



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 28, 1984

84-80

**BTN, ACTS Satellite  
Launch Successful**

By Frank Wm. White

**WASHINGTON (BP)**—The satellite to carry telecommunications signals for two Southern Baptist Convention television networks was successfully placed into orbit May 22.

Spacenet I, a GTE Spacenet satellite, was launched on an Arianespace rocket from Kourou, French Guiana. It was the first commercial launch for the French space launch company. The GTE Spacenet I launch also marked the first time a U.S. satellite has been sent into space on a commercial carrier or by a foreign company.

**BIN** (Baptist Telecommunication Network), an educational network venture for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, and **ACTS** (American Christian Television System), a Christian family network of the Radio and Television Commission, will be only two of the several customers using transponders on the GTE communications satellite.

**BIN** and **ACTS** expect to gain access to their satellite transponders by July 1, 1984, after GTE Spacenet tests the satellite systems, said Dave Piske, vice-president and general manager of GTE satellite corporation.

GTE spacenet officials hope to fire on-board rockets during the ninth orbit of the satellite to place it in its final orbiting position 22,300 miles above the earth, Piske said.

**BIN** and **ACTS** actually will have begun broadcasts before gaining access to the GTE Spacenet satellite. Transponders for the June 12-14 broadcasts of the Southern Baptist Convention and inaugural ceremonies for the networks in Kansas City, Mo., and other programming before July have been leased on the Westar V satellite.

**ACTS** began broadcasting May 14 when it delivered its first program to almost 70 cable television systems. The network plans to broadcast six hours a day until the June 12 convention broadcast begins. During the first month of operation, **ACTS** plans to fine-tune the operation and bring more cable systems on line.

**BIN** will be broadcast to churches, associations, state conventions and other agencies which subscribe and purchase television-receive only systems. The network has 110 systems (stations) as of May 15.

The two networks can expect to have use of the Spacenet I transponders for at least 10 years, Piske said. The initial lease is for seven years but the lease may be extended annually until the satellite runs out of fuel.

The actual orbit time for the satellite could be slightly longer than expected because of the successful and accurate launch Tuesday, Piske said.

Although the launch was delayed more than two hours from the scheduled 7:15 p.m. EDT launch time, the satellite was accurately placed in the anticipated orbit.

The launch was delayed twice—once for a fuel line leak and then for a communications problem. Countdown operations went smoothly until 17 seconds before ignition when the fuel line leak was noted by the computer sensor systems. After a delay to correct that problem countdown was again halted to correct a communications problem at a satellite tracking station.

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The Arianespace rocket was launched at 9:34 p.m. EDT. The Spacenet I satellite was free from the three-stage satellite and in orbit 16 minutes later.

The success rate of the Ariane launch system had been proven in eight earlier launches. Although Tuesday's launch was the first commercial venture for a rocket launch, the earlier launches of the system had been under the control of the French space agency at the launch site constructed by the European space agency on the northeast coast of South America.

GTE Spacenet contracted with Arianespace for the launch and four others within the next year because the launch times were available now. NASA launches would not be available until 1986 and the cost was considerably higher, said C.J. Waylan, executive vice-president and general manager of GTE Spacenet Corporation.

When the Spacenet orbit is set it will be at 120 degrees west longitude. Originally, the orbit had been planned for 122 degrees. The position was changed earlier this year by the Federal Communications Commission which controls orbit positions for U.S. satellites.

The shift in positions may require some adjustment of receiver dishes already installed by BIN and ACTS customers. However, some adjustments likely would have been needed for the original orbit, Piske said.

BIN and ACTS engineers will have information on required position changes after GTE testing is completed, he said.

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Nursing Homes Need  
Political Help Too

By Karen Benson

Baptist Press  
5/28/84

WACO, Texas (BP)—Nursing homes and retirement centers across the nation, including those supported by Southern Baptists, are facing some of the most pressure-packed times in their history with little support in the legislative and political arenas from the churches which help fund them.

This very concern brought about 65 Southern Baptist professionals to Baylor University May 21-22 for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Association of Ministries With the Aging.

Represented were ministers of senior adults from local churches; administrators and other staff personnel from retirement centers, nursing homes and other long-term care facilities; health care professionals from Southern Baptist hospitals and medical centers, and staff members from Southern Baptist agencies.

