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Top Low-Power Television
Station Affiliates With ACTS

By Greg Warner

CUMBY, Texas (BP)--In every other way, Cumby is like dozens of tiny east Texas towns, complete with farms, a few houses and a truck stop. It doesn't seem a likely place for television history to be made.

But one of Cumby's newest residents, Channel 18, is writing the book on low-power television. Channel 18, officially K18AL, went on the air Sept. 15, 1983. Already it is considered the most successful low-power television station in the country, with write-ups in Forbes Magazine and Wall Street Journal.

It is also the newest affiliate of the American Christian Television System. Channel 18 began buying about 12 hours of ACTS programs a day Dec. 3 in a move station owner Mike Story said will only add to Channel 18's success.

Cumby is in the center of a triangle formed by three larger towns--Greenville, Sulphur Springs and Commerce. Channel 18's broadcast signal reaches 35,000 homes in the area and perhaps that many more through nine cable television systems which carry the station.

Channel 18 has made its mark, Story said, by concentrating on family programs and local events. High school basketball and Christmas parades are the favorite fare this time of the year. Channel 18 will now provide its local programming with ACTS' family and Christian entertainment.

"This is one of those marriages that was made in heaven," Story said. "ACTS has the best of national programs and we have the best of local."

The Cumby station differs from other ACTS affiliates, which are either cable systems or low-power stations owned and operated by the network. Who owns the equipment is unimportant, said ACTS President Jimmy R. Allen, as long as the station carries the programs and involves the community.

"We want a local partnership so churches can have access to television," Allen said. In each city where ACTS is carried, the network organizes a local ACTS board of Baptist churches to serve as a liaison to the community. Charles Redmond, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sulphur Springs, said his church, which currently broadcasts its worship service on another television station, will switch to Channel 18 to be on ACTS.

Herbert Garrett, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greenville, said while his church has not been on television before, it may now. "If we did not even have the opportunity to put our program on, to have ACTS would help us and this station," he said.

Allen said ACTS is offered to any television station interested in the network's localized approach. That's an offer that will be hard to refuse, Story said.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Radio-Television Commission

Elder Urges Recommitment
To Bold Mission Thrust

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A ringing challenge to Southern Baptists to "recapture the dream" and commit themselves anew to the achievement of Bold Mission Thrust has been sounded by Baptist Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder.

Speaking to state convention leaders in Nashville, Tenn., to attend annual planning meetings, Elder emphasized, "The best thing we can do is put Jesus Christ back in the Baptist headlines. We would like, along with you, to help Southern Baptists to recapture the dream of sharing the gospel with every person in the world by the year 2000."

Elder responded to statistical projections released earlier in the week which showed the denomination experienced a sluggish year after four years of growth.

"It could be that Southern Baptists have spent far too long trying to resolve the issues of our diversity and too little spiritual energy on our God-given Kingdom assignments," said Elder. "The reports from our churches could be a warning signal throughout this great denomination that the real issue is not our definition of the nature of the Bible but the proclamation of its mighty salvation power throughout a lost world."

At the same time, Elder urged leaders not to be discouraged by the statistical projections but to undertake even greater efforts to achieve 1984-85 Bold Mission Thrust goals.

"A table of numbers does not tell the whole story of our Baptist people, a story of love and commitment and effort and sacrifice and enthusiasm," said Elder. "There are also real life stories of the lost won to Christ, lives changed, families strengthened, churches built and missionaries sent."

Harry Piland, director of the Sunday school department, said he believes it is still clearly possible for Southern Baptists to reach a Sunday school enrollment of 8.5 million by Sept. 30, 1985. The projected 1984 enrollment, with a one-year gain of 31,000 stands at an all-time high of 7.84 million after five consecutive years of growth.

"We are on the road to victory, but we are not there," said Piland. "There are 298 more days, 42 weeks and 43 Sundays (until Sept. 30, 1985). We intend to use every one of those days working, praying and believing God will give us victory," pledged Piland.

Roy Edgemon, director of the church training department, said the projected small decline of 0.6 percent in enrollment after four years of growth totalling more than 35,000, "serves to motivate all of us to work harder."

"Every Baptist in every church must be well-grounded in doctrine and must grow as a follower of Christ," Edgemon emphasized. "It is my prayer every church must double its efforts in 1985 to involve every member in discipleship development through church training."

Wesley Forbis, secretary of the church music department, was heartened by the 19th consecutive increase in church music enrollment which for 1984 is projected to be a gain of one percent. "Annual gains of one percent will fall short of our goal of 1.99 million enrolled by 1990," Forbis said. "We need an annual growth rate of 2.8 percent. To achieve such growth, we must direct our energies and efforts toward reaching out to witness more than ever before."

