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Gregory Adds BWA
To Leadership Tasks

By Carol Garrett

LOS ANGELES (BP)--She describes herself as "very plain vanilla" in a brown paper wrapper, who is also a "communicator on a grassroots level." But when Christine Gregory begins to speak, plain papers fall away and you're left with a shining treasure of a woman.

And what a communicator she is.

"I'm convinced one's total Christian commitment has to be carried out through many different directions. I can't just tell you what I believe, I've got to show you what I believe," Gregory said recently after addressing the pre-congress leadership conference of the Baptist World Alliance Woman's Department.

The path of doing instead of talking has lead "ordinary Plain Jane" Gregory into places of worldwide Baptist service.

The past national president of Woman's Missionary Union, first vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and president of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, was selected as the first vice-president for the BWA the first week in July.

A refreshing "plainness" does prevail, when, discussing her impressive list of accomplishments, this animated Virginian seems almost amused at herself.

Gregory said she simply has been willing to be led by God where he's wanted her to go.

Blue eyes sparkling she said, "I've never set a personal goal. God always has worked in my life for me to do what he wanted without my having to set goals. Most of the things I've done I never dreamed I'd do."

Learning to do more than she thought possible, being "better than her best," can be traced, Gregory said, to the level training ground of WMU service.

"Looking back to my earliest involvement in mission action, things like literacy and race relations, I doubt seriously that had I not been involved in WMU I would have been involved in those things," she said.

Her service easily could have gone the route of Junior League or civic clubs in the 1950s, Gregory said, adding although these are good activities, she wouldn't have lived a "total life." She explained, "The fact you have the opportunity to exercise your talents and gifts in WMU is terribly important. And where else is a laywoman going to do it?"

Finding and using gifts are so important to Gregory 1 Corinthians 14:1 springs easily to mind as her favorite Bible verse. "It's about the Holy Spirit...asking him to help you know how to use your gift," she said.

Using your gift for the Lord is an important distinction, Gregory said. "Too many young women who have realized their power in helping change laws by influencing legislatures aren't influencing the church to recognize its responsibilities," she said.

Sometimes being placed in leadership is hard. Being named to the special Peace Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention is one of those times, Gregory said.

"This Peace Committee thing has disturbed me a great deal. The people in the denomination, who are serious, are hanging a tremendous load of responsibility on this committee," she said.

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Nashville, Tennessee

Current labels such as moderate, liberal, conservative and fundamentalist are a real problem, according to Gregory. "I don't like to be tagged, and I was tagged. Nobody's ever asked me what I believe about the Bible. You get tagged by assumptions," she said, this time with eyes flashing.

Gregory would like to see two major things come out of this committee. "First, it is my hope we will shut out the world and learn to talk to each other in common Christian courtesy," she said. She also hopes to see the committee become a sounding board.

"The Scripture says when you have ought against your brother to go to him with a third person. I hope the 'third person' in the SBC can be this committee," she said.

"Why be a Southern Baptist?" is a question which draws reflex response in authentic Southern drawl. "It's how I was born and bred," Gregory said. "I remain a Southern Baptist today because I believe totally the things which I was taught," she continued.

Those affirmations of her Southern Baptist faith include priesthood of the believer, autonomy of the local church, and "also being priest to someone else by listening, caring, helping and hurting," she said.

From this base, Gregory reaches out further through the Baptist World Alliance. They can join people together in fellowship that separate Baptist groups could not bring, she said.

The coming together with other Christians, for Gregory, is the best part of a life spent in Baptist leadership. "The fact that you come in contact with all kinds of people, and your common bond is Jesus Christ; there is nothing more special," she said.

"The fact I've been able to do all the things I've done in my lifetime makes you absolutely sure that just one ordinary woman can do anything the Lord asks."

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Errors Acknowledged
In Sunday School Lesson

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
7/15/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Several statements in the July 7 lesson of "Adult Bible Study" are the result of errors made in the editing process and are not the fault of the writer, according to an official of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

The lesson, "Accepting Good and Bad," is the first of five sessions based on the book of Job. The statements in "Adult Bible Study," one of eight quarterly adult periodicals in the Life and Work Series, say the Satan referred to in the first two chapters of Job is not the devil of the New Testament.