"Our church-supported retirement and nursing homes are setting out there somewhat isolated—and certainly isolated in the legislative arena," said Mark Rose, a Southern Baptist who is executive director of the Texas Association of Homes for the Aging.

"We must do a better job of making the Southern Baptist Convention aware of political problems the church-supported homes are facing. The churches support them financially, but we must start supporting those administrators politically and legislatively," Rose said.

Issues the administrators of these centers now face, he said, include: Higher operating costs coupled with federal cutbacks in aid; increased regulation of the entire health-care industry for the aged; probable loss of tax exempt status for non-profit and church-related homes and centers; increasing demands for better educational programs for the elderly, as opposed to primarily game-oriented activities, and demands for higher standards of certification for health-care professionals who work with the elderly.

Federal cutbacks in aid to nursing homes and retirement centers have created a "downward pressure that is not going to be relieved," Rose said. "All state governments still are reeling from those cutbacks. At issue is how these centers are going to be funded, what types of services can or cannot be provided, and how will it all be paid for?"

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Administrators of these facilities can expect regulations upon more regulations during the next several years, Rose said. "Our industry has only seen the beginning of increased regulations. This is a regulated service area, and it always will be. Over the next 10 years, standards for the provision of care should be and will be increased. We'd be better off to stop complaining and spend the next five or 10 years writing the regulations!"

Older Americans, as a whole, are becoming perhaps the most active, most demanding and most responsive consumer group in the nation, Rose said. "This 'new elderly' is not going to be satisfied with what we've been providing. Bingo and quilting are about to go by the wayside. This is an active and dynamic population which is not going to sit back and simply accept the activities we're now providing them!"

The retirement industry also is experiencing a gradual takeover by private business groups who are little more than "real-estate syndications interested mainly in the 'bottom line,'" Rose said. "Baptists are not aware that retirement homes have turned into a really dynamic healthcare industry for care of the elderly," he said. "If our folks don't get with the program and start looking at the entire field on more of a profit basis, then we're absolutely going to have our lunches eaten by these groups!"

For churches interested in becoming more involved in meeting the needs of the elderly, Rose had words of encouragement and warning: "Be careful! If you are planning to fill the void yourselves, seek professional help. This is a complicated, sophisticated industry. Raising money to help is one thing, but operating it is another thing. By all means, join the group and think about providing services, but be professional in your approach."

Individuals can work to find out which institutions are supported through their local churches and by visiting the homes and retirement centers to learn about their unique problems. Additionally, Southern Baptists can write state and federal legislators, making their opinions known on issues and legislation which concerns the elderly, he said.

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Missionary Doctor  
Does It His Way

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press  
5/28/84

MACAO, Macao (BP)—Physician Bill Swan doesn't cure heartburn. He causes it.

Missionary committees frequently throw up their hands in despair when they try to deal with him. Administrators gnash their teeth. "He resists authority," sighs one colleague. "He refuses to follow policy. He ignores restraints. He just moves."

But even Swan's critics admit the Southern Baptist missionary doctor has laid the foundation for a medical evangelism ministry which may reach whole chunks of the population in Macao, the Portuguese territory near Hong Kong.

Says an exasperated admirer: "I'd like to choke him sometimes, but I'm for him."

The 40-year-old Arkansas native doesn't understand all the furor that sometimes surrounds him. "In the Orient, especially in Macao, people say you need patience," he explains, leaning back at his clinic, hands behind his head, sandaled feet casually crossed. "Well, you do, but you need aggressive patience, because if you want to get something done, you have to push."

When Swan's "aggressive patience" collides with Chinese culture or the policies of the Hong Kong-Macao Baptist Mission, he sometimes gets sent back to the drawing board, but he never gives up. That persistence goes back to Swan's days at Oklahoma University, where he suffered through medical school ("I love medicine but I hated medical school") because a "doctor could do his own thing." After four years as a Navy flight surgeon, he aimed for private practice.

But the Lord intervened, Swan says. Both he and his wife—the former Janet Morgan of Oklahoma, who worked as a journeyman in Hong Kong from 1967 to 1969—felt God calling them to be missionaries in China.

