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BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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March 14, 1984

84-41

Former Missionary To Enlist Preachers For Foreign Field

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A former missionary to the Philippines, now a seminary missions professor and administrator in the States, will direct a new department to enlist Southern Baptist preachers for foreign missions work.

John David Floyd, who worked in the Philippines from 1965 to 1976 as a church starter and later as director of church growth, has been named to head a new Foreign Mission Board department effective April 1. He is a vice president at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis, Tenn.

The new missionary enlistment department will expand the board's efforts to find more preachers willing to be evangelists and church developers overseas. Nearly three-fourths of the most urgent requests for missionaries are in those two categories.

Last year the board appointed only 52 general evangelists. Missionaries had requested 387. This year they have asked for 315.

The board's active search for preacher missionaries must become a greater priority, said Harlan E. Spurgeon, vice president of the Office of Human Resources.

"God has uniquely endowed Southern Baptists with the human resources for world missions," he said. "We must not be timid when it comes to challenging people to respond to the Commission of Christ. The calling out of the called is an accepted practice in Baptist life."

Floyd will select, train and supervise furloughing missionaries to help him enlist new missionaries, especially field evangelists. He also will represent the board at various conventions and conferences.

Herman Hayes, career enlistment consultant since 1978, will be a consultant in the new department.

Board President R. Keith Parks said the addition of Floyd to the staff in no way affects the board's long-standing policy concerning missionary appointments. The policy, reaffirmed in December, states missionary candidates whose jobs require a seminary degree must be graduates of a Southern Baptist seminary or have earned a degree from an accredited seminary followed by a year of study at one of the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

Graduates of Mid-America, which is accredited but is not a Southern Baptist-affiliated seminary, also must meet this requirement.

Floyd is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark. He received his master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and his doctorate of theology degree from Mid-America.

He came to Mid-America as an instructor and two years later became a professor of missions and chairman of the department of missions. In 1980 he was named vice president for administrative affairs. He is now the seminary's vice president and director of the School of World Mission and Church Growth.

Gerald Stow Named Chief
Of Tennessee Childcare

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP)--Gerald Stow, pastor of First Baptist Church, Cookeville, Tenn., has been elected executive director-treasurer of Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes Inc., effective April 15.

Stow will succeed Evans B. Bowen who retired Dec. 31, 1983, but agreed to continue as interim executive director-treasurer until April 1. TBCH trustees asked Dean Doster, associate executive director, to be interim executive director-treasurer April 1-15.

Bowen, 63, announced in October he would take early retirement and two of the three campus superintendents resigned following disclosures of "extremely low morale" among TBCH trustees.

The morale problems were disclosed at a meeting in September, and trustees named a special committee to investigate questions raised by Nashville-area pastors, former employees and county school officials.

At that September meeting, trustees voted to "express disapproval of the executive director's failure to recognize and to respond" to the morale problems. At the October meeting, trustees adopted as statement specifying "there is no note of immorality or moral wrongdoing," and said the "problems have been matters of judgment and policy management."

During their March session, Trustees elected Gene Gafford, pastor of National Avenue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., as superintendent of the Memphis home effective April 9. He will succeed Keith Wilson at that post.

Stow, pastor of the Cookeville church since 1976, has been active in denominational life, serving currently as a trustee of the Baptist Hospital in Nashville and on the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. He also is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention's special study committee on Canada.

Previously, he was a member of the Tennessee Baptist Convention executive board, and was board president in 1979. He also has been a director of the Baptist and Reflector, newsjournal of the Tennessee convention.

Stowe, a native of Dresden, Tenn., is a graduate of the University of Tennessee, and Southwestern and Southern Baptist Theological Seminaries. Previous to accepting the Cookeville pastorate, he was pastor of another Tennessee church and three Texas churches.

Gafford, the new Memphis home superintendent, has been pastor of National Avenue Baptist Church in Memphis since 1973. He also has served churches in Tennessee and Kentucky. He is a native of Memphis, and a graduate of Toccoa Falls Institute, Toccoa Falls, Ga., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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Virginia Court Affirms
Ruling Against Sorrels

Baptist Press
3/14/84

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Virginia's Supreme Court has affirmed a decision by the state's Industrial commission denying workmen's compensation to Robert W. Sorrels, a paralyzed Mission Service Corps volunteer.

