

(BP) -- FEATURES

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Paroled Convict Returns
To Prison To Preach

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ROCKY GAP, Va. (BP)—The same judge who sentenced Cam Mills to 10 years in prison took part in the convict's ordination service.

And although Mills is now free from the bars of the state penitentiary, he is still spending hours daily with prisoners—and plans a career as a prison minister.

The 45-year-old man's story unfolds like a script for a novel. A lifetime of crime, drugs and alcohol culminated in a liquor store robbery in November 1979. Jail officials described him as "a raging animal" after his arrest.

But while awaiting trial, John Ross Hill, a student at Bluefield College (a school affiliated with the Baptist Association of Virginia) took an interest in the angry and despondent man. Under Hill's influence, Mills began what he calls "my Christian walk."

Just weeks later his first sermon was delivered to inmates at a Christmas party and soon all 16 inmates in the cell block were coming to him for advice and prayer.

When he was released on bond he began attending Bluefield College and working as a volunteer in the prison ministry program. But after his trial he was sentenced to 10 years in the state penitentiary by Judge William O. Bivens. An appeal was denied and in May 1983, Mills entered prison, leaving behind a wife, two children and an unfinished education.

But he took his call to ministry with him.

Convinced he was on "a mission from God," he immediately set out to strengthen the jail ministry at Huttonsville prison, began holding Bible studies daily for inmates and made an alliance with five other Christians who also planned to eventually enter the ministry.

Tom Farrar, Mills' pastor and a professor at Bluefield College, helped Mills continue his college studies and worked with other friends to secure a pardon for Mills.

Instead, Mills was granted clemency and his sentence commuted to 1-10 years. He was paroled in January 1984, he reentered college immediately and graduated from Bluefield last May with a bachelor of arts degree in religion and philosophy.

He also began working as chaplain for the county jail and the juvenile detention center and attempted to establish a jail ministry in a neighboring county.

Since his conversion five years ago in jailblock "B" at Mercer County jail, Mills has brought nearly 200 people to Christ. Some of the conversions came in local churches, some in the county jail and many in the state penitentiary.

"I went (to prison) and I am glad," he insists. "If I had not gone to jail it would have taken down my credibility in the ministry because I would always have had someone to say I had used my faith to stay out of prison."

"I am thankful I'm not out there somewhere drunk or with a needle in my arm or not out there trying to hurt someone. Instead, I am going to spend the rest of my life trying to help people, to comfort them and do what I can...."

July 29, a part of Mills' life came full circle as he was ordained as a minister of the gospel at Laurel Fork Baptist Church in Rocky Gap, Va. His wife and children stood beside him.

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Farrar, pastor of the church, presided over the service and Hill came back from Louisville, Ky., (where he is now a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) to give the ordination address.

And Bivens--the judge who just 14 months earlier had sentenced Mills to 10 years in prison--gave the invocation.

Mills will continue his education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., this fall. But after the three year course of study he hopes to come back to Mercer County and work fulltime in the jail ministry instead of being pastor of a church.

"I love this ministry," he explained. "This is where I was saved."

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(Adapted from stories in the Bluefield Daily Telegraph.)

RTJC
(C)-F

ACTS Newest Challenge
For Broadcasting 'Survivor'

By Bonita Sparrow

Baptist Press
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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Frank Olsen is one of the few people in this world who has survived 40 years in the sometimes cutthroat, always competitive world of broadcasting. And Olsen is only 57 years of age.

Olsen is a tall man ("I'm 5 feet, 16 inches") of warmth and wit who loves people, puns and writing—not necessarily in that order.

He also loves his new job as supervisor of broadcast promotion for ACTS (the American Christian Television System). His job includes preparing promotional spots for such ACTS productions as "Life Today," "Lifestyle," "Sunshine Factory" and "Country Crossroads."

Olsen's career which has included stints with NBC and ABC, actually began when he was a boy in New York, the only child of Norwegian immigrants. A stutterer and stammerer as a child, he was a self-professed bookworm and afraid to speak in public. "But with pen and paper I found I was eloquent," Olsen said. "I was writing poetry at age 10 and mysteries at 13."

