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Southern Baptist Marchers
See Hopeful Signs In Rally

By Robert Dilday

WASHINGTON (BP)--More than 250,000 Americans--Southern Baptists among them--braved the August heat and humidity Aug. 27, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic march on Washington.

United under the theme "Jobs, Peace and Freedom," 700 groups from across the nation, including diverse religious groups, went to Washington to draw attention to a broad political and social agenda. While the 1963 march was sparked by a concern for civil rights legislation then languishing in Congress, participants at "March on Washington II" came to support everything from a nuclear freeze to the Equal Rights Amendment to full employment.

Glen Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., said, "The march both remembered Martin Luther King, our fellow Baptist, and also expressed our commitment to human rights, including the right to a job and the right to life undestroyed by nuclear war."

Stassen, a member of the Crescent Hill Baptist Church's Peacemaker Group, said the 1963 march "made a deep impression on me and I suspect this one will have a deep impression on people who were here. It will give us a dedication to work for peace and justice for the rest of our lives."

Former Alabama congressman John Buchanan, a member of Riverside Baptist Church in Washington, noted: "I have been concerned about the degree of apathy and backsliding in the whole area of civil rights and the march should rekindle that fire," he said. "I prayerfully hope we have a revival in our country's commitment to civil rights."

Other Southern Baptists saw in the march a blend of positive and negative.

"I thought the march rekindled some of the spirit embodied in Dr. King," said Glenn Saul, associate professor of ethics at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., who is on study leave in the Washington area. "It was a reminder of the power of people when they get together and ought to remind the nation of unfinished business in the area of unemployment."

William Clohan Jr., a Washington attorney and member of Riverside Baptist Church, was concerned about the wide variety of groups at the march. He said: "It will be difficult to hold together a coalition as diverse as this one, although I do think it possibly will stimulate voter registration, especially if the black leadership continues to push it."

Noting most Baptist marchers seemed to concentrate on peace, the former undersecretary of education said, "I see the peace issue having an impact on all social issues. It's only by cutting defense spending that we can free up money for programs for the aging and the hungry."

John W. Baker, general counsel for the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, regretted there were not more Southern Baptists involved in the march.

"The fact that there was no official Southern Baptist participation probably reflects either a lack of concern or a feeling of the inability of people to change things," he said. "People can change things. If Southern Baptists are really concerned about jobs, peace and freedom, they could make a real impact on the world scene."

Clyde Fant To Teach
Preaching At Southeastern

By Toby Druin

DALLAS (BP)--Clyde Fant, who resigned Aug. 16 as president of Baptist Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, will join the faculty of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., Southeastern's president, Randall W. Lolley said last week.

Lolley told the Baptist Standard (Texas Baptist newspaper) Fant would teach two courses during the fall semester--"History of American Preaching" and "Preparation of Sermons."

Fant's appointment to the faculty, at the present, is only for the fall term, but Lolley expressed hope he would also be there at least through the spring semester.

Fant was expected in Dallas last Friday, but could not be reached for comment.

He resigned the presidency of the European seminary, citing "family and personal reasons" and told the Standard on Aug. 17 it would be improper at the time to comment on his plans.

Fant's resignation came a year after he was inaugurated as the sixth president of the European seminary which had students from 22 countries last year. He and his wife's appointments as Southern Baptist missionaries were linked to his presidency and his resignation is expected to be acted upon in September by the Foreign Mission Board.

Fant went to Ruschlikon from the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas, where he was pastor from 1975-81. From 1966-75, he was professor of preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Lolley said he was "excited" about Fant coming, and described a series of circumstances which had created the faculty vacancy Fant will be filling.

Southeastern's senior professor of preaching retired last year. His replacement, Tom McKibbens, a pastor from Bristol, Tenn., is on a year's study leave before he joins the faculty.

V.L. Stanfield, who recently retired from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary had been employed to teach this year, but the death of Stanfield's mother and his involvement with her estate will prevent him from being at Southeastern until at least next spring.

"I got word that Clyde was coming back and called him and asked him to come," Lolley said. "I feel he is worthy of every effort to get him a forum. He can teach preaching."

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Southern Baptists To Hold
Simultaneous Revivals In 1986

By Sherri Anthony

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ATLANTA (BP)--National, simultaneous revivals--billed by Home Mission Board evangelism leaders as one of Southern Baptists' most effective evangelism tools--will be held in Southern Baptist churches in all 50 states from March 16-April 27, 1986.

"Good News America: God Loves You" is the theme for the nationwide campaign, the first such effort among Southern Baptists since 1969.