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China was and is closed to missionaries. So the Swans determined to work with Chinese people elsewhere. Sorry, said the Foreign Mission Board, we have no requests for medical work among Chinese. The couple agreed to go to the Philippines. But near the end of missionary training Swan was invited to practice at Baptist Hospital in Hong Kong.

He later wrangled a transfer to Macao to open medical work. No non-Portuguese or non-Chinese physician had obtained a medical license in Macao for centuries, as far as Baptists knew. Swan got one. The Chinese and Portuguese hospitals in Macao wouldn't tolerate "competition," he was warned. He opened a medical clinic in 1980 and expanded in 1983.

Swan's philosophy of medical missions is simple: "If what I'm doing isn't resulting in evangelism, then I might as well be practicing in Atlanta."

His clinic features three full-time nurses, a lab and pharmacy, an X-ray facility, a small operating room and two beds for intensive-care recovery. At full speed he can handle scores of patients a day. But Swan wants to reach far beyond the boundaries of his clinic. He calls his vision a "hospital without walls."

The vision fits Macao. Once the bustling hub of Western trade with China, Macao was long ago eclipsed by Hong Kong. The 16-square-mile territory remains a lively place for business and tourism, but it has been overrun in recent years by Chinese and Southeast Asian refugees. The population has doubled to nearly 500,000.

Thousands of these refugees jam shantytowns clinging to forsaken corners of the area. Most are undocumented and thus ineligible for decent employment or social services. Many are sick; many children are malnourished. Swan treats refugees at his clinic, but he also "makes rounds" in the shantytowns, checking on regular patients and finding new ones. Missionary nurse Janis Dickerman and Chinese community nurse Chio Kim Fong work with him, sharing the gospel as they examine patients.

Other missionaries (including Janet Swan) work in the ministry distributing food, preaching and teaching, helping people get work permits.

Swan dreams of a whole team of Christian medical workers who will go into homes, teach health care and open the door for Bible studies, fellowships, ultimately new churches. The dream hasn't materialized yet, and some Swan-watchers wonder if the restless dreamer will lose interest and move on to something else. Swan doesn't resent the doubters, but he insists he's in Macao to stay.

Now he faces another challenge: a government administrator is requiring Swan and his new missionary partner, physician Mike Fleenor, to prove fluency in the Portuguese language (which isn't used by the Chinese majority) or lose their Macao medical licenses. Both will probably have to study in Portugal to meet the requirement.

Is it worth the trouble when other fields are begging for medical missionaries? Swan thinks so. "We've come to the realization that the Lord wants us in Macao," he states calmly. And he can be very persistent.

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

Survey/Scripture Distribution  
Combination Called Effective

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press  
5/28/84

DALLAS (BP)—Combining a door-to-door survey for prospects for Bible study with distribution of New Testaments to people in their homes apparently resulted in a higher-than-average willingness of persons to acknowledge they do not attend church, according to four persons who participated in a recent statewide effort in Texas.

Bernard Spooner, director of the Sunday school division of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, estimated that more than 250,000 prospects were discovered in the April 8 Scripture distribution/prospect discovery project.

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Approximately 1,300 Texas Southern Baptist churches participated in distributing one million New Testaments published by the Holman Division of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Spooner said in most census projects, the average number of prospects discovered equals approximately 15 percent of the number of homes where personal contacts are made. "We almost doubled that in this project," said Spooner. "This is a concrete, simplistic approach that a lot of people could see themselves doing."

He attributed the results to three possible factors: (1) being able to give Bibles to people enables surveyors to be more confident in participating in the survey; (2) receiving a Bible caused respondents to be more open to acknowledge they did not attend any church and (3) the number of potential prospects was simply greater than earlier estimates.

"A church must have a lot of prospects to grow. Giving a New Testament is an overwhelming way of letting persons have an immediate positive feeling toward anybody who would express an interest in them," said Spooner.

Roy Marshall, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hewitt; Robert Cooper, minister of education at Crestview Baptist Church, San Antonio; and Charles Hamill, minister of education administration, First Baptist Church, Arlington, reported positive results from the project.

At First Baptist Church, Hewitt, Marshall said 70 people participated in the survey. They distributed 464 Bibles and found 220 prospects.

"Scripture distribution gave us an entry into the home," said Marshall. "We had very few who refused to give us the information. Our people felt they were going out not just to get information but to share a witness."

