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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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August 6, 1984

84-111

Australian Nominated
 As BWA President

By Reinhold Kerstan

BERLIN, West Germany (BP)--G. Noel Dose of Australia has been nominated as president of the Baptist World Alliance for the term of 1985-1990, subject to election by the general assembly at the 15th Baptist World Congress in Los Angeles, July 2-7, 1985.

Dose was nominated by the BWA General Council during its meeting July 27-29. He is a native of Perth, Western Australia, and principal of Baptist Theological College, Western Australia. He holds degrees from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary (Th.M., 1960) and University of Denver (Th.D., 1963).

Dose will succeed Duke K. McCall, chancellor of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., who has been BWA president since 1980.

Christine Gregory, of Danville, Va., a Southern Baptist leader, was nominated first vice-president. To serve with her, eleven vice-presidents were nominated: Mrs. A. Bamijoko, Nigeria; Samson H. Chowdhury, Bangladesh; Ruserse S. Escoc, Costa Rica; Peter Sehr, U.S.A., North American Baptist Conference; Theodore J. Jemison, U.S.A., National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.; Roger Fredrikson, U.S.A., American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.; Birgit Karlsson, Sweden; Billy Kim, South Korea; Lorenzo Klink, Argentina; J. Makondekwa, Angola; Stanislav Svec, Czechoslovakia.

The meetings in Berlin, attended by more than 450 delegates and visitors, marked a record attendance for the BWA General Conference.

The Council passed resolutions on human rights, calling for action against torture, on the first use of nuclear weapons and an immediate verifiable freeze, urging Baptist churches all over the world to "seek peace and pursue it."

Another resolution acknowledged the "strong cultural and theological differences of women in the church" and affirmed the firm biblical teaching "that in Christ male and female are equal."

In another action, the General Council accepted a recommendation by the commission on doctrine and interchurch cooperation to begin conversations with the Lutheran World Federation on an international level in October 1985.

Preceding the council sessions, Baptist-Catholic International Conversations took place July 19-22 in Berlin-Dahlem, sponsored jointly by the secretariat for promoting Christian unity (Roman Catholic) and the commission on doctrine and interchurch cooperation (Baptist World Alliance). Theme of the discussion was "evangelism/evangelisation." The next talks will focus on the topic, "called to witness" and will be held in California in June 1985. Co-moderators of the International Conversations were Bishop Bede Heather of Australia and David Shannon from the United States.

The Baptist World Alliance is a voluntary fellowship of more than 34 million members of 127 Baptist unions/conventions with headquarters in 90 countries. During the Berlin General Council session, four additional Baptist bodies were accepted as full members: Barbados Baptist Convention, Dominican Baptist Convention, Fraternal Union of Baptist Churches (Central African Republic), and Mambilla Baptist Convention (Nigeria).

This brings the BWA membership to an all-time high of 131 member bodies.

Valentine Urges Parents
To Teach Values Of Peace

By David Wilkinson

BERLIN, West Germany (BP)—Leaders of the Baptist world community, meeting in Berlin for sessions of the General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, were reminded that parenting and peace go together.

Foy Valentine, executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, said biblical teachings about parenting clearly indicate "this is where our work for peace with justice must first be done; and it may very well be where it can best be done."

"If peace with justice is an important agenda for the family, for the race, the class, the nation, and the larger human family in which the children grow up, it will become an important agenda for children when they grow up," he explained.

Valentine, in an address to the Ethics Commission of the BWA, emphasized that children are "shaped by nature and by nurture" and must be taught Christian values and ideals.

He urged families and churches "to give very careful attention to the nurture of children who are God's gift to today and who are today's bequest to all tomorrows that the human race can have in this world."

He described the earth's one-half billion children as "our hope for the future, our prospect for a human kind of immortality, and our deposit in the great bank of aspirations, dreams and visions, including the enduring vision of peace with justice."

Valentine called for increased involvement in response to the special problems affecting children today, including hunger, poverty, child abuse and divorce.

But, he concluded, "Of all the things that children need, parenting is the thing they need most. Having children is essentially an act of faith, raising them is essentially an act of hope and parenting them is essentially an act of love."

