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August 27, 1985

85-104

Explosion, Fire Level
Mississippi Church

By Tim Nicholas

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--A Sunday morning thunderstorm helped minimize the tragedy at a north Mississippi Baptist church when an apparent gas leak sparked an explosion which burned the church to the ground and injured four members, two severely.

About 15 people were standing in the sanctuary of Priceville Baptist Church near Tupelo at 9:50 a.m. Aug. 25 when the accident occurred but a number of others were waiting in their cars for the rain to slack. Still others had not yet arrived for the 10 a.m. Sunday school which usually averages 60-70, according to Terry Ramey, minister of music and youth.

The church janitor already had turned on the lights in the basement when two Sunday school teachers went downstairs to prepare for their classes.

"I saw a flash out of the corner of my eye," said Ramey who had been standing near the pulpit talking with members. "The blast knocked us all down and we managed to get out." He said the basement door to the sanctuary blew off and "a gush of flames started coming up."

Ramey said the two men in the basement, Vardaman Alexander and Jerry Nolan, got out, Ramey already burned went back into the sanctuary to make certain everybody was out. "It blew the whole back wall out the basement," said Ramey.

The frame building, which was insured, burned completely despite the arrival of firefighters. Ramey said a couple of the women later said they had smelled gas.

The two men who had been in the basement were listed in critical but stable condition at Firefighters Memorial Burn Center in Greenville. Two women in the sanctuary suffered injuries. Cora Alexander, sister of one of the injured men, had a sprained shoulder; Lucille Crider had a fractured wrist.

Members had a service at 4 p.m. at Auburn Baptist Church, making tentative plans for temporary facilities. A new pastor, Robert Rogers' first Sunday on the field will be Sept. 1.

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board was providing a double-wide chapel trailer for temporary facilities and \$2,500 from Disaster Relief Funds.

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(Tim Nicholas is associate editor of the Mississippi Baptist Record.)

Belfry Pastor Determined
To Continue Hunger Fight

By Glenn Mollette

Baptist Press
8/27/85

BELFRY, Ky. (BP)--In December 1984, Belfry Baptist Church voted to send \$100,000 to famine stricken Ethiopia.

"It's a lot of money and we have many needs but in comparison to a million dying people our needs are insignificant," Pastor Jim Watt told a pastor's conference when he announced the gift.

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Later a layman in the church matched the gift with another \$100,000.

"It seemed as if God were getting ready to do something in Ethiopia," Watt reflected recently. One week prior to Belfry Baptist's gift the Foreign Mission Board received permission from communist governed Ethiopia to send food and help. The money seemed to come at the right time.

"National attention took over my life for three months," Watt said. When a reporter from the Washington Post came to Belfry to do the story it was only the beginning of daily interviews from papers throughout the country along with radio talk shows and television appearances. On Dec. 23 Watt appeared on national television which Watt estimates raised another \$40,000 for Ethiopia. "We received gifts from one dollar to \$500 after that," he said.

Yet even in the limelight Watt affirms it was a great spiritual time for him and his church.

"We decided not to respond to any of the negative thoughts that come our way," he explained. The church did receive 15-20 negative letters among the thousands of positive and a man one Sunday picketed the church.

"We agreed to do three things in view of our gift," noted Watt, "not to try to explain, defend or justify our actions."

Some folks might get the idea a church who had received so much attention might become haughty but Watt said that hasn't happened. "Our church never had an attitude of look at what we've done. We felt a part of something big God was doing in the world."

Recently Watt had the opportunity to visit Ethiopia. His purpose was to first, "See if our money got there or is the food really getting to the people." And "Did \$200,000 do any good?"

The first question was answered with a resounding yes when Watt "personally viewed 300 tons of grain and food stacked in warehouses strategically built near the famine area." Watt not only saw the grain but was able to be a part of the grain disbursement in Rebal, a tiny village in the Mentz Gisha district outside of Addis Ababa.

The United Nations is overseeing the sacking of this grain which requires one sack be placed in four sacks to withstand the 25 foot drop from the airplane. "This food is donated by the U.S.A." is written on each sack.

"Southern Baptists are in charge of the food after it is dropped into the famine stricken area," he reported. "About 200 natives work with Southern Baptists to sack it and oversee its distribution."