He said surveyors were unable to cover the entire community in one day. The project is being continued one zone at a time until the entire suburb south of Waco is covered.

Cooper said approximately 150 Crestview members participated in the project. They went to 2,416 homes, distributed 2,110 Bibles, located 612 prospects and pre-enrolled 38 persons in Sunday school.

"A lot of our people responded well to the idea of giving out Bibles," said Cooper. In the Sunday night testimony service after the survey, he noted, "None of our people were extremely discouraged by negative responses. They came back very enthusiastic."

Cooper said Crestview will participate in the national Scripture distribution/prospect discovery project in October 1985. "I think because of our good experience more of the churches in our association will participate in 1985," he said.

Hamill said 478 persons participated in the canvass. They found persons at home in 2,829 homes, distributed 2,211 New Testaments, located 1,573 prospects and pre-enrolled 45 persons in Sunday school. Many of the prospects attended a revival at the church two weeks later.

In Arlington, where an average of 1,800 persons move in each month, Hamill said, "The people we found were lost, had never heard of church and are people we must really cultivate." Efforts are now under way to match church families with prospects for continued follow-up.

Spooner said he believes the success of the project "establishes this as an approach to finding unreached persons. Our directors of missions, pastors and church leaders liked the idea of using Scripture distribution as an opportunity to find unreached persons. That's what really did work."

Southern Baptists' 37 state conventions will cooperate in the nationwide prospect discovery/Scripture distribution project slated for October 1985 as a prelude to 1986 Good News America revivals.

Memories Haunt  
Normandy Beaches

By Wilmer C. Fields  
Director, Baptist Press

ARROMANCHES, France (BP)—On warm days children frolic on the beach at Arromanches-les-Bains on the Normandy coast of France. When the tide is out, horsedrawn carts race up and down the flats.

Nearby the hulk of a warship rusts in the sand. Offshore the tumbled remains of an artificial harbor named by Winston Churchill, "Mulberry," lie in wreckage. This June will mark the 40th anniversary of the day this peaceful fishing village was at the center of the most massive amphibious military assault in human history.

Onshore, facing the English Channel, a museum commemorates the apocalyptic events of D-Day, June 6, 1944, the Allied invasion of Hitler's "Fortress Europe." The battle which began that day has taken its place beside Waterloo, Hastings, Thermopylae Pass and others, as a major turning point in human affairs.

At 15 minutes past midnight on that fateful date, Operation Overlord began when a few specially chosen pathfinders stepped out of their planes into the moonlight over Normandy. They marked the drop zones for American and British paratroopers and infantry in over 1,000 planes and gliders which quickly came behind them.

Airborne troops fought desperately in the darkness. St. Mere Eglise on the Contentin Peninsula became the first French town liberated by the Americans. In the battle there, one paratrooper's chute caught on a church steeple and he dangled for two hours in full view of the fierce fighting in the town square below.

In the British sector, two paratroopers landed in error on the lawn of a German general who demanded, "Where have you come from?" One of the captured British replied calmly, "Awfully sorry old man, but we simply landed here by mistake."

During the hours before dawn over 2,400 U.S. and Royal Air Force bombers pounded ground installations. A naval bombardment rocked shoreline gun emplacements. Simultaneously, over 5,000 ships, the greatest armada the world has ever witnessed, maneuvered offshore carrying 250,000 soldiers and sailors.

East of Arromanches for 25 miles were the three British and Canadian zones—Gold, Juno and Sword. Westward for 35 miles were the two American zones—Omaha and Utah. At 6:30 a.m., the first wave of troops waded ashore through artillery and machine gun fire, through beach "hedge-hogs" and land mines.

The 1st and 29th American Divisions at Omaha Beach fought desperately during the day and reported they were "hanging on by their toenails." At St. Laurent, Vierville-sur-Mer and Colleville the issue was often in doubt. Monuments there today memorialize the heroism of the invaders—including the more than 10,000 Allied casualties in the first 24 hours.

All along the coast are formidable limestone cliffs which were topped by German coastal guns. At Pointe du Hoc, where the cliffs rise to dizzy heights, stands now a granite spire honoring a group of American Rangers led by Lt. Col. James Rudder, who scaled the precipices with hooks and ropes to get at the German pillboxes at the top. The scars of battle are still quite visible throughout the area.