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HMB-N

Spanish Pastor
Honored By HMB

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
8/6/84

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—A Spanish pastor who receives no pay from his church was named the "Messenger of the Word" for 1984 by the language missions division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Efraim R. Diaz, pastor of Theo Avenue Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas, was recognized for his leadership of the Hispanic congregation during an annual conference sponsored by the HMB at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

Messengers of the Word are laypersons or ministers who serve voluntarily and establish ethnic/language culture preaching points, Bible study groups and missions as a part of their ministry, according to Oscar Romo, director of the HMB's language missions division. Acting as the leader of a congregation or serving in other missionary or pastoral capacities, this person generally does not receive financial assistance for his services, Romo added. This is the first year an award has been presented to the outstanding Messenger of the Word of the year.

Diaz was lauded for his role in taking a declining Anglo congregation of a dozen members and building a Hispanic congregation of more than 900 members since 1977--all as an unpaid staff member of the church.

Diaz, a government worker in San Antonio, joined the Theo Avenue church seven years ago and began a Bible study for Hispanics, which grew to 50 people within three months. Theo Avenue members ordained Diaz and turned over their facilities to the budding Hispanic group, which named Diaz pastor, and the congregation flourished in the predominantly Hispanic community.

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Romo noted Diaz employed evangelism strategies and prayer to grow the infant church and averaged 60 professions of faith per week. Romo added the Theo Avenue church has been among the top three churches in its association with 686 baptisms during the past five years.

Diaz also organized church members into witnessing teams which blitzed 29 communities outside of San Antonio and recorded 6,500 professions of faith during 1983 alone, Romo said.

Romo said Diaz tailored Bible study, music and worship experiences to fit the people's culture. The church recently built debt-free a \$250,000 building in addition to the existing Theo Avenue facilities.

Romo commended Diaz for "his willingness to voluntarily respond to God's leadership to serve in an area of San Antonio where people are hungry for the gospel."

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BKSB- N

Strengthening Families
Called Church Role

By Frank White

Baptist Press
8/6/84

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—The traditional family is a myth that we need to forget when we talk about strengthening the family, Drew Gunnels told more than 2,000 participants in the third Sunday School Leadership Conference.

Gunnels, pastor of the Spring Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., discussed the Strengthening Families Emphasis of Bold Mission Thrust adopted at the 1980 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in St. Louis.

"The picture of the traditional family has the mother and father with two children—always a baby—gathered around the hearth at home in the evening," Gunnels said.

But there is no real model of the family today, he said. Today's families are ever-changing and frequently have only one parent.

"Single-parent families are a fact that churches must deal with. We can minister to the family even though we don't condone divorce," he said. "We ought to minister to the real needs of a real world rather than trying to deal with something that doesn't exist."

Gunnels listed four points for helping to develop stronger families.

Christians should accept the value of personhood. "A wife isn't to be used and children aren't to be manipulated," he said.

Second, we should have a belief in a complete commitment to marriage and not bail out at the first sign of trouble.

Also, discipline must be considered anew, he said. "Too much discipline deals with punishment and correction. Discipline is not what you do to a child, but what you do for a child."

Fathers especially need to learn how to demonstrate their love, said Gunnels, admitting his own difficulties with showing love to his young adult children.

"The greatest thing you could do for your family is to demonstrate your love to them," he said.

The time to deal with the family is now, Gunnels said. "Hurry. Before it is too late, hurry. You can't put your children in the freezer and take them out when you have time to deal with them. You must deal with them now," he concluded.

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Parker Sees With Her Heart,
Sheds Light In Her Dark World

By Bonita Sparrow

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Helen Wallace Parker has been blind since birth but she spends her days shedding light around her.

"My two eyes don't see, but I'm blessed with four others that work really well for me," she said. "They are insight, imagination, ideas and interest—interest in everything and everybody."

Parker appeared twice in July on "Life Today" on the ACTS network. She told the show's hosts one deals with handicaps like hers "by learning to accept yourself as you are, by remembering that God loves you and he created you the way you are for a purpose."

"Life Today" is primarily a talk show, designed to help change, from a Christian perspective, what's happening in the world.

"When I was the first blind graduate of Centre College of Kentucky in Danville, I wanted to be a teacher but couldn't get a teaching certificate back then," she said. "Still, God had better plans for me. I spent 42 years proofreading Braille textbooks for the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville before I retired in 1979.

"So you see, I still was helping handicapped people get an education. Now that I have retired, all those books I read have been helpful to me in my writing career. "Parker told host Jimmy Allen she had no idea she would be doing the freelance writing she currently is doing.

But since 1976, Parker's material has appeared in approximately 20 Christian periodicals, including twice in WMU's Royal Service magazine. She has written six different times for Open Windows, a daily devotional guide, and for the past three years has written a monthly column for Sunday School Leadership. In January 1983, her first book, Light On A Dark Trail, was published by Broadman Press.

