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South Carolina Church
Ordains, Calls Woman

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--The first woman to serve as pastor of a Baptist church in South Carolina was ordained Aug. 14.

Esther Tye Perkins was ordained by Pine Bluff Baptist Church, Columbia, S.C., and called as interim pastor. She immediately disavowed "any interest in Woman's Lib or the ERA," but strongly defended her ordination by saying, "When God calls, we must respond."

Approximately 25 women have been ordained and are serving as associate pastor or in other staff ministry positions in South Carolina, but none serve as senior minister according to the Baptist Courier, newsjournal of the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

Perkins is the widow of Charles G. Perkins. He was pastor of Pine Bluff from 1978 until his death May 23. She was minister of music and education, a paying staff position at the 383-member "basically rural church."

"I am not interested in making history or in calling attention to myself by this ordination," Perkins said. "I do not see this ordination as involving manhood or womanhood, but servanthood," she said. "God called my husband into the ministry and through the years we had a shared ministry. This is my opportunity to continue it. As for women being liberated, Jesus Christ liberated me many years ago."

Three ministers participated in the ordination service. Jim Smithwick, director of missions in Columbia Metro Association, preached the sermon. Howard G. McClain, executive minister of the Christian Action Council, gave the charge to the candidate. Inez Register of West Columbia gave the charge to the church.

Perkins, 62, is a native of Montgomery, Ala. She preached her first sermon at Pine Bluff May 29. It was less than a week following her husband's death. "But there was nobody else," she said. The deacons asked her to stay, the church asked her to be interim pastor, and the congregation voted unanimously to ask for her ordination.

In the past 10 weeks she has baptized five new converts and has two now awaiting baptism. She has conducted one funeral service. And with ordination she says she looks forward to performing a wedding ceremony.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Coups B come Way Of Life
For Many Missionaries

By Joe Bruce

Baptist Press
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GUATEMALA City, Guatemala (BP)--During a normal career, many missionaries experience one or more coup d'etats (a forceful overthrow of the existing government).

In our 14 years of missionary service we have gone through at least five successful government takeovers and innumerable attempted ones. We experienced our first coup just two days after arriving on our field of service. Coup number five occurred Aug. 8.

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The sensationalism and graphic portrayal of such events by some of the international news media often leave stateside family and friends of missionaries in a state of panic over their welfare. Some danger does exist during an attempted coup, but it is usually minimal.

Unless you happen into the conflict area during the coup attempt, you possibly would not know about it until the danger is past or until you hear it on the evening news.

Although there is no such thing as a "typical" coup, our experiences have been similar in the five we've encountered.

Usually the political climate of the country begins to heat up weeks or months before the coup. The existing government imposes laws or commits acts unpopular with one or more special interest groups within the country.

Those people then begin working behind the scenes to discover if there is enough support among military leaders to overthrow the existing government. If so, plans are secretly laid to carry out the coup.

When the day and hour of the attempted coup arrive, insurgents move as rapidly as possible to control the electronic communications centers. Suddenly the telephones will not work and the radio and television stations go off the air.

Rebel forces also move toward the center of government, usually the presidential palace or congress building. If the coup has widespread support, usually there are people already in place inside and outside the building. Commonly armed men, sometimes tanks and aircraft, are brought in to surround the installation. Shots may or may not be fired.

If there are enough troops loyal to the existing government to repel the attack, the coup fails. If the rebels overpower the loyalists and take the building, the coup succeeds.

Generally the military action is confined to a relatively small radius around the central government buildings. Therefore, unless you happen to be in the immediate vicinity, your physical danger is relatively slight.

Often the only clue anything extraordinary is happening is the change in programming on the radio and television. Instead of continuing regular broadcasts, the electronic media are synchronized or all but the official rebel stations are silenced. Usually the coup broadcast consists of martial music and an occasional rebroadcast of the official statement announcing reasons for the coup and the persons responsible for it.

After the existing head of state is deposed, coup leaders take steps to get their person sworn in as the official head of government. This is usually done during a press conference some hours after the coup. After his official recognition, the new government leader publicly outlines the basis for his new government. The press then asks questions and the news begins to flow again to the general public.

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(Joe Bruce is associate to the Foreign Mission Board's director for Middle America and the Caribbean. He lives in Guatemala City.)

Famed Japanese Artist
Gets "Ticket to Heaven"

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AOMORI, Japan (BP)--The elderly Japanese gentleman calmly requested an appointment to buy "a ticket to heaven."

Southern Baptist missionaries Don and Joyce Heiss from Ohio, pressed him for more information since Christian conversions come slowly in conservative northern Japan.

Shunzo Nishizawa, 84, said he had been told years before by another missionary "that there was a place called heaven and Jesus Christ had tickets." He wanted Heiss to introduce him to this Jesus Christ.

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The missionary visited Nishizawa, explained the plan of salvation and led him to become a Christian. "I want to be baptized in the river just like Jesus," the old man said. But it was the middle of winter, snow was deep on the ground, and he had a weak heart.

Only later did the Heisses discover Nishizawa is a living "national treasure"--designated as such by the Japanese government for his national renown as a painter, calligrapher and teacher of artists.

Nishizawa, due to failing health, still has not been baptized. But just before the Heisses returned recently to the United States for furlough, the artist sent his daughter with a gift painting and a message. "He said," related Mrs. Heiss, "if he didn't see us again he would see us in heaven."

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Sunday School Board Adopts
Budget, Delays Price Increase

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
8/18/83

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board adopted a record budget of \$149.2 million for 1983-84 and delayed until July of 1984 a six percent church literature price increase originally approved for April 1984 during their semi-annual meeting.

In his final report to the trustees before his retirement in February 1984, board president Grady Cothen said a strong financial position made possible the postponement of the literature price hike, which he estimated would save churches \$800,000.

He noted the 1983-84 budget represents a 10.8 percent increase over the projected 1982-83 total of \$134.7 million.

Cothen said Baptist TelNet, the board's satellite telecommunications network which will begin broadcasting to churches in June 1984, is "going to work but flexibility is a requirement." He said recent action by the Federal Communications Commission reducing the spacing of satellites from four to two degrees could double the potential number of satellites that could be launched and reduce the monthly transponder leasing charge.

Other FCC changes in uplink specifications have slowed construction on the Nashville Baptist TelNet uplink, but completion is still scheduled for early 1984.

Cothen also cited Centrifuge youth camps as a "remarkably successful effort," noting participation has doubled in five years from 7,977 to a projected 1983 total of 15,800.

In other action, trustees approved an increase in 1984 conference center rates, authorized the publication of a Sunday school periodical in Korean to begin in October 1984 and adopted official guidelines for news coverage of trustee meetings.

Warren Hultgren, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla., and chairman of the committee which recommended the guidelines, said, "Trustee meetings are open meetings to which the news media are welcome. These guidelines vary only a few words from the administrative guidelines we've had for many years."

The guidelines specify that plenary sessions are open and on the record with trustees having the "right and responsibility to conduct executive sessions in unusual circumstances such as the consideration of certain delicate personnel matters."

Guidelines also note committee meetings and matters requiring future board action are designated "for background only."

The introduction to the guidelines states, "Baptists have always engaged in business with the considerations that the people have not only the right to know but the need to know about the plans and operations of their agencies. The formula 'tell the people and trust and Lord' is still valid."

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The Korean periodical will be targeted to youth and adults and will be a part of the Bible Book Series. It will be produced in cooperation with the Korean Baptist Development Board and will be distributed both in the United States and Korea.

The 1984 conference center rates include an increase from \$30 to \$32 in the adult conference services fee and increases in housing. Food prices will not increase.

President-elect Lloyd Elder told trustees that in the first four months of his orientation he has learned "Baptists are not bashful and there is a belief within the board that Baptists deserve to be heard and will be heard."

Cothen praised Elder's efforts to learn about every facet of the board and said Elder "will be perhaps the best-oriented president the board has ever had."

Cothen said the trustees have brought professional expertise to their roles and worked with "an absolute minimum of pettiness and nitpicking."

"You have functioned as a board and allowed us to function as an administration," said Cothen. "I feel the long-term welfare of the board and the Southern Baptist Convention have been your concern."