A Hercules transport plane carrying 16 tons a trip made four stops to drop off food.

"The Mentz Gisha is the hard hit area of Ethiopia," he said. "Food has to be dropped into there by helicopter. It is extremely difficult to get there. The terrain is very rough and requires a two and a half hour walk but only two minutes by helicopter."

Watt viewed several people on the verge of death and he knows many more will starve.

But because of the money Belfry gave, Watt "was able to hold some children in my arms who might not otherwise be alive. The tragedy is the children and the babies are the hardest hit. Forty thousand Ethiopians were dying per day with 4,000 of them being under three years old."

When Watt was introduced in Rebal as the pastor of the church who had given so much money, people began to gather around him and kissed his feet. "I had to lift them up. They couldn't understand that what we did was really nothing."

Is there any hope for Ethiopia? "It has to rain," Watt answered. "It did rain two days while I was there and the Mentz Gisha is beginning to green up a little bit. However, our country will have to help Ethiopia for another 10 years. They simply need time to build up, develop seed and get going."

In view of the church's large gift to Ethiopian hunger, a long period of national attention and a missionary trip to see what is really going on Watt admitted, "I have become very aware of our church's responsibility to be a good steward of God's money. I want us to have adequate facilities but in view of the need of the world I want us to shy away from extravagance."

The trip to Ethiopia also reaffirmed Watt's convictions concerning the Cooperative Program, the voluntary unified national budget of the Southern Baptist Convention. "I am a die hard Southern Baptist," Watt explained. "I saw first hand the genius of our nation where the need is great."

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(Glenn Mollette is a correspondent for the Western Recorder, newsjournal of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.)

Blacks, Whites Need To Form
Relationships, Then Churches

By Leisa A. Hammett

Baptist Press
8/27/85

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Southern Baptist attempts to start churches in black communities or have homogenous worship with blacks will not be successful until the two groups form meaningful relationships, said a Southern Baptist church starter.

The fact many whites never have had meaningful relationships with blacks perpetuates a parental tendency in Southern Baptist church starting attempts, noted Willie McPherson, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board national consultant for new church starts.

Because Southern Baptists are 95 percent white, McPherson said, most SBC churches in black communities are going to have to be started by whites. But many white Southern Baptists only know how to relate to blacks in "superior and patronizing" ways, he said.

During home missions week at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, McPherson, a black, told Southern Baptist church starters the ideal of homogenous worship will not compromise black heritage but will blend it with equally valuable white worship styles. "I'm convinced the love of Christ transcends all cultures, colors and nationalities. The gospel is the same to all people," McPherson said.

"One of our problems is that we polarize people by talking about status and culture."

McPherson admitted many National Baptists (members of the three mainline black Baptist denominations: National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.; National Baptist Convention of America and the Progressive National Baptist Convention) see Southern Baptist church starting efforts among blacks as a takeover attempt.

"But," McPherson defended, "we are not out to win people to a denomination. We're out to win Christians."

McPherson said Southern Baptist black relations have progressed from when the HMB's black church relations department was first called "work with Negroes." The department name was later changed to work with National Baptists and was altered to its current department name in 1981.

McPherson reported approximately 16 Southern Baptist state conventions currently employ directors who relate to black Southern Baptists and National Baptists in their respective states. Approximately 1,000 black churches are affiliated with the SBC though the majority of them maintain dual alignment with their respective National Baptist conventions, McPherson said.

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Some black churches do not see aligning with the 14.3-million member denomination as "constructive," McPherson admitted.

The advantages of National Baptists and Southern Baptists pooling their monetary, material and human resources is the increased effectiveness of church starting and communicating the gospel message of Jesus Christ, according to McPherson and other black National and Southern Baptist leaders.

Some black national Baptist churches want to dually align with Southern Baptists, McPherson said, but are hesitant for several reasons.

Those reasons include the difficulties of dual alignment, (which McPherson compared to the biblical admonition of trying to be loyal to two masters), fears of minimizing black Baptist heritage and concern over if they will be accepted by white Christians.

Blacks, said McPherson, are accepting the "mission approach," the typical Southern Baptist church starting method.