His first job at NBC, when he was 17, was operating a mimeograph machine. During the day he duplicated scripts. At night, he wrote his own and submitted them to the network's radio syndication department.

Before long, word of Olsen's talent filtered up to the executive suite and in 1945 he was offered a job as a junior staff writer for the network. He stayed there four years before leaving to try broadcasting's newest medium, television.

For four years he wrote free-lance copy for TV--"the only way to break into television in those days."

In 1952 he began four years of copywriting for some of the most prestigious advertising agencies in New York. He worked on radio ad campaigns for Colgate-Palmolive and Esso (before the oil company became Exxon). But he missed broadcasting, so he took a job with ABC-TV in 1956 as a writer-producer in the network's broadcast promotion department. He stayed 14 years.

Olsen prospered professionally at ABC. But along with his growing professional success came a growing sense of frustration. A Christian since childhood, he recognized his comfortable rut. "The Lord had given me talent as a writer but I constantly asked him, 'Is this what you want me to do with the rest of my life?'"

He describes himself as a "dyed-in-the-wool New Yorker", but when Olsen prayed, "I'll go wherever you want me to, Lord," he began to get dissatisfied with New York City.

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"I had heard of the growing film industry in Dallas, so I came down for a week and arranged some interviews. I like it so much I moved here in January 1970. All my friends in New York thought I was crazy. I didn't know a soul."

It took almost a year for the man who had worked in New York with such notables as Helen Hayes, Basil Rathbone, Robert Preston and Pat Boone, to become established in the Dallas-Fort Worth market. He watched his bank balance "drop to almost zero," but even during that first difficult year in Texas his faith never deserted him.

"I used to ask myself, 'How come you're not worried?' But I had a peace in my heart I couldn't deny," Olsen said.

Then, the day after Christmas in 1970, Olsen landed a big free-lance job and he has worked regularly since. During the next 14 years as a free-lance writer/director/producer in Texas, approximately 85 percent of his work was done for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

"I think the RTVC saw my Christian commitment," Olsen said, "and I recognized and identified with the commission's dedication to quality from the very first."

Olsen produced more than 800 television commercial spots and helped to develop two of the commission's television series, "Listen" and "At Home With The Bible." He also found time to produce films for the SBC's Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board and Annuity Board.

Working for the RTVC on a free-lance basis for 14 years, Olsen had long since been adopted as "family." But he made the "family" tag official in March by accepting the full-time promotion position. He finds the job satisfying not only because he enjoys being creative and doing something worthwhile, but also because of the opportunity he has to pass his knowledge along to another generation. He doubles as an adjunct professor in the Center for Christian Communications Studies, sponsored by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and the RTVC, where he has taught broadcast writing for three years.

"I'm thankful for the opportunity to teach at the center because my extended family is composed of students and former students. I feel like a proud parent when I see one of them succeed."

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BSSB-N

Sunday School Board Trustees
Approve Millennial Guidelines

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
8/9/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board elected persons to fill three executive positions and affirmed January 1984 editorial guidelines giving equitable treatment in church literature to three views on the millennium during their semi-annual meeting.

Trustees also adopted a record 1984-85 budget of \$158.5 million and requested a study of editorial guidelines concerning ordination of women for presentation at the February 1985 meeting.

E. V. King, executive director of the Tennessee Housing Development Agency, was elected vice-president for business and finance. He will succeed E. DeVaughn Woods who is retiring.

King, 42, will be responsible for administering the board's office of finance, management services divisions and personnel department. King, a Baptist layman, holds the B.A. degree from David Lipscomb College in Nashville and the master's degree from the University of Tennessee School of Management.

Two board employees, Emmett Wood and Thomas Clark, were promoted to department management positions.

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Wood, 42, supervisor of the personnel compensation section since 1981, will manage the accounting and control department. Clark, 45, supervisor of Broadman books and music section since 1977, was named manager of the Broadman products department.