Sorrels had sought the compensation because of automobile accident injuries received April 15, 1980, less than a week after he arrived in Nigeria for a year's service as an accountant. He was paralyzed from the shoulders down in the accident, which took the lives of a Southern Baptist missionary and a Nigerian Baptist.

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L.W. Hiner, chief deputy commissioner of the Industrial Commission of Virginia, ruled in July 1982 that no actual employer-employee relationship existed between the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and Sorrels. Hiner held Sorrels was a volunteer, not an employee, but even if there had been such a relationship, Sorrels would not have been entitled to state compensation because all of his work was done outside Virginia.

Later, the full commission upheld Hiner's ruling, but the decision was appealed to the State's highest court. The court's ruling, made March 9, affirmed the order dismissing Sorrels' workmen's compensation claim.

Sorrels, now 32, is a master of divinity student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and hopes to become a preacher. Before the accident he worked for a Washington savings and loan firm and was a member of Capitol Hill Metropolitan Baptist Church in that city.

Funds donated by people who wanted to help Sorrels were used to buy him a three-bedroom house in Fort Worth and to remodel it to meet his needs. Two seminary students have been sharing the home and assisting Sorrels.

Vinton Koons, president of the District of Columbia Baptist Foundation, which has managed the funds donated for Sorrels, said the foundation also is providing Sorrels a \$400-a-month seminary scholarship. He receives a comparable amount from Capitol Hill Metropolitan members and a Social Security check. Texas workers who assist quadriplegics have helped in his rehabilitation, Koons said.

The Foreign Mission Board spent more than \$28,000 for Sorrels' medical care after the accident and provided a monthly stipend of \$603.50 until October 1982, when he became eligible for government disability benefits. But the board declined to accept long-term responsibility for Sorrels because he had gone to Nigeria as a volunteer, not as a career missionary, and because all Mission Service Corps volunteers signed waivers absolving the board of responsibility in the event of a disabling injury.

A group called the "Friends of Bob Sorrels" circulated letters criticizing the Foreign Mission Board for not providing more funds. Later, however, Walt Tomme, then associate pastor of Capitol Hill church, helped bring about a reconciliation between Sorrels and his supporters and the Foreign Mission Board. Tomme later became pastor of the church.

Although the board does not recognize any legal obligation, Board President R. Keith Parks has encouraged Southern Baptists to contribute to the special fund for Sorrels' support. Both board members and staff have been among those who contributed.

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Mississippi Baptist Pastor
Attempted To Smuggle Cocaine

Baptist Press
3/14/84

GULFPORT, Miss. (BP)--Ricky Edwards, former pastor of one of the fastest growing churches in Mississippi, has been sentenced to three years in prison and fined \$10,000 for his part in a drug smuggling attempt.

In November 1982, after his arrest, Edwards resigned as pastor of Pass Road Baptist Church in Gulfport, Miss., on the same Sunday the church had 27 new members in Sunday School and seven people joined the church. Pass Road Baptist Church had led the Mississippi Baptist Convention in baptisms for several years, including 1982 when it reported 279.

Edwards, 31, was sentenced in Mid-March by the U.S. District Court in Jackson, Miss., after pleading guilty last January to conspiring to import cocaine and to currency violations. He was also found guilty on a gun-related charge, the Mississippi Baptist Record reported.

He was arrested along with another U.S. citizen and two Colombians after a plane Edwards was piloting landed after being chased by U.S. Customs agents. Police reportedly found \$115,000 in U.S. currency and several handguns on board. It is illegal for citizens to enter or leave the country with more than \$5,000 without making a declaration.

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The Baptist Record reported Edwards told the judge in the case he was hired for \$50,000 to fly the plane and had seen a bundle of money in a hotel room before the smuggling attempt and assumed it was to be used to buy cocaine. "I was going to Colombia to pick up a load of cocaine," he said.