Richard Harris, director of Home Mission Board Mass Evangelism and co-chair of the campaign's national steering committee, noted, "These national-level campaigns offer Southern Baptists a cooperative, church-centered evangelistic endeavor with possibly the greatest opportunity in our history to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"Evangelizing our nation is at the heart of our Bold Mission Thrust goal to share the gospel with every person by A.D. 2000."

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Support for the simultaneous effort, approved by state evangelism directors at their national meeting in December 1981, is based in part on the apparent correlation between revivals and baptism rates in the SBC, Harris explained. In the past 30 years, six nationwide meetings have been held. Annual church letters indicate during all but one of those years, baptism totals were significantly higher than average.

"Simultaneous revivals give Southern Baptists a chance to promote their revival meetings city-wide, association-wide and even nation-wide," said Harris. Most of the SBC's 37 state conventions/fellowships will select either March 16-April 6 or April 6-27 as the dates they will participate. Each state convention will promote the revivals and encourage churches and associations to hold revival meetings during the designated time slot for their state.

To prepare for the revivals, the national steering committee has laid plans to provide concentrated personal and mass evangelism training. The yearly countdown of events includes: in 1983, a national revival training seminar; in 1984, national, state, regional and associational revival training seminars, witness training, national promotion, prayer emphasis; in 1985, continuing revival training seminars on all levels, national witness training, national promotion, continued revival preparation training.

The 1983 national revival training seminar was held in July. The seminar provided 85 participants from 30 states with "information, guidance and motivation to use the revival meeting to the full potential," Harris said. In 1984, Harris expects 15 state-wide seminars and in 1985, at least 30.,

The steering committee is also advocating the use of vocational evangelists during the simultaneous revivals.

"We have some talented and spiritually gifted vocational evangelists, preachers and musicians who are going to be hurt by these revivals," explained Harris. "Because most churches will participate in the revivals, there will be only six weeks during the spring for many vocational evangelists to work. Understanding this, churches should call on these people not only for the revivals but for revival preparation training, January Bible studies, prayer seminars and witness training or consider using them as staff evangelists."

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43 US-2ers Commissioned
For Mission Service

By Patti Stephenson

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LITHONIA, Ga. (BP)--Forty-three young adults, including the first deaf and the first blind appointees, have been commissioned for two years of mission service through the Home Mission Board US-2 program.

The new missionaries will work in 20 states and Washington, D.C., in the areas of evangelism, language missions, church extension, Christian social ministries and special mission ministries.

Wendell Belew, director of the HMB's Missions Ministries Division, characterized the group as "the most diverse we've ever appointed." In his charge to them, he identified the "secret of missions strategy" as relying on God for "the inner strength that will help you know what to do at the times when you don't have the slightest idea what to do."

Milton Walters, the first deaf US-2er, will work with the deaf in Washington, D.C. Sherilyn Richardson, the first blind appointee, will minister to the blind in Talladega, Ala.

Other US-2ers and their assignments are: Evangelism: Julian Burch, Southfield, Mich.; Bruce Davenport, El Monte, Calif.; Hal Jr. and Marti Richardson, Fresno, Calif., and Randall Worthington, Central Baptist Association, Ind.

Language Missions: Joanne Jones, New York, N.Y.; Fandi Moy, Decatur, Ga.; Peggy Thrall, Schenectady, N.Y.

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Church Extension: Terry and Lisa Fortner, Ticonderoga, N.Y.; Claudia Hill, Lee's Summit, Mo., and Donovan and Melissa Pucik, Beverly Hills, Calif.

Christian Social Ministries: Michael and Billie Bone, Mt. Clemens, Mich.; Johnna Carter, Akron, Ohio; Lynn Gibson, Chelsea, Mass.; Doni Hammonds, Los Angeles; Georgia Hix, Carver Center, New Orleans, and Kelly Malone, Canton Center, Baltimore, Md.

Special Mission Ministries: Carrington and Linda Bailey, Ashland, Ore.; Frederick and Elizabeth Brawner, Ann Arbor, Mich.; Daniel and Jan Bryant, Daytona Beach, Fla.; Cala Burney, West Yellowstone, Mont.; Martin Chappell, Galveston, Texas;

Janet Fuller, New Haven, Conn.; Tammy Henderson, Hammond, La.; Daniel and Ann Hickey, Washington, D.C.; Gregory Irvin, Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Marcus and Sandra Johnston, Lake Havasu, Ariz.; Lisa Lepeltak, Cedar Falls, Iowa; Timothy Ridgway, Largo, Fla.; David and Judy Stewart, the New Orleans World's Fair; Sylvia Underwood, Bakersfield, Calif., and Crystal Walker, Reno, Nev. The commissioning service was at First Baptist Church in Lithonia, Ga.