Further west, the 4th American Division landed on bloody Utah Beach to link up with 82nd and 101st Airborne troops.

Behind the first wave, the Allies had ready 39 divisions with nearly three million troops and 16,000 planes. The Germans had 65 divisions, including reserves extending back to Germany, and a Luftwaffe which had been virtually driven from the skies.

Field Marshall Erwin Rommel, the German commander of the "Atlantic Wall," had said to an aide April 22, "The first 24 hours of the invasion will be decisive...it will be the longest day." He was right. The battle was decisive. The days of Nazi rule were numbered.

At the end of June, Rommel reported casualties for the month of "28 generals, 354 commanders and approximately 250,000 men." Eleven months after D-Day, Hitler committed suicide in the rubble of Berlin and the vaunted "Thousand Year Reign" of Naziism was over.

But much death and destruction lay in wait along the route to Berlin. The visitor to this beautiful quarter of France is continually sobered by reminders thousands of men on both sides died too young in the apple orchards and green pastures of Normandy.

The feeling hits you when you see an LCI rusting in the sand at Port-en-Bessin. It creeps into the marrow of your bones when you ride through the Bocage country with its hawthorn hedgerows and sunken roads where the picturesque embankments of earth, shrubbery and trees helped stall the Allied armies for six weeks just miles from the coast.

In St. Lo, where the breakthrough finally came in late July, bombs and artillery virtually obliterated all vestiges of earlier days. Vire all but disappeared. Coutances saved its cathedral, but little else. Mortain has risen from grey ashes. The old culture in the city of Avranches, within sight of the rock of Mont St. Michel, is largely a memory.

Cherbourg has a lot of modern buildings—a sure sign wartime damage was severe. At L Havre, bombs and shells wiped out 12,000 buildings, damaged 5,000 others and left 40,000 homeless. It now looks new.

Caen, nine miles up the Orne River from the coast, was three-fourths wiped out, as 2,000 died. Nine hundred years ago, William the Conqueror and his wife, Matilda, built two churches there. They were used as bomb shelters in the summer of 1944.

The old city of Lisieux was almost completely destroyed by fire during the bombardment. Its cathedral, begun in 1170 was untouched. Rouen, where Joan of Arch was buried in 1431, was torn apart. Sunken ships, tangles of steel and concrete clogged its harbor and the city center was a flattened wasteland.

The battle was over by Aug. 21, 1944. The cost, frightful for the Allies, was even higher for the Germans who lost over 640,000 men dead, wounded or captured.

Normandy's rolling fields and farmland seem too peaceful and benign to have ever been battlefields. This is a place of slender streams and little rivulets freshening the landscape of poplars and willows. It is a peaceful, smiling land of apples, lace and old world style.

Huge, sleek Percheron horses pull high, two-wheeled carts and women go into the pastures to milk the squarish white-and-brown dairy cows. There are fields of flax and yellow mustard and odd corners are bright with camellias, tulips, lilacs and banks of primroses. The region is full of obscure roads and hidden valleys. On warm days it is doftly fragrant.

But these peaceful villages were deathtraps in the summer of 1944. The gentle slopes and pleasant valleys clattered with tanks and rattled with machine gun fire and raged with the holocaust of war. Normandy became a crackling hell of flame, smoke and death.

On June 7, the day after the invasion began, the British took Bayeux. Only five miles behind the beach at Arranches, it sustained little damage when a Benedictine monk pedaled his bicycle to the advancing troops to tell them only a token German force was left in the city.

As the British moved up, the Germans fled without fighting. Bayeux cathedral bells clanged and jangled, out of tune, for the first time in two years.

Carentan fell on June 13. U.S. troops took Cherbourg June 27. British and Canadians took Caen July 9, after desperate fighting.

In late July, American forces broke through hedgerow country. Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr., and the U.S. 3rd Army attacked south and west of St. Lo on Aug. 1. Canadians took Falaise Aug. 17. A pincer movement by the U.S. 3rd Army closed the Argentan gap in terrible fighting, trapping 12 to 14 German divisions.

Aug. 14-15 the Allies landed 1,000 ships on the south coast east of the Rhone River.

On Aug. 25, the 2nd French Armored Division and a token U.S. force entered Paris.