Under Edwards' leadership Pass Road had grown from 105 to 1,500 members. In 1982 Sunday school attendance was around 280. After his resignation Edwards began a non-denominational church in Gulfport, the Cathedral of Hope.

Edgar Jackson, who became pastor of Pass Road last September, said the church had survived the "troubled times" quite well, "which speaks well of the strength of the church." Attendance is around the 250 mark, he said.

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Housing Block Told For 1985
Southern Baptist Convention

Baptist Press
3/14/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Seventeen Dallas hotels have been reserved for the Southern Baptist Convention Housing Bureau for assignment of 4,000 rooms for the 1985 meeting of the SBC.

The other 16,000 rooms in Dallas, including some close to Reunion Arena, may be reserved by individuals directly since the Housing Bureau will have no control over them.

The 4,000-room block will be assigned to people who send in the housing request form to the SBC Housing Bureau after Oct. 1. The forms will be available in September.

Assigned to the bureau are: Adolphus Hotel, Dallas Hilton, Dupont Plaza Hotel, Executive Inn, Fairmont Hotel, Grenelefe Hotel, Holiday Inn-Downtown, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Viscount-Market Center, La Quinta Regal Row, North Park Inn, The Plaza Hotel, Quality-Market Center, Regent Hotel, Sheraton-Dallas Hotel, Sheraton-Mockinbird and Twin Sixties Inn.

The headquarters hotel has not been determined. All requests handled by the housing bureau will be on an individual basis. Group reservations will not be accepted.

Anyone wanting an address list of the hotels in the block, as well as a partial list of other hotels in Dallas which are not in the block, should write "Housing Information, 460 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, Tenn. 37219" or phone 615-244-2355.

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Board Okays Plan To Work
With Australian Baptists

Baptist Press
3/14/84

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Australian Baptists will receive short-term help from special project workers and partnership volunteers under a working relationship approved March 13 by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The board emphasized that Baptist work is well developed in Australia, with more than 54,000 members in almost 700 churches, and said it will provide assistance only as requested by individual state Baptist unions.

The first request, from the Baptist Union of New South Wales, calls for two church starters and a youth worker for short-term assignments with Australian pioneer pastors in the Sydney area. One of the church planters will assist in the inner city and the other in the suburbs. The youth worker will develop counseling and outreach ministries.

Just three months earlier the board established fraternal relations with neighboring New Zealand Baptists.

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In other actions the board approved 12 new missionaries, reappointed four others, and announced the start of a new missionary enlistment department headed by former missionary John David Floyd, a vice president of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis, Tenn.

The new missionaries include five couples and two women who will serve in seven countries. They were appointed in a service at Monument Heights Baptist Church, Richmond.

Vice President Harlan E. Spurgeon said Floyd's appointment will be effective April 1. As director of the new department, Floyd will seek to expand the board's efforts to find more preachers willing to be evangelists and church developers overseas. He and his wife, the former Helen Ruth Nutt, were missionaries to the Philippines from 1965-76.

Herman Hayes, career enlistment consultant, since 1978, will be a consultant in the department.

Board President R. Keith Parks said Floyd's addition to the staff in no way alters the board's policy on qualifications for missionary appointment. Missionary candidates whose jobs require a seminary degree must be graduates of a Southern Baptist seminary or have earned a degree from an accredited seminary followed by a year of study at one of the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

This policy also applies to graduates of Mid-America, where Floyd, as professor of missions, has been influential in encouraging many to consider a missions career. Mid-America, though accredited and largely teaching Southern Baptists, is not officially linked to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Board members also heard a report that \$1,691,589 in hunger and relief donations were released in February to help meet human needs around the world. More than a third of the money, \$606,978, went to Brazil for development projects, including two to help provide water resources in the drought-stricken states of Ceara and Paraiba.

Sam James, missionary orientation and furlough director, said work on the Cauthen Missionary Learning Center near Richmond is near completion, with the first groups scheduled to arrive for orientation in April. The board closed its final missionary orientation program at Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, Ga., in March.

The board will hold its April meeting in Biloxi, Miss., where Mississippi Baptists hope to fill the 11,000-plus seats of the Gulf Coast Coliseum for a missionary appointment service April 10.

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