Elder listed seven challenges to the achievement of Bold Mission Thrust: reach people for Christ, teach the Bible, develop believers, strengthen families, build up the churches, support bold missions and be a servant institution. He cited the board's satellite telecommunications network, BTN, as an example of the board's commitment to serving the denomination.

"Baptist Telecommunication Network is not yet a great strength in the midst of Southern Baptist life," Elder acknowledged. "Any new program has a development phase, brings about necessary changes, lays burdens on people already working diligently and demands valuable resources. But I would hate to think a denomination of 14.4 million Baptists would enter the telecommunications age with a commitment only to the print medium."

Emphasizing his belief the SBC has dependable agencies directed by faithful leaders, Elder urged denominational support of a worldwide mission.

"We are Southern Baptists. We are cooperating Southern Baptists. We are Cooperative Program Southern Baptists. We are missionary Southern Baptists," he said. "The agencies are dependent on the Baptist people who gave them birth."

Elder said a five-year plan for language publishing and support of an effort to train one million Sunday school workers as witnesses are only two ways the board supports reaching people. "I wish we could grow up a new generation of pastors who believe building great Sunday schools is the way to build great churches," said Elder.

Also, he noted, "We must develop believers as Christians, as church members, as leaders, as witnesses and as Southern Baptists. There are thousands of Southern Baptists who need to hear convincingly about our Baptist distinctives--about the competency of the soul, salvation by grace alone, priesthood of the believer and religious liberty."

Elder called for stronger efforts to support existing churches and to start new ones. "We need new lighthouses and we want to care for the churches we have now," he said.

He said he believes Southern Baptists are willing to work to make dreams happen.

"Southern Baptists have been willing through the decades to move out on a dream that this world needs Jesus Christ. We are the kind of people who dream and work at it consistently. We must accept the challenge and commit ourselves anew to Bold Mission Thrust."

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Canadian Pastors Plea For Help In Evangelism

Baptist Press
12/7/84

VANCOUVER, B.C. (BP)--Southern Baptist pastors and mission leaders in western Canada challenged 175 state and national Southern Baptist evangelism leaders to help respond to "overwhelming" needs in Canada.

There are more than 13 million people in Canada, and 80 percent of them do not believe in Jesus Christ as Lord, said Clyde Billingsly, evangelism director for the Northwest Baptist Convention with which SBC churches in western Canada are affiliated.

Billingsly described western Canada as a secular society where the people are hearty, self-sufficient and do not feel the need for God.

Henry Blackaby, director of missions for Capilano Baptist Association which includes Vancouver and Victoria, said in an interview following the conference, response from the SBC evangelism leaders to needs in Canada was "phenomenal" and the meeting in Vancouver came at precisely the right moment in history.

If this meeting had been held here a year or two ago, or a year or two later, it would have not been nearly so significant, said Blackaby.

He explained the meeting came just five months after the Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City, Mo., had adopted the report of its Canadian Study Committee calling for "an aggressive evangelistic strategy" using coordinated resources of four SBC agencies.

The meeting also was held just six weeks after a highly-successful Billy Graham crusade in Vancouver in which more than 10,000 persons made commitments to Christ, Blackaby said.

The conference was especially significant because of the important roles in evangelism assigned to those who attended, Blackaby observed. "These men (state and national directors of evangelism and associates) comprise the greatest team of evangelism leaders in North America, and only God knows ultimately the effect this meeting will have on them and on our ministries here," he said.

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To share the needs and vision of Southern Baptist missions work in western Canada, Blackaby sponsored a breakfast attended by almost 100 evangelism leaders. Several Southern Baptist pastors and lay persons in the Capilano association spoke at the breakfast.

Phillip Young, pastor of Vancouver Chinese Baptist Church, the largest Southern Baptist congregation in the association with 350 members, told the group 46 percent of the two million people in the association are of ethnic and/or language background, and five percent do not understand English. The church includes members from 10 nations.

Blackaby said few other evangelical religious denominations are involved in ethnic missions, but Southern Baptists in Vancouver include Chinese, Laotian, Spanish, and Korean congregations among the 14 churches and missions in the association.

Gene Laird, pastor of the largest Anglo church in Vancouver, the Royal Heights Baptist Church, challenged the evangelism leaders to come up with ideas which will be effective in helping Canadians reach other Canadians. Laird is president of the Canadian Fellowship of Southern Baptists, which includes 67 Southern Baptist churches and missions throughout Canada, most in the western part of the country.

Dave Bartow, associate pastor of Village Hills Baptist Church, challenged SBC evangelism leaders to help enlist qualified student workers to reach 250,000 students enrolled in three universities in the association.