These errors do not appear in the other seven quarterly adult Life and Work periodicals, said Max Caldwell, manager of the youth-adult group in the board's Sunday school department. "These statements do not reflect the position of the Sunday School Board. We simply failed to catch the errors in this periodical. We deeply regret these oversights," he said.

He emphasized the writer of the lesson material, John I. Durham, professor of Hebrew and Old Testament at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., did not write the statements that are errors.

These statements were inserted by a temporary editor called in to work because of a staff vacancy, said Caldwell. However, he said, "We have an evaluation system in which edited manuscripts are read by several persons, including an outside doctrinal reader. The errors should have been noted and removed."

Caldwell said the statements which are incorrect say the Satan mentioned in the first two chapters of Job is a different being than the devil of the New Testament.

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One phrase which was added in the editing process states the Satan in Job "was God's servant, not his enemy" and goes on to say, "There is in the Old Testament no concept of an empire opposed to God."

In contrast, lesson material in "Studying Adult Life and Work Lessons" by Herschel Hobbs, pastor-emeritus of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, states: "Furthermore, note that Satan came also.... He tries to destroy everything good in the universe. Satan appeared in true character in our Scripture."

In a study of the first two chapters of Job, "we need to focus on the distinctive features of Job's picture of Satan," Caldwell said. "We also need to base our doctrine of Satan on the more complete revelation in the New Testament."

Caldwell said he regrets the errors in "Adult Bible Study" have caused confusion among those who use the periodical. He said several letters and telephone calls have been received, "but we want the larger Southern Baptist family to know of these concerns."

"This material does not reflect the kind of clarity and accuracy to which the Sunday School Board, its editors or those involved in the evaluation process are committed," said Caldwell. "The result of this commitment is evident in the fact that so few errors appear in print in the more than 150 periodicals published by the board."

Caldwell said the entire quarterly is being reviewed and efforts are under way to determine if changes are needed in editorial and evaluation processes, especially when staff vacancies occur, to avoid errors in the future.

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Indochinese Celebration
Focuses On Refugees

By Carolyn Brandt

Baptist Press
7/15/85

BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP)—"Indochinese Celebration '85," held at Southwest Baptist University June 28-July 1, had a twofold purpose: to train and equip Indochinese Southern Baptist leadership to serve their congregations more effectively and to celebrate ten years of refugee resettlement in the United States.

The Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention sponsored Celebration '85 which brought together 475 Indochinese adults, youth and children.

Conferences were held simultaneously during the daytime for Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian pastors, lay pastors and church leaders. There were also conferences for Indochinese youth and for non-Asian workers among the Indochinese.

The three evenings, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, were given to the three ethnic groups as a time of singing, a time of sharing testimonies by refugees and a worship service.

Jose Hernandez, director of ethnic resource correlation at the Home Mission Board, planned and directed the conference. He explained a very important need exists for all Americans to know of the experiences of the Indochinese refugees and also to be reminded of the continuing need for sponsoring other refugees to come to the United States.

Hernandez emphasized there are still thousands and thousands of Indochinese waiting in refugee camps in Thailand and Mayasia for sponsors.

On Sunday morning, Hernandez presented "The Ten Year Pilgrimage and Testimonies" through a slide presentation and personal reports.

Included in the presentation was a report by former missionary journeyman Beth Rogers, who spent two years, 1982-83, at the refugee camps in Thailand. She currently is employed by the SBC Immigration and Refugee Service in Atlanta.

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In the May 1985 edition of Mosaic, published by the Immigration and Refugee Service, it was reported there were 10,771,100 refugees worldwide in December of 1984.

Mosaic also reports that according to the latest available records, the United States has accepted more than 237,400 refugees and the People's Republic of China resettled more than 250,000 refugees. France ranks third with 56,026 refugees.

Refugees who spoke at the conference praised Southern Baptist individuals and churches who cared for them by serving as sponsors. "I want to take this opportunity to tell you how much we appreciate Southern Baptists," said Sok Doeung, Cambodian consultant for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. "I became a Christian in a refugee camp after talking to a Southern Baptist foreign missionary."