This approach, he said, involves surveying the church needs in an area, choosing property and obtaining monies, and support from local, state and national denominational structures (local churches, associations and the state and national convention.)

He cited New Orleans and Shreveport, La., where six churches were started in one month.

Until then, McPherson said, few black Baptist churches in the area were "willing" to be affiliated with the SBC. He added that approximately 354 black Southern Baptist churches have been started nationwide in the last three years.

McPherson named three other church starting approaches in predominantly black communities.

The pastor/family approach, said McPherson, is a church starting method common to the black culture. In this method, a person decides to become a pastor and creates a church family in his home.

The pastor is usually bivocational and receives no funding until the church eventually moves into a storefront and later buys property and builds a church. Many of these church starts, however, never advance beyond their storefront quarters, he said.

The Bible approach usually occurs when blacks move from the South to the West and start a Bible study in a home. Eventually the group calls a pastor--usually someone they knew in the South.

A fourth method occurs when a church splits. Usually the split happens because of a negative confrontation, he said. However, McPherson noted, splits also can occur purposely and have positive results. The churches, for example, can relocate into unchurched communities.

Whatever method is used, McPherson believes Southern Baptists are serious about reaching people and starting churches among blacks and others.

However, Southern Baptists are still in the developmental stages of starting black churches, he said. The denomination has come a long way, but still has a long way to go.

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HMB Honors Two
Churches, Pastor

Baptist Press
8/27/85

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board recently honored two churches and a pastor for their contributions to church and community ministries, resort and language missions.

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Tyrrell Park Baptist Church of Beaumont, Texas, received the first Jewell Beall Award for Church and Community Ministries. First Baptist Church, Tahoe City, Calif., was awarded the first resort missions church of the year.

Isaias Hernandez, of Michigan, was honored as the 1985 Language Pastor of the Year.

Tyrrell Park Baptist Church is located in a community which has shifted from a predominantly white to predominantly black population. The church offers a variety of weekday programs, including a worship service and Vacation Bible School for senior adults at a local nursing home and also sewing and craft classes.

Last year the church's annual children's activities program drew 400 neighborhood children for recreation, Bible studies and clubs and a choir. An inner-city mission also resulted from the activities program.

Tyrrell Park's award was named for Jewell Beall, 80, a retired Home Mission Board Christian social ministries missionary.

The resort missions church of the year, First Baptist Church, Tahoe City, is situated in one of the nation's major resort centers. In its leisure-oriented, secular setting the church started two missions, several home Bible fellowships and led six ski slope worship services during ski season.

First Baptist also maintains ministries in area campgrounds, condominium and vacation home communities, casinos and beach fronts. Last year the northern California church led the state in baptisms. Dan Holzer is pastor of the church and works with Home Mission Board resort missionary Debbie Wohler.

Hernandez, language pastor of the year, has been pastor of First Spanish American Baptist Church for 28 years. The church started three local missions in Pontiac, Mich., and 20 missions in Mexico.

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HMB Honors Missions
Directors, PACT Workers

Baptist Press
8/27/85

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Two associational directors of missions, a missionary and a local church were honored for contributions to home missions by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board during the board's annual conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference.

Harold Polk of Lexington, Ky., and Cline Borders of Shelby, N.C., were named outstanding missionary leaders for the East for their work as associational directors of missions. Stephen Cloues of Birmingham, Ala., was named eastern PACT consultant of the year and Prichard Memorial Baptist Church of Charlotte, N.C., was named eastern PACT church of the year.

PACT (Project: Assistance for Churches in Transitional Communities) is a Home Mission Board effort to help churches facing transition evaluate church ministries and programs and their communities in order to be more effective in community outreach and ministry.

Polk, director of missions for Elkhorn Baptist Association in Kentucky, was named outstanding missionary leader for a metropolitan association in the eastern United States. He has been director of Elkhorn, the oldest Baptist association in Kentucky, since 1970.

Under his leadership, the Lexington area association developed a Christian social ministries program which involves the local churches. Last year mission gifts for the association were more than \$1 million. During Polk's 15 years of service the association started 10 new churches and are planning three more by 1990.

Borders, director of missions for Kings Mountain Baptist Association, Cleveland County, N.C., was honored as outstanding missionary leader for a rural-urban association in the eastern half of the nation.