Bartow said there is a desperate need for qualified, trained Canadian Baptist leaders to work in SBC churches in Canada, and he is convinced the time to enlist them is while they are still college students so they can be trained as they mature.

Jim Yoder, pastor of Gladstone Baptist Church, stressed the impact of the Billy Graham crusade, pointing out Southern Baptists in Vancouver are cooperating with other Baptists and other evangelicals to reach Canadians for Christ.

Blackaby said the Graham crusade came as an answer to prayer. The 14 Southern Baptist churches and missions in the association received an average of 20 prospects per church from those making commitments during the Graham crusade, Blackaby said.

Blackaby added response of SBC evangelism leaders to the needs they saw and felt while in Vancouver was beyond his expectations. Several of the evangelism leaders from other states told Blackaby they felt God wanted them to move to Canada and do missions work.

Several others talked to Blackaby about needs they might meet by recruiting volunteers from areas of the country where Southern Baptists are stronger. Blackaby said he was convinced God would work in ways none of the conference participants ever dreamed possible to strengthen SBC work in Canada, including little ways which might seem insignificant.

For example, Ron Hogue, pastor of Towers Baptist Church in the Richmond area of Vancouver, said his church has been without a pianist for more than a year and half, and he had been praying expectantly God would lead a pianist to his congregation.

At the meeting, SBC Home Mission Board evangelism consultant Dan Crawford shared his faith with the pianist at the hotel lounge, discovering the pianist was a new believer who accepted Christ during the Graham crusade.

Crawford introduced the pianist to Blackaby and Hogue after discovering the pianist lived in Richmond and was attending a church which already has several good pianists.

Blackaby said he did not know whether the hotel pianist would become the Richmond church's pianist, but he was praying God would use that and similar incidents to meet the needs of Vancouver churches.

Hogue is the son of C.B. Hogue, recently elected executive director of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California and former evangelism vice-president of the Home Mission Board.

It was Hogue who made the motion at the SBC two years ago to change the convention's constitution to allow messengers from Canadian SBC churches to be recognized, leading to the Canada study committee report approved by the SBC last June.

Hogue, one of the speakers at the conference, also preached in his son's church in Richmond. In an interview, the elder Hogue agreed with Blackaby the evangelism conference in Vancouver would make a significant impact on SBC work in western Canada.

Hogue said he was pleased with the progress the SBC is making on implementing the SBC committee's recommendation. "The SBC is responding positively to the motion adopted in Kansas City, and the agencies are moving as rapidly as possible within the bureaucratic restraints under which they operate," Hogue said.

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Training Leaders Challenged
To Continue Discipleship

By Gail Rothwell

Baptist Press
12/7/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—State church training directors and associates meeting at the Baptist Sunday School Board for annual planning sessions heard reports from state leaders and were challenged to continue the task of discipleship in the local church.

Roy Edgemon, director of the church training department, introduced plans for a 1985-90 emphasis on Developing Believers. "We must never let up on our responsibility of enlisting and enrolling people for training," Edgemon said. "Discipleship isn't an easy task, but our churches will not grow numerically unless we help them to grow spiritually."

Edgemon noted church training projects included in the developing believers emphasis include new member training, in-depth discipleship, doctrine study and leadership training.

The 1984 Friend of Church Training Award was presented to Harry Piland, director of the Sunday school department. Edgemon cited Piland's strong support of the training program in presenting the award which is determined by nominations from state church training leaders and personnel in the board's church training department.

The church training and Sunday school departments, along with the Home Mission Board's evangelism section, are cooperating on a five-year emphasis from 1985-90 to train one million Sunday school workers in evangelism in preparation for the 1986 "Good News America" revivals.

Piland noted the combined effort is the "fulfillment of a dream to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to reach and teach persons and involve them in the mission of reaching others for the Lord."

The church training department has developed an equipping center module, Training Sunday School Workers in Evangelism, to be used during the training emphasis. Edgemon said church training will support the Southern Baptist Convention's 1985-90 Bold Mission Thrust emphases on reaching people, developing believers and strengthening missions.

State directors from Arkansas and Mississippi shared how their states were supporting the training emphasis on developing believers.

Robert Holley from Arkansas said developing believers conferences, to train associational leaders, were held in the spring and summer of 1984.

"We have had an enthusiastic response to the emphasis," he said. "The resources help Southern Baptists know who they are, what they believe and why. In addition, church training is helping to develop leaders who provide a good foundation for other church programs."

Mississippi director Mose Dangerfield said the concept of developing believers was introduced in the state at combined conferences for pastors and associational leaders. In the past two years 60 such conferences have been held in Mississippi. An additional 25 conferences will be held in 1985.

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