In further action, the trustees approved, effective October 1984: deleting the Sunday School Growth Journal; changing titles of Simplified Bible Study and Sunday School Lessons Simplified to Bible Study-Special Ministries and Sunday School Lessons-Special Ministries, and beginning publication of Preschool Bible Teacher A Resource Kit.

Effective in October 1985, a Special Ministries Resource Kit will begin publication, combining contents of two existing kits for teaching deaf children and the mentally retarded.

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Hispanic Mission
Overcomes Prejudice

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
8/18/83

MT. PLEASANT, Texas (BP)--In spite of opposition, First Church of Mt. Pleasant, Texas, has established a mission to minister to a growing Hispanic population in Titus County.

Due to the prompting of its Woman's Missionary Union, the church voted in February 1980, to begin work among the local Mexican-American community, and in May the Harmony-Pittsburg Association agreed to support the effort.

In September 1980, Roy DeSilvey, church extension representative for northeast Texas, conducted a feasibility study and found an estimated 4,000 Hispanics in the area.

However, before an effective work could begin, prejudices had to be overcome.

"Some people didn't want the 'Mexicans' in the church building," Janet Hargrove, chairman of the missions committee at the church, recalled. "Some didn't want Mexican-American children playing with their children."

Still, Marcos Gonzalez began a Spanish-language Bible class. He left Mt. Pleasant in the summer of 1981, but made arrangements with Abraham Escudero to continue the work.

"The Good Lord needed us here," said Escudero, who became pastor of the mission congregation. "We started with four people meeting under the trees near my camper. We met there for four months, until bad weather started in November. Then the Lord provided us a basement to meet in."

That basement was in a Fundamental Baptist church. First Church contacted Escudero to ask if he and the mission congregation wanted to be Fundamental Baptist or Southern Baptist. He said they would like to be Southern Baptist but they needed a place to meet.

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Representatives from First Church met with Alton Patton, missions director for the Harmony-Pittsburg Association. The association located a building site on Highway 67 West and the church secured a loan from the Baptist Church Loan Corporation.

As the mission planned to build, it once again faced some opposition. However, differences were resolved and construction began.

The construction was a cooperative effort involving the mission congregation, First Church and several associations. The Harmony-Pittsburg Association contributed to the building fund, and volunteers from Bowie and Gregg Associations donated labor.

The mission congregation moved into its new building on May 6 and a formal dedication service was held June 5. The mission now averages more than 50 in attendance.

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Southern Baptist Layman
Elected Gideons President

Baptist Press
8/18/83

BAMBERG, S.C. (BP)--A Southern Baptist layman who once presented a Bible to Ugandan dictator Idi Amin is the new president of Gideons International.

Guy S. Sanders Jr., a Bamberg, S.C., businessman, was elected at the annual convention in Indianapolis on the first ballot.

He had been vice president for three years and is eligible for three one-year terms.

He has been a Gideon for 22 years and an officer for 18 years, including trustee and treasurer.

"The basic Gideon goal," he said, "is to reach every lost person for Jesus Christ. Knowing that the word of God is a necessary tool in this mission, Gideons are thoroughly committed to placing a copy of the Bible in the hands of every person."

Sanders, a member of First Baptist Church, Bamberg, said he would not be involved in the Gideon ministry "if it were not in total accord with the main purpose of my local church, the South Carolina and Southern Baptist conventions."

Sanders is the first Southern Baptist elected president of Gideons since 1971.

The new president has visited over 40 countries for Bible distribution, initiating work in three of those as well as numerous cities.

In 1977 he spent 30 minutes in private conference with Idi Amin, then the dictator of Uganda. Sanders shared the plan of salvation with Amin and presented him a special edition of the Bible.

Sanders, a deacon and Sunday school teacher, has been a trustee of Baptist College at Charleston, S.C., and was on the SBC Committee on Committees in 1970.

He is a graduate of Clemson University and served with the Navy in World War II. A son, Guy III, is pastor of First Church, Lake Wales, Fla. A sister, Marian, who died in 1973, was a missionary for 26 years. His brother, Perry, is pastor of First Baptist Church, Lafayette, La.

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