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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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September 14, 1983

83-138

**Parks Challenges SBC To Be  
As Big Spiritually As In Size**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--It's time "to stop talking about how doctrinally correct we are and how heretical others are" and start being Christ's followers, Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks said.

As 11 new members joined the board, Parks said both the board and its staff "must be available to God to challenge the Southern Baptist Convention to rise up to be as big spiritually as we are numerically."

Parks said, "we as trustees no longer have the option to be controlled by personal preferences, individual viewpoints, petty jealousies, minor issues, divisive concerns. We are not here to represent a particular point of view nor to try to force conformity. We are here to get caught up in God's eternal plan for the ages."

Citing the urgency of the world task, he said: "Let's allow the Spirit of God to give us vision and to lay out challenges that will catch us up with such excitement that we will not have time to quarrel about differences, or to struggle with semantic variation or to be the suspicious questioner of anyone who differs with us on some point of doctrine."

In recent years the 14-million-member Southern Baptist Convention has been torn by doctrinal controversy over issues such as inerrancy of the bible.

Parks made no direct reference to the denomination's doctrinal squabbles, but did say that the new trustees are assuming their responsibility at a "sensitive and critical moment."

Southern Baptists are losing an in-depth understanding of missions, he said. "This, combined with greater variety and intensity of other pressures and demands, creates a danger of causing our commitment to missions to shift from an internal conviction to an external creed."

Parks observed, "we are still at a time in Southern Baptist life where the vast majority of Southern Baptists recognize this agency has its program biblically rooted.... They find in what is happening here a common meeting place where the majority of Southern Baptists are in agreement.

"Let us rise to the challenge of capturing the attention and enthusiasm of our convention to give itself unreservedly without distraction to the Bold Mission Thrust that we talk about."

Bold Mission Thrust is the denomination's effort to share the gospel with all people of the world by the year 2000.

At the September meeting the board took further steps toward this objective by voting to enter its 101st mission field, Fiji in the South Pacific, and appointing 13 new missionaries and reappointing five who formerly worked overseas. Two special project medical couples also were employed.

With these additions, the board has added 302 persons to its missionary force this year, running slightly ahead of last year's record appointment pace at this point. A total of 406 missionaries were named in 1982.

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Among those appointed as missionaries was Don Madaris a Missouri music minister who once was a tenor soloist with Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians. Madaris' wife, the former Kay Weldon of Texas, was a missionary nurse in Mexico for 16 years.

She resigned in 1979 to marry Don, who had become a close friend after he arrived in Guadalajara as a volunteer. Their romance developed so quickly after he left Mexico that the month they were married Christian Single magazine printed an article she had written about being single and happy in Mexico.

She was reappointed during the board meeting. They will return to the Mexican American Hospital in Guadalajara where he will be a chaplain and she will be a nurse.

Also appointed were John and Lila Vera Hastey of Arizona and Mexico. He is the son of former Southern Baptist missionaries Ervin and Ruth Hastey, who worked in Mexico and Panama for 15 years.

Ervin Hastey is now senior consultant for Evangelism and Church Growth Ministries for the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va. The younger Hasteys will be going to Mexico.

Also appointed were Chris and Karen Harrison Austin, of Virginia and Germany, respectively, to Gambia; Rick and Vickie Barkema Derby, Louisiana and Montana, to the Philippines, and Vicki Dunwoody, North Dakota, to Nigeria.

Also, Debbie Headlee, Indiana, to Upper Volta; John and Sherry Beall Murphy, Missouri and Iowa, to Venezuela, and Ken and Deborah Cassady Richardson, both of Virginia, to South Brazil.

Reappointed were Edgar and Linnie Jane Joslin Burks, both of Missouri, to Nigeria, where they worked 27 years before their resignation in 1982, and Bill and Lois Williams Norman, both of Alabama. Norman, a physician, and his wife worked 21 years in Nigeria and Ghana before resigning in 1975.

Employed as special project workers were Jim and Barbara Curtis Miller, both of Illinois, to Korea, and Paul and Dana McDaniel Seale, both of Texas, to the Philippines.