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The associational offices now are located in a new building and have increased its budget from \$22,000 to \$130,000. This year the association will operate debt-free. Borders has been its director since 1973.

Cloues, a missionary of the HMB, was named the 1985 PACT Consultant of the Year. Cloues directs church extension ministries for the metropolitan Birmingham (Ala.) area.

This year Cloues conducted 15 PACT consultations with churches. Two of these Birmingham churches have received the PACT church of the year award, 85th Street Baptist in 1982 and Green Acres Baptist in 1984.

Prichard Memorial in Charlotte, this year's PACT church of the year, was recognized for reversing a 15 year membership decline and increasing Sunday school attendance by more than 150 members in two years. The Charlotte church began a refugee resettlement ministry, a Vietnamese mission and plans to begin a ministry to a neighboring Greek community.

Beginning in November the church will host a breakfast for area street people in addition to the church's on-going ministries to senior citizens and cooperative ministries with a local black church and two housing projects.

Prichard also provides recreation ministries to singles in the downtown Charlotte area and offers a support group program for widows and divorced people.

Approximately 3,000 Southern Baptist churches in urban or metropolitan areas are located in demographically changing communities, according to HMB Executive Vice-President Robert T. Banks. The board has provided training for 160 PACT consultants who work with churches, evaluating church programs and community changes in order to help churches more effectively reach their communities for Christ, he said.

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Reaching City's People
Means Reaching Ethnic

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
8/27/85

WINONA LAKE, Ind. (BP)--Reaching the people of Chicago means reaching ethnic groups.

"Chicago is an ethnic city. If we are to reach Chicago's population, we must think ethnic," said Paul Hart, director of language missions for the Chicago Metro Baptist Association, which includes 40 language churches, 42 black churches and 62 white, English-speaking churches.

Among those churches is an American Indian church where Arthur Ben is pastor and a Haitian French-speaking church where Daniel Jean is Sunday school director.

The Gabon Baptist Church, one of three Haitian churches in Chicago, started with Haitians attending English-speaking churches who wanted services in the Creole-French language, Jean said. The church is encouraging each member to enroll one other person in Sunday school because the one-on-one approach to reaching other Haitians seems to be most effective.

Although about 60 persons are involved in Sunday school, activities are difficult because of a cultural difference in attention to time--Haitians don't often arrive on time.

The church has purchased land and has a goal of building its own building this year.

The All-American Indian Mission of First Baptist Church, Glenview, is the only American Indian Baptist congregation in the Chicago area which has an American Indians population of 23,000. The mission has 28 members, said Ben, pastor of the mission for four years.

Cultural differences among the many different Indian tribes make it difficult to reach others, he explained. Ben is training mission members to understand the Christian responsibility to witness to others.

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Cultural barriers exist with all the ethnic groups, Hart pointed out. "The barriers are difficult to cross but we must find ways to cross them," he said.

An emphasis on ethnic work in Chicago is part of Mega City Focus, a Bold Mission Thrust effort of the Sunday School Board and the Home Mission Board, Hartt said.

The Chicago association has a goal of 55 language work areas by 1990, and "To get the job done, we will need a few good men," Hart said.

Workers are needed in several language and ethnic areas. Japanese, Hungarian and Filipino are three of the larger target groups without Baptist work, he said.

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Embracing Japanese Lifestyle
Enhanced Couple's Witness

Baptist Press
8/27/85

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Paul Schlett spoke the simple words with kindness and in the best Japanese he could muster.

"God is precious and God is very special to me and on Sunday I go to church." He wanted his Japanese co-workers to at least respect his faith and hopefully join him in church.

Schlett, a top engineer in heat-resistant industrial ceramics with Exxon Research and Engineering Co., and his wife, Carrol, lived in Japan during 1984 while he worked on a project for a Japanese firm, General Sekiyu-Sakai Refinery.

The couple, members of Hope Baptist Church, Flanders, N.J., sought to learn the language and live a Japanese lifestyle to open doors for sharing their faith.

In an interview during Foreign Missions Week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, Schlett recounted that, as a youth, he had no zeal for engineering. His father, however, had suggested such a career and Schlett pursued it in college, "out of love for my family." He didn't want to be "a rebellious son."