He went on to encourage the Indochinese Christians to be on the giving end now--to work, to serve, to help and to support Southern Baptist work with refugees.

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(Carolyn Brandt is director of public relations for Southwest Baptist University.)

Journey From Thug to Pastor
Costs Fiancee, Education

Baptist Press
7/15/85

ST. KITTS (BP)--His decision, another step in his journey from thug to pastor, cost him his fiancee and education in England. But Kevin Jones has no regrets.

Today he is pastor of Mount Carmel Baptist Church on St. Kitts. With more than 160 members, the church sponsors six missions in surrounding communities and has about 700 children enrolled in outreach Sunday school programs.

Mount Carmel also sponsors a three-grade elementary school and a small business college to teach basic job skills to young people. The church's latest venture has been to start an agricultural program to teach people farming skills and canning.

Jones is understandably pleased with the way the church has developed; he began working with it when it was only a mission. But his own story is even more dynamic.

He carried a pistol with him the first night he went to Bible class, Jones remembers, and went only to please a friend. Later that night he was going to roam the streets with his gang; he carried the gun because sometimes things got rough.

Still, he had basic Christian training and felt he knew the Bible well enough to dismiss it. But that first night a giant of a man, William Connor, stood before the class. Jones slouched in his seat, convinced the man could tell him nothing from the Bible he didn't know.

"His first words were, 'Let us turn to Habakkuk.' And, believe me, I didn't know there was such a book in the Bible," Jones says. "I looked around to see if they had the same kind of Bible I had. They did." He hid his Bible so nobody would notice he had not found the chapter. "That was a humbling experience," he admits.

That evening Jones became a Christian. "Everything looked different after that," he says. "I read the Scripture and began seeing things I was doing which were wrong. I knew God had done something to me. The Bible looked so different I got out my mother's copy to compare it and see if something in it had changed--but the words were the same. I had changed."

He later began working with the St. Kitts government, first as a statistician, then as a customs official. But gradually he became convinced God was calling him to the ministry.

It came to a head when he prepared to attend college in England, where his fiancee already had gone. His suitcase was packed, but he felt God holding him in St. Kitts. After eight days of prayer and fasting, he cancelled the trip; God had work for him on the island.

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Cancelling that trip was expensive.

The dream of most young people on the island is to leave for England or the United States, attend school and get good jobs, opportunities which largely don't exist on their island. His friends thought he was a fool for throwing away his future. His fiancée broke their engagement. For three years his father refused to speak to him.

But Connor, his pastor of Antioch Baptist Church, asked him to begin working with a mission in the Lodge community. That was the beginning of Mount Carmel Baptist Church.

Life for Kevin Jones would have been different if he'd made that trip to England. But he has no regrets.

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Hunger Relief Giving
Surpasses \$6 Million

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
7/15/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptists in the first half of 1985 contributed more than \$6 million to their denomination's hunger relief ministries, about \$1 million short of the total given during all of 1984.

Through June 30, a total of \$5,519,454 had been given to the Foreign Mission Board's overseas hunger relief fund, and \$484,813 had been contributed to the domestic hunger fund administered by the Home Mission Board, according to figures released by the two Southern Baptist Convention agencies.

In 1984 the SBC's worldwide hunger relief ministries received a record \$7.16 million. The figures do not reflect monies given for hunger ministry that were utilized in local churches, associations and state conventions.

This year's record pace in contributions coincides with an outpouring of private Americans stimulated by news media coverage of the devastating famine in Ethiopia and other African nations.

Interaction, a coalition of more than 120 voluntary agencies active in famine relief and development, reported that through May of this year Americans had given \$120.6 million to agencies working in Africa.

The total does not include an estimated \$60 million generated to date by the British "Band Aid" and American "U.S.A. for Africa" recordings. The figure also does not include Southern Baptist gifts through the Foreign Mission Board.

The Baptist World Alliance, a member of Interaction, reported recently its World Aid vision received a record \$2.3 million for hunger relief during the fiscal year ending March 31. Giving included \$1.75 million to aid African famine victims.

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