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Justice Brennan Denies  
Baptist School's Stay Appeal

By Don McGregor

Baptist Press  
9/14/83

CLARKSDALE, Miss. (BP)--Clarksdale Baptist School's request for a stay of an investigation of the school's tax exempt status pending the outcome of an appeal has been denied.

After U.S. Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan denied the request it was resubmitted to another justice. If that ruling should go against the school, the Internal Revenue Service would begin investigations of the school's tax exempt status and possibly also that of Clarksdale Baptist Church since the school is an institution of the church, Pastor Don Dunavant told the Mississippi Baptist Record this week.

The school has appealed a federal district court ruling which directed the IRS to investigate the tax exempt status of the school following a suit brought against the IRS to force such an investigation.

The briefs in the appeal will be submitted in October and since there must be time for a response to the briefs by the opposing side the hearing will not begin until November or perhaps even after the first of next year, Dunavant said. A decision by the appeals court is not expected until next spring.

Thus the school and church are facing an immediate investigation by a government agency even though the agency may be told in the spring such an investigation is unconstitutional, the pastor noted.

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The IRS claims the school must provide proof it was not begun in order to provide an escape for some students from the integration of Clarksdale public schools. The tax agency has established the procedures by which the school must provide its proof, including recruiting black students, faculty members and board members.

The school contends it was begun to provide a Christian education for children of church members and that it is an extension of the church's religious education and evangelism efforts. The student body is not limited to Baptists, however, and anyone may attend who pays the tuition and is interested in such religious training from a Baptist perspective.

The school notes it has minority pupils (though no blacks) and it has no need to recruit since classes are always full. No blacks have applied for entrance, officials have said.

Dunavant feels that for the IRS to seek to force the school to recruit is a violation of the religious freedom of the church as provided by the constitution and the outcome of the appeal will have nationwide consequences for churches that operate religious schools.

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Gaventa Named To Head  
FMB Medical Department

Baptist Press  
9/14/83

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--William C. Gaventa, Southern Baptist missionary physician in Nigeria, has been named director of the medical services department of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Gaventa, chief medical officer at Baptist Medical Center, Ogbomosho, will replace Merrill D. Moore Jr., who resigned from the newly created post in April because of family needs. Franklin T. Fowler, senior medical consultant for the board, has been acting director of medical services.

Gaventa will manage health care for foreign missionaries, help enlist and evaluate medical missionary candidates and volunteers, and coordinate the board's medical mission conferences and symposiums. He will also be liaison to the Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship.

Gaventa was asked to go to the Ogbomosho hospital in 1972 to help the hospital through a personnel shortage. He remained as the hospital faced frequent strikes, supply shortages and the transition to a free medical system required by the state government.

Gaventa and his wife, the former Alice Price of Rogersville, Tenn., were appointed missionaries to Eku, Nigeria, in 1949. They arrived to find a mud house and half-finished foundations for a hospital, but no laboratory, no X-ray and no blood transfusion equipment. When the Gaventas left Eku in 1963, there were 120 beds, an approved laboratory technology training program and an affiliated school of nursing.

Gaventa, who was born in Atlanta and grew up in Tampa, Fla., is a graduate of University of Tampa, Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, and Tulane University of Louisiana, New Orleans. From 1963 to 1972, he was on the staff of the Veterans Administration Hospital in Louisville, Ky., and on the faculty of the Department of Medicine of the University of Louisville School of Medicine. He has also been a physician at Underwood Memorial Hospital, Woodbury, N.J., and a surgeon at Veterans Administration Center, Bay Pines, Fla.

Gaventa is a fellow of the American College of Physicians, the Nigeria Medical College, and the West Africa College of Physicians.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Tennessee Children's Home  
Trustees Hit 'Low Morale'

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP)--Trustees of the Tennessee Baptist Children's Home, in a called meeting, have taken action to deal with what they described as "extremely low morale" on the three campuses and at the administrative office.

The trustees also voted to "express disapproval of the executive director's failure to recognize and to respond" to the low morale problem.

The meeting was called to discuss the report of a special study committee appointed in May to investigate questions which had been raised by Nashville-area pastors, former employees and Williamson County school officials.

Reportedly, staff turnover in the past year has been extremely high.

The study committee, appointed by TBCH trustee chairman Charles Gibbs, pastor of North Athens Baptist Church, Athens, included Ivan Raley of Johnson City as chairman; Ronnie Batchelor, Greenfield; Edward Jennings, Nashville; Ralph W. Stone, Nashville; Mrs. Ruth Willhoit, Chattanooga, and Don T. Wilson, Memphis.

Raley said the committee conducted confidential interviews with 95 percent of the employees on the three campuses and in the administrative office.

During the called meeting, trustees met almost nine hours in executive session prior to inviting visitors into the meeting room to hear the steps they plan to take to correct the problems of "extremely low morale" among TBCH employees.

In a statement adopted by the board, the body expressed appreciation to pastors, former employees, present employees, and other concerned Tennessee Baptists for calling this problem to its attention. The trustees accepted their responsibility for their failure to understand the full effect of board-established policies.

"We are totally committed to correcting this problem in a positive manner."

Noting the morale problem was existent on all the campuses, the trustees stated it was most critical on the Franklin campus and voted to express disapproval of the superintendent of that home for his failure to recognize and respond to this problem.

Following the meeting, a local radio station broadcast reports E.B. Bowen, TBCH executive director, and the Franklin children's home superintendent, John Ashby, had both resigned.

Bowen said he has not resigned, although he has received a resignation submitted by Ashby. He added that such a resignation must be acted on by trustees.

During a question and answer session after making the statement, trustee chairman Gibbs said: "We are looking for a change in style from top to bottom."

In other action, the trustees voted to meet monthly for the next 12 months, rather than the normal semi-annual schedule (May and December). They also voted to instruct the advisory committees, composed of trustees living near the three campuses, to meet with employees in confidence to see if changes are being made.

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South Phoenix Church Dispenses  
Milk For Body And Soul

By Chris Potts

Baptist Press  
9/14/83

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--Continuing efforts to serve the King, the Southern Baptist Temple of Phoenix has become something of a Dairy Queen.

After receiving more than 6,600 boxes of dried milk, the church spent a great deal of the summer distributing that product to the needy folk of their community.

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"I think it's a very good idea in so many ways," said Robert Heath, a newly arrived resident from Michigan and one of the neighborhood beneficiaries. "I don't know too many people right now who don't need help. I think this will help people realize there's a lot of good left in Christianity.... A church that says, 'hey, we've got it, come and get it'-- that's a good ministry."

The program began, according to Pastor Greg Gearing, with a call from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in search of food distribution points for the South Phoenix neighborhood which had read of the Southern Baptist Temple's other community service projects.

The church is finding 6,600 boxes is a lot of milk. It took four hours for the pastor and 15 others just to unload the truck. And, after two months and two distribution days, the church still has close to 6,000 boxes left.

"In terms of numbers, I'd hoped for more people," Gearing admitted. "There aren't many people who like dried milk. It's not the drawing card cheese would be." Cheese requires refrigeration, something Southern Baptist Temple can't provide right now.

Still response has been "one of gratitude," said Gearing. "We're surveying these people to find out what their needs are, and if they're interested. We're making contact." He added with every box of milk, the neighborhood folks are receiving a tract explaining how to find life in Christ. "We're giving our not only food for the body, but food for the soul."

In addition, Gearing feels he's giving his denomination some good publicity. "We're trying not only to do things, but to give some promotion for Southern Baptists. We want to show Southern Baptists care."

The church's new form of outreach has provided many new prospects for the predominately black New Jerusalem Church and a Spanish mission, both sponsored by Southern Baptist Temple. "Every person we help is one more contact," Gearing said. "We have a multi-ethnic congregation so we've got room for everybody."

Gearing has encouraged any other churches interested in distributing milk in their community to contact him for details.

"It's one thing," said Heath, now a member of the Temple, "to preach to the needy. But if a church takes time to care for people they don't know.... I don't know of a better outreach than, 'if you need help I'll help.'"

"That's sticking pretty doggone close to the Bible."

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(Chris Potts is a freelance writer in Phoenix, Ariz.)