Otherwise, he might have headed in a different direction. "I felt that the Lord called me to some kind of special service when I was 12 years old. "I've always wondered all these years: What is it?" Sometimes he has wondered whether he "neglected a call."

Today Schlett realizes an answer. "The Lord may have wanted to give me work experience that can be useful worldwide." As one of the top engineers in his field, he's excited about new vistas of Christian witness.

The couple said new materials developed by the laity abroad section at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board contain valuable suggestions for Baptists with overseas work assignments. "It's almost like God sent us to Japan to come back with a testimony to say, 'Yes, they work,'" said Schlett, who intends to accept other jobs abroad.

And they credited a prayer effort in their home church in Flanders, in which members signed up for various time slots, with undergirding their witness in Japan.

Throughout their stay in Japan, first in Yokohama and then in Osaka, the couple took private language lessons twice a week. They had disagreed with advice in some materials that, in Schlett's words, "If you're staying less than a certain amount of time, it isn't worth your while to bother learning the language."

Their aim was "to give a witness wherever God gave the opportunity, Mrs. Schlett said. The people appreciated every effort to speak their language. We picked it up very quickly," not to the point of speaking "excellent Japanese, but just being able to communicate."

Some of the most substantive discussions, she said, were with their two language instructors, who based each lesson on "questions about things we'd seen. It would bring up all kinds of opportunities to present our points of view."

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In a discussion about ancestral-related religious practices in Japan, for example, the teacher expressed interest in knowing how to differentiate between good and evil spirits. "The Bible," Mrs. Schlett related, "says that if it's a spirit that confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, then it's God's Spirit."

To "learn the ropes" during the first part of their stay in Japan, the couple lived in American-style housing. But in the Osaka suburb of Nishikinohama, they embraced Japanese living as well as a small Japanese congregation, the Sakai Baptist Church.

"Even though we didn't understand everything that went on at church," Mrs. Schlett said, "we could take Japanese friends there and they would understand."

Because of their Japanese lifestyle, Schlett said, "It was unbelievable the level of cooperation that I received." In a project that demanded exhausting hours, his Sundays were free because his Japanese co-workers "actually worked it out so that I could go to church."

Living in a local neighborhood, Mrs. Schlett said, "puts you on the level of the people you're working with, instead of elevating you. It takes down one more barrier."

Not as many co-workers accompanied the Schletts to church as they would have hoped for, but at least "everybody knows where Paul went to church," his wife said. "They didn't even know the little church existed before."

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

Local Traditions Complicate
Grain Distribution In Mali

By Beverly Coad

Baptist Press
8/27/85

BAMAKO, Mali (BP)--An African tradition of sharing is complicating grain distribution in Mali and increasing the heavy burden on Christian pastors in charge of distribution.

People who need food come every day to the home of pastors distributing grain, says David Saye, coordinator of a Southern Baptist-financed grain distribution program in Mali's fifth region. But pastors must turn away many because there is not enough food. "It fatigues a person morally, psychologically and even physically," he says.

"The people follow you everywhere you go and pull you by your robe and beg: 'Help me. Give me food. My children are hungry. Help me.'"

Two pastors, he says, have been especially pressured. The pastor at Bandiagara shares his own food with the many needy people who have moved in with his family. "He is really at the end of his strength morally, psychologically, physically."

Another pastor in Koro lives in similar conditions. "Every day people come with their gourd bowls--women, men--to look for food for the day. For weeks at a time, their yard is full," reports Saye. "When people are starving, they do not act with reason. When the stomach is empty, one cannot think."

The situation becomes even more difficult because of an African tradition which, ironically, has probably saved many lives. "Our tradition says when your brother has something, he must share with you," says Saye. "However, with this gift of grain, we cannot follow the traditional system. This gift was given to those who have nothing."

Tradition also says "if someone is responsible for something, the family of that person must benefit from whatever he is responsible for," says Saye. But often those distributing the grain are not eligible to receive any. When that happens, those men find it difficult to explain to their families why they can't follow tradition.

Sometimes family members, in exerting pressure for grain, claim the pastor "has forgotten his own family or, even worse, that he is not taking care of his own family," Saye says.