Trustee adopted seven recommendations to assure equitable treatment in church literature and Convention Press materials to three views of the millennium, events surrounding the second coming of Jesus Christ. The three views commonly held among Southern Baptists are dispensational premillennialism, historical premillennialism and amillennialism. Areas of agreement include: return of Christ, resurrections of the dead, judgement, heaven, hell and God's consummation of history.

The recommendations specify all curriculum lines will emphasize areas of doctrinal agreement among Southern Baptists while, at the same time, dealing factually and fairly in areas where there are differing points of view.

The recommendations followed a request by two trustees at the February 1984 meeting for a discussion of treatment of eschatology (last things) in Sunday school literature and whether one line of curriculum might be assigned to reflect primarily the premillennial view. The board's editorial guidelines on the millennium were completed last January as a follow-up to an October 1983 Millennial Consultation.

In affirming the guidelines, trustees approved a recommendation that "no curriculum series will take any one doctrine or doctrinal viewpoint, including the doctrine of last things, as its organizing principle."

The final recommendation urges recognition of diverse opinions about the millennium among Southern Baptists and "the wisdom of not making the millennium a test of faith, fellowship, conservative biblical scholarship or evangelistic commitment."

The 1984-85 budget of \$158.5 million represents a six percent increase over the 1983-84 budget of \$149.2 million.

In another matter, trustees adopted a substitute motion to refer to the administration and the plans and policies committee a request for a study concerning editorial guidelines on the ordination of women.

The request as adopted followed an earlier motion by Roland Maddox, a layman from Memphis, Tenn., asking that guidelines be developed "to assure that no publication of the Baptist Sunday School Board will question or cast doubt upon the position of not ordaining women as pastors or deacons practiced by most of our churches; and not promote, foster or encourage the ordination of women as pastors or deacons."

Joe Courson, pastor of Cinco Baptist Church, Fort Walton Beach, Fla., said a request for a study should "not change the administration in advance with what they have to come out with." He then introduced a substitute motion, which was adopted, requesting a study with recommendations to be presented at the February 1985 meeting.

Also referred to the plans and policies committee for study was a motion that full salary and benefits information be provided to trustees concerning each candidate they consider for an elected position at the board.

In his first report to the trustees since his February installation, President Lloyd Elder, outlined highlights of board programs supporting Bold Mission Thrust, issued an appeal for responsible trusteeship and pledged to carry out the actions of the trustees.

"Let us function together responsibly as a trustee board," said Elder. "Open, candid discussion is encouraged. Diverse opinions are welcomed. Let us maintain a spirit of oneness and mutual respect.

"When the vote is taken, the president acts upon the decisions of the trustees and they will be reported accurately to our Baptist publics," Elder added. "Let us be servant leaders of the Baptist Sunday School Board. We are here to serve the churches, all the churches. We are here to serve Baptist people, all Baptist people."

In a devotional message, Earl Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., applauded efforts by the trustees to maintain a spirit of unity during a potentially divisive committee discussion on the millennial guidelines.

"I observed an overwhelming feeling of understanding, trust and acceptance, a feeling of appreciation of different views. Every person in the room believed everyone else in the room believes in Jesus, loves the Bible and wants to save a lost world," said Davis.

Charles Stanley, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and an ex-officio member of all SBC agencies attended the two-day meeting. At a fellowship dinner, Stanley said, "It is my intention to be the president of as many people as will allow me to be president. I will be as obedient to God as I know what obedience is."

Elder expressed appreciation to Stanley for taking time to attend and participate in the trustee sessions. "We pray for him to succeed as he leads us in the mission of Southern Baptists," he said.

In an internal restructuring, the telecommunications unit managed by Joe Denney was given department status and will report to the vice-president for publishing and distribution, Jimmy Edwards.

Also approved were:

--Leisure Listening for Blind Youth and Adults, a monthly two-hour cassette tape, beginning October 1985;

--Handbells, a quarterly music periodical, beginning October 1985;

--Preludio: Musica y Adoracion, a quarterly Spanish music periodical purchased from the Baptist Spanish Publishing House and offered by the board to U.S. churches, beginning January 1985.

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