The pace increased. A German counter-attack in December brought on the Battle of the Ardennes Bulge but by late January, Nazi forces were retreating again.

March 7, 1945, saw the capture of the Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen and five U.S. divisions poured across the Rhine into Germany. On May 4 German armies began surrendering. On May 6 at 8:41 a.m. (EWT) at Rheims, unconditional surrender was signed. All fighting ceased at 6:10 p.m. (EWT), May 8. The war in Europe was over. Three months later, following the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese surrendered on Aug. 14 to end the war.

The roads from the Normandy beaches were strewn with death and destruction. Battlefields are places of tragedy. Anywhere, they speak of man's failures, not his successes. They mark in carnage and blood the breakdown of civilization itself. They testify to some monstrous deficiency in the affairs of men.

On the Normandy coast at St. Laurent there is a 150-acre site given to the United States by France. It is a cemetery where rest 9,300 young Americans who died in the early days of the Allied invasion. Crosses and stars of David in Carrara marble stretch in long, symmetrical rows. The place is quite and peaceful. Bird songs ride in on the gentle breezes. Seeing it, a nameless, visceral sadness fills the heart.

On June 6, 1944, radios around the world crackled with the electrifying news that the long-awaited invasion of Europe had begun. Like many other groups throughout the earth, the congregation of Carlisle Avenue Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., gathered for prayer. Every day thereafter until World War II was over, members of the congregation gathered at the church building at 5 p.m. for a few moments of prayer. They prayed daily for loved ones and friends and for an end to the immense tragedy and incredible waste of war.

Maybe we need such a concern today for the strengthening of a very fragile peace.

This time of year, Normandy is in full blossom once again. On the Channel coast and in the hill country, life goes on. Fisherman in wooden shoes clip-clop their way to the waterfront. Housewives in carpet slippers sweep the sidewalks. Old women under black shawls shuffle along. Boys with long loaves of hard bread tied to their bikes, move carefree through the narrow streets and roads. Priests in long black robes hurry to their devotions.

But the Normandy coast of France will forever haunt the memory of man. The world should have learned a lesson there. In war, everyone loses.

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(BP) photo of Arronanches mailed to state Baptist newspaper editors.

(Adapted from article written by Wilmer C. Fields for Baptist Press, May 22, 1973.)

Paralysis Doesn't Keep  
Welch From Succeeding

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press  
5/28/84

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Scott Welch's life took an "abrupt detour" on July 23, 1966, when the young member of New Orleans' Gentilly Baptist Church broke his neck on a church outing.

A headfirst dive from a boathouse into a pond near Meridian, Miss., began an odyssey through dark valleys and onto a mountaintop bathed in the spotlight of national attention.

Despite his setback, the 33-year-old Baptist attorney is one of this year's 10 Outstanding Young Men of America, selected by the United States Jaycees. That puts him in the company of the likes of John Kennedy and Charles Lindbergh.

It's an honor which he couldn't envision in 1966 as a 15-year-old quadriplegic.

"Immediately after the accident, I thought I was going to die," he recalls. "My main concern was to stay alive."

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It took him five or six months to get over that feeling. By then he was deep into an 18-month rehabilitation period in Houston and New Orleans which prepared him for re-entry into the mainstream of life.

Meanwhile, Welch never doubted or questioned God.

"At first, I was worrying about staying alive," he explains. "Then the rehabilitation therapy was so intense and non-stop that I really didn't have time to say, 'Why me, Lord?' Besides, it's inappropriate to blame God. He gives us the laws of nature, and sometimes we try to defy them." Welch credits his faith in the power of God for his ability to press on.

He completed the 10th grade while in rehabilitation and graduated from high school with his own class. He enrolled in the University of New Orleans in the fall of 1969 and graduated in the spring of 1974.

"Around that time, I began applying to different law schools and getting turned down," he remembers. But not one to sit and wait, he did postgraduate work at UNO and spent the summer of 1975 in its Master of Business Administration program. Then he was admitted to the Loyola University School of Law, from which he graduated in 1979. Next he earned a master's degree in law from Southern Methodist University in 1979-80.

He passed the Louisiana bar exam in the summer of 1980 and landed a job as a staff attorney for the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. But that was a government job, subject to bureaucratic changes, and he found himself facing unemployment in 1982.