This is the second year missionaries Norman and Beverly Coad have used Southern Baptist hunger relief gifts to distribute grain through the Christian churches in Mali. Saye, a Christian high school teacher who grew up in Mali's fifth region, the country's traditional breadbasket, has coordinated distribution in that region both years and says the grain distribution has elevated the stature of Christians in the country.

Because almost everyone is affected by the famine, there is tremendous pressure on him and the pastors in charge of distribution locally to give people large quantities of food, says Saye. "But there is not food available to give in great quantity. One can only give what is in one's hand."

Southern Baptists have financed distribution of 6,000 tons of grain this year. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization estimates Mali needs 375,000 tons of food aid this year, but only 269,000 tons had been pledged by the end of June.

To insure steady food supplies, relief organizations are assigned to work in particular areas and time slots so one takes over in a particular area when another exhausts its resources.

In the Baptist-sponsored distribution, Norman Coad and other planners have set up a system to help see that grain gets to those who need it most. Crop reports and other studies help district planners select the counties most in need. At that level, Saye says, there are two groups especially helpful in pinpointing need: the county commandants (government administrators) and county development committees. To those, he poses the question, "Which are the villages the hardest hit by the famine?"

At the village level, the Christians consult with village elders who know the situation of each family under their jurisdiction. Of them, they ask, "Among you, who is the hardest hit by the famine?" From their answers, the Christians develop a list of those in greatest need. Someone with livestock will probably be excluded because he can sell his animals to buy grain. Someone else may have a harvest, however small, which his family can eat. He has to be passed over for those who have nothing.

To keep track of which families have received food, they use registration cards issued to each family by the government.

In spite of the pressures, Saye says the grain distribution has had positive effects for the recipients and for the church. "If someone is at the point of death, and you give him new life, you would have to say that what you have done is effective. Your gift renews life in people and shows them that there are other people who care about them."

And that changes people's attitudes toward Christians. "In the past, Christians were considered as the lowest of the low," says Saye. "It was said that Christianity was only for whites, and that Christianity had never done anything good."

But now people are saying, "'Truly these Christians have love for other people,'" says Saye. "Many are beginning to believe that Christianity is the true religion."

The result in the churches is numerical and spiritual growth. When Malian Christians see those from other countries working to help those in need in spite of the difficulty of that work, says Saye, it encourages Malian Christians to share what they have and teaches them they have a responsibility to help others outside their family support group.

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

Sherri Brown Named HMB
Assistant Features Editor

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ATLANTA (BP)--Sherri Anthony Brown, editorial assistant in the SBC Home Mission Board's evangelism section for the past four years, has been promoted to assistant features editor in the board's editorial department.

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Brown, a 1981 journalism graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, has written numerous features for Baptist Press and MissionsUSA magazine published by the board. She has done both writing and photography for the magazine.

In her new position, Brown will specialize in developing features for Baptist Press, state Baptist papers and secular news media. It is a new position, approved this year as part of an effort to expand the role of news and information services at the board, according to Jim Newton, the board's editor of news and information services.

Brown, 26, is married to Greg Brown, pastor of Adairsville Baptist Church, Adairsville, Ga. Her father, Everett Anthony, is executive director of the Chicago Baptist Association.

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Michael Stephen Day
Named 'Probe' Editor

Baptist Press
8/27/85

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Michael Stephen Day, active in youth work in Tennessee churches since 1973, has been named editor of "Probe" magazine, published by the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, Tenn., for boys in grades 7-12, effective Sept. 1.

Day resigned as minister of youth at Westwood Baptist Church in Cleveland, Tenn., to accept the Brotherhood post. He previously was youth minister at Haywood Hills Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn., and Shelbyville Mills Baptist Church in Shelbyville, Tenn.

Born in Fort Lee, Va., Day graduated from Antioch High School in Antioch, Tenn., and received the bachelor of science degree from Belmont College in Nashville. He earned the master from divinity of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Day has conducted a dozen Youth Discipleship Conferences and preached in 60 youth revivals. During his service at the Haywood Hills Church, he was chairman of the Nashville Baptist Association youth committee for two years.

Day, 33, is married to the former Debra Susan Houston of Lewisburg, Tenn. They are parents of Meredith, four, and Rachel, 10 months.

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NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION