santiago. Before assuming her current role, she worked a four-year missionary term doing nothing but starting work.

That experience taught her something. She and a Chilean girl worked with 25 groups of children in 11 areas each week. Unfortunately, not all those groups had sponsoring churches or individuals committed to establishing churches.

The effort is never wasted, she says, "because you've invested in the lives of these children." But she tries to begin work where a church will take responsibility for follow-up.

As a mission nears organization into a church, Henson begins to pray for a new neighborhood and a new group of kids with a mean little boy who can help her do it again.

Africa's Where Action Is,
Claims Evangelist Runyan

By Erich Bridges

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Christians can win Africa to Christ in the next decade, claims Farrell Runyan, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's evangelism strategist for Africa.

"Listen to me. If we had the missionary personnel to preach and train others to preach, we could take Africa for Christ in the next 10 years," Runyan told listeners at the Foreign Missions Conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center. "I'm working harder today than I've ever worked in my missionary career and I'm enjoying it more, because I'm right out where the action is."

Runyan said the number of Christians in Africa is growing five times faster than the population, surging from 10 million in 1900 to between 175 million and 200 million today. If response continues at the same rate, he said, Christians will number 400 million by the end of the century. The growth has come in spite of, and sometimes because of, wars and upheaval. Christian growth in Uganda and Zimbabwe are recent examples.

For missionaries of past eras Africa was the "white man's graveyard" and it lived up to its name, Runyan recalled. The 20th century brought its own problems; the end of Western colonialism provoked a backlash against foreign influences, including missionaries. Mission stations and institutions were attacked, some national churches asked missionaries to go home, and even traditional missionary-sending groups demanded a "moratorium" on foreign missions.

At the same time Muslims launched a fervent missionary movement to consolidate their strength in north Africa and conquer the south. They won millions of converts but Runyan believes they have now come to a "sort of standstill."

Southern Baptists were just getting started as the century began. "At the beginning of 1900, after Baptists had been in Africa for 50 years, we still had only six missionaries, six churches, six preaching stations and 385 members," Runyan said. "In the last 80 years we have seen such an outreach for Christ that we now have 800 missionaries working in 29 countries in Africa, with almost 4,000 Baptist churches and over one-half million believers."

Missionaries have also learned, he added, "to change our attitude toward national Baptist groups...rethink our servanthood relationship with Christ...remember that we are ambassadors for Jesus Christ, not Uncle Sam...(and) be prepared to work and witness under political and social conditions not particularly to our own liking...."

But the key to growth is in African Christians themselves, Runyan emphasized. Today there are more than six million believers in Kenya. In Zaire the population is 60 percent Christian. Teams of national Christians in Tanzania recently fanned out to unreached towns and villages and reported 4,200 conversions to Christ. Sixty churches were begun. A similar evangelistic campaign in Tanzania last year produced 7,800 new believers.

Teams of Kenyan Baptists went into an area populated by 400,000 people and only 16 churches, Runyan reported, and started 80 more churches "without any outside assistance whatsoever."

More Southern Baptist missionaries can develop more African Baptists into strong church leaders, said Runyan. He reminded the Ridgecrest gathering the strongest centers of Christianity once headquartered in Africa. The churches of north Africa produced giants like Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Clement and Augustine before they weakened and were swept away by the onrush of Islam.

What happened? "About the third century, after engaging in church planting and preaching and evangelizing, the church began to argue and debate on theology," Runyan said. "Does that sound familiar?"