Some of her articles dealt with how to treat blind people in church. Others are devotional in nature. She types her manuscripts in Braille and edits them before typing them on a typewriter with regular type face. Her clever sense of humor shines through them all.

Parker broke Allen and co-host Rudy Hernandez up on the "Life Today" set while talking about meeting her husband of 43 years, J.S. Parker, on a blind date. "All my dates were blind dates," she announced.

She traveled to the Radio and Television Commission in Fort Worth, Texas, for the interview with a companion, Rosa Rodgers, a retired Louisville school teacher. Through Rodgers' eyes she "sees" much of the beauty of the places they visit.

"People who say blindness is not a handicap are not realistic," Parker insists. "It is a handicap that can be overcome. I think I'm irked most when I ask someone what something looks like and they say, 'I really didn't notice.' If I could see, I would see it all. I worry about people who don't see all the beauty God has made in this world."

But there are some advantages to not having sight. "I can read my Braille books in bed at night without the light bothering someone. We save on the electric bills because we don't turn the lights on in our house. (Her husband is also blind.) And I can identify people by associating their names with the sound of their voices."

But she's also bothered by people who realize she is blind then treat her as if she were also deaf.

"I had several writing assignments from Baptist periodicals when I fell and broke my hip several years ago," she said. "Some friends asked me not to give up the assignments, saying they would do them for me. I thanked them but reminded them I had broken my hip, not my head."

While she recuperated from the broken hip the contract for her book arrived and was signed. During that recovery time, she wrote the book.

"And now that I have another book in mind, I hope I don't break another bone just to get time to write it," she said. The book has the working title, "Oh, I See."

Because Helen Parker does see. She sees with her heart.

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WMU Stresses Cooperative
Program In Ministry

By Karen Campbell

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8/6/84

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—More than 80 missionaries and conference leaders stressed the necessity of ministering to needs in the community and marketplace as they interpreted the WMU week theme, "By Love Compelled", at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

Compelled by God's love, Woman's Missionary Union members and leaders are seeking a way to express missions concern and missions love in this day, Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of WMU, told the crowd of almost 1,200. "We are 20th century women who are anxious to find the key to Bold Mission Thrust in our churches and through organizations," she said.

Weatherford noted the emphasis on compelling love translates into two objectives for WMU: to seek to involve every church member in a lifestyle of personal ministry and witness and to seek to minister to urban areas. "Each church member—man, woman, boy and girl—should be encouraged to become a marketplace missionary committed to sharing his faith in lifestyle ministry and evangelism," she said.

The importance in increased giving to the Cooperative Program was an additional emphasis of the week. The missions minded audience answered the pleas of Cooperative Program awareness with an offering of more than \$2,490. Conference center records show the offering as the largest collected to date this summer.

The week's Bible study leader, Beverly Hammack, assistant director of the Home Mission Board Christian social ministries department, related the ministry of Jesus to present ministry opportunities. She noted the way Jesus affirmed persons, accepted persons and listened are requirements of ministry today.

During morning and evening convocations missionaries issued challenges to pray and confront personal ministry opportunities.

"I would rather have five minutes a day of your prayer time for me and my work than \$10 or \$15 or \$20 or \$50 a day of your money," said Zan Gladen, foreign missionary to Mexico. "I can't always wisely spend the money you send but I can't miss when you pray," he added.

Ministering to the hungry, to resort areas, through student work and by lifestyle witnessing were among the challenges presented by the week's speakers.

Judi Folds, missionary to Japan, questioned the women about their use of their time and facilities in taking advantage of weekday ministry opportunities. She urged them to develop friendships in order to present the love of Christ. "Are you so busy in your WMU activities that you do not have time for missions in your own community and neighborhood," she asked.

Addressing current issues, Nathan Porter, Home Mission Board national consultant for disaster relief and domestic hunger, also questioned participants on their knowledge of hunger in the U.S. He noted women and children are the people suffering most in the United States because of poverty and hunger.

He drew spontaneous applause with his remarks on the inconsistency in male/female pay scales even within the church. "How can we as women or men who believe in Christ call for and expect social justice in the world when we do not call for it in our own churches," he asked.

Another highlight of the week came when Harlan Spurgeon, Foreign Mission Board vice-president for human resources, spoke of his recent trip to China. He quoted Chinese Christians who refer to the policy change allowing Christians openness to worship without persecution as the "daybreak after a long, dark period."

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