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Deaf Daughter
Amplified God's Call

By Larry Brumley

Baptist Press
8/29/83

DALLAS (BP)--Six months after Bob and Nancy Parrish's daughter was born, she was diagnosed as being deaf. "That's what changed our lives, our ministry and our work," said Parrish, Deaf Work consultant for Texas Baptists.

Mrs. Parrish developed rubella while pregnant with the Parrish's second child and their doctor said Debra would likely be born with some form of physical handicap.

During this period of anticipation, members of a Southern Baptist church located down the street from the Parrish's Greensboro, N.C., home started visiting and encouraging them to visit the church's Sunday school. Parrish and his wife were not Christians, but he had attended a Baptist church as a teenager.

The Parrishes visited the church occasionally, but the turning point came when Debra was born without any visible physical handicaps. "We felt like God had spared her and he did something that no one else could have done," Parrish said.

Then came the discouraging news--Debra was deaf. "After we found she was deaf, we had a real hard time. In fact, we blamed God," Parrish said. However, church members continued to encourage the Parrishes and give them them support.

Soon Parrish began to feel God calling him to preach.

"I ran for two years," he said, "but then my father died and I felt like God was trying to get my attention. I could not read my Bible because God would convict me to go preach. I was about to be promoted to captain (in the Greensboro Fire Department) and I was looking for the secular, but God used my fathers's death to bring me into the ministry."

At age 32, Parrish quit the fire department and enrolled in New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. "I only knew of two professions in the church then--preaching and music," Parrish said. I knew I couldn't lead music, so I was going to preach."

Parrish found out about the Southern Baptist Convention's programs for the deaf and that First Church, New Orleans had a ministry to the deaf. He joined the church's staff and worked as assistant pastor to the deaf until he received his diploma from the seminary.

While in seminary, Parrish attended the Louisiana Conference for the Deaf. As a deaf woman prayed for missionaries and pastors to the deaf, he was convinced God was calling him.

After seminary Parrish became minister to the deaf at First Church, Little Rock, Ark. "The deaf at First Church, Little Rock, taught us how to really communicate," Parrish said.

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"They were very patient with us." Parrish said hearing people have more difficulty communicating with the deaf, even when they use sign language, because they do not have the same experiences as deaf people.

Parrish later became language missions director for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention for six years before joining the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Since coming to Texas, he has worked with the division of student work in getting a Baptist Student Union director appointed at Southwest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf in Big Spring. He also helped form a Mission Service Corps team to work with the deaf in south Texas.

Parrish's day-to-day work includes keeping close contact with Texas Baptist's six pastors to the deaf and other church staff members who work with the deaf.

"Texas Baptists have, down through the years, been pacesetters in deaf work in the Southern Baptist Convention," Parrish said. "But we need more deaf men and women who feel called to work in the ministry full-time, not only in Texas, but in the entire Southern Baptist Convention."

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Fern Powers, Just 'Mom'
To Indochinese Refugees

By Charlene Shucker

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8/29/83

OLYMPIA, Wash.(BP)--Fern Powers is a powerhouse, compacted into a 5-foot 6-inch frame.

It is her nurturing, Monday through Saturday, that fills First Baptist Church of Lacey, Wash., where she is a member, with refugees on Sunday. At last count, Powers had placed 1,500 homeless refugees in the Northwest. Many of them are now Christians.

An accountant for the state for 10 years, Powers quit her job to devote more time to refugee work. She now drives three school bus routes both morning and afternoon, leaving time during important business hours to assist refugees with their problems.

Known only as 'Mom' to the refugees, Powers is everywhere--looking for decent housing, serving as advocate to social service and government agencies, finding money for rent and food, helping find work and getting timid applicants to job interviews, shopping for essentials and serving as interpreter to an unfriendly world.

Powers is always working, performing her small miracles everyday. From house to house, she constantly experiences for herself the hardships the refugees endure.

She sees children and adults wrapped in blankets to stay warm. "In many of these homes there is heat and electricity but they won't turn it on," Powers lamented. "They don't have money, can't pay the bills, so they do without. They'll turn it on when I'm there, then turn it off as soon as I leave."

Many of the refugees live in what Powers described as "shacks." "We do all we can to find them decent housing but sometimes we can't get them to move away from some of these places."

But there are rewards. Wherever Powers goes, she is greeted by hugs and kisses and open arms. And everywhere, beautiful children with round faces and big brown/black eyes peep around doors and out of windows to welcome her.

Powers sometimes finds herself running in circles, but there is no doubt where she is going. She is always on mission--being a servant to needy refugees in the name of Jesus Christ.

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Adapted from the March-April issue of Missions/USA, the Home Mission Board's magazine (BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press