That was when Welch again tasted disappointment and setback. He was rejected by 16 law firms or agencies before becoming an attorney for the district counsel for the Internal Revenue Service's Southwest Region, a position he still holds.

"It was providential," he says of the IRS post. "I majored in tax at SMU, and this is where we handle the legal questions the IRS has and represent the government in an enormous number of bankruptcy cases."

Through his journey, Welch has managed to enjoy the challenge of being the first quadriplegic to become an attorney for the Federal Court of Appeals and to take on a mountain of legal work for the IRS. Along the way, he's overcome the rejection—being "turned down by every law school and graduate school" to which he applied, being turned out of a job through no fault of his own and being rejected 16 times before landing another job.

The reason he's persevered is his perspective on life.

"Believing in yourself is half the battle," he explains. "You can give the Lord the football and let him run with it. He'll take care of all your problems. But before you can reach that step, you have to believe in yourself."

Welch points out most people "sell themselves short" and actually have the ability to pull themselves up through similar adversity.

"It's not until your faith is tested you can come back with a response you can reflect on and say, 'Lord, you must have a reason for this. I'm going to give you the ball and let you run,'" he says.

"Never give up believing in yourself and never give up your faith," Welch tells people who ask how to make it through life—with or without adversity.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," he quotes from Scripture, adding his own interpretation, "Faith is something that says you can do it when reality says you can't."

SBC Renewal Means  
Best Still Ahead: Elder

By Karen Benson

WACO, Texas (BP)—Liberal scholars have written the Southern Baptist denomination is over and done with; that the SBC has already had its finest day.

Not so, says Baptist Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder. In fact, he has begun a personal crusade to change that thinking—a crusade for denominational renewal.

It's a crusade which has been in the making for 32 years, Elder explained, and has been born of concerted thought. "I feel deeply about this message, and I want to say it to multiplied audiences throughout the Southern Baptist Convention," he said.

Elder made the remarks while in Waco, Texas, May 22 to speak to area pastors and to the National Conference on Aging for Southern Baptists, held at Baylor University.

"I am here to affirm that Southern Baptists are indeed a great people of God," Elder said. "That does not affirm a perfect people. That does not say there aren't small people within the denomination who would try to tear it apart. But I can say from my experience that Southern Baptists are a great people."

The convention has a life cycle with identifiable stages of development, Elder said. After the birth of the SBC, the convention went through a period of survival and expansion. "If the Southern Baptist Convention were not of God, it had plenty of ways and means to die during those early days," he said. Just after its beginning, "the young convention suffered the horrors of a civil war and survived despite all that was hurled against it."

Next came the convention's youth, and therefore its stability and identity, Elder said followed by a stage of heightened pride and reputation in which Southern Baptists became a "proud people who delighted in our enlargements and expansion."

That expansion led to fragmentation, Elder said, which now brings the convention to its "most favorable place." The SBC "can now be seen as being at the very edge of adult maturity," Elder said. "If we are willing, we can move through turbulent times to a time of maturity as Southern Baptists. The critical thing about maturity is when and how to change."

In Southern Baptist life today, "ours is not primarily a doctrinal problem," Elder said. "Ours is primarily a crisis of change. If we deal correctly with the issue of change, we'll nail down solidly the things that are eternal and cut loose those things that are not." Only then, he said, will Southern Baptists earn the "'well done' of our Lord."

Elder listed several symptoms and problems that are calling for denominational renewal—the sensitive debate among "liberals" and "fundamentalists," the emergence of secular humanism, an aging denomination, a convention structure bigger and more diverse than ever in its history, limited resources, communication that is "not always accurate and at least inadequate," and a loss of a sense of mission, among many other problems. "It would sound as if we are already in the intensive care ward as a denomination," Elder said.

In light of these issues and problems, "we will do well to look them right in the eye and deal with those problems," Elder said.

The true measure of success for Southern Baptists will be seen in the local churches, he said. "We need to focus our attention back on the local church. If we do that effectively, the denomination will be dynamic and flourish. Our institutions and agencies may whimper, but if we do what we're supposed to do, they'll be service organizations for local churches."

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CORRECTION—In (BP) story "Start-up Agreement Completed, Elder Pledges Continued Support," mailed 5/25/84, the words "has been terminated" need to be added to the lead paragraph.

Thanks, BP

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