



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 1, 1985

85-9

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

DALLAS CONVENTION CENTER

June 11-13, 1985

Theme: "Pray ye therefore..." (Matthew 9:38)

Tuesday Morning, June 11, 1985

- 8:30 Music for Inspiration, First Baptist Church Choir, Atlanta, John Glover, director
- 9:00 Call to Order
Congregational Singing, Sam Prestidge, music secretary, Baptist General Convention of Texas, Dallas
- 9:05 Prayer, Dan Pleitz, attorney, Waco, Texas
- 9:10 Registration Report and Constitution of Convention
- 9:15 Committee on Order of Business
- 9:20 Welcome
- 9:25 Response, Dwight "Ike" Reighard, pastor, New Hope Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ga.
- 9:30 Prayer Time
- 9:40 Announcement of Committee on Committees, Credentials, Resolutions and Tellers
- 9:45 Executive Committee Report (Part 1)
- 10:40 Presentation of Gavels
- 10:45 Introduction of Business and Resolutions
- 11:15 Congregational Singing, Sam Prestidge
- 11:20 Music, First Baptist Church Choir, Atlanta, John Glover, director
- 11:25 President's Address, Charles F. Stanley, pastor, First Baptist Church, Atlanta; president, Southern Baptist Convention
- 12:00 Benediction, Wes Cantrel, corporate executive, Atlanta
Singing As We Go, "Blessed Be the Name"

Tuesday Afternoon, June 11, 1985

- 1:00 Evangelistic Singers
- 2:00 Music for Inspiration, 1985 Texas Baptist All-State Youth Choir, directed by Loyd Hawthorne, Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas; and orchestra, directed by Jim Hansford, Wayland University, Plainview, Texas
- 2:30 Congregational Singing, John Glover
- 2:35 Prayer, Charles Nelson, pastor, Cuba Baptist Church, Mayfield, Ky.
- 2:40 Election of Officers (First)
- 2:50 Messenger Information Survey
- 3:00 Introduction of Business and Resolutions
- 3:10 Prayer Time
- 3:20 Congregational Singing, John Glover
- 3:25 Executive Committee Report (Part 2)
- 4:10 Annuity Board Report
- 4:25 Business
Election of Officers (Second)
Committee on Boards
Miscellaneous Business
- 5:00 Benediction, Darrell Royal, management consultant, Dallas
Singing As We Go, "Glory to His Name"

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
LIBRARY OF RECORDS SERVICES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

Tuesday Evening, June 11, 1985

- 6:30 Music for Inspiration, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Chorus and Wind Ensemble, directed by Robert Burton and A. Joseph King, Fort Worth, Texas
- 7:00 Congregational Singing, William J. Reynolds, professor, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
- 7:05 Prayer, James Deloach, associate pastor, Second Baptist Church, Houston
- 7:10 Theme Interpretation, Thomas D. Elliff, pastor, Applewood Baptist Church, Wheatridge, Colo.
- 7:25 Election of Officers (Third)
- 7:45 Sunday School Board Report
- 8:15 Congregational Singing, William J. Reynolds
- 8:20 Foreign Mission Board Report
- 9:00 Benediction, Perry Goolsby, educator, Wichita Falls, Texas
Singing As We Go, "He Is Lord"

Wednesday Morning, June 12, 1985

- 8:30 Music for Inspiration, First Baptist Church Choir, Roanoke, Va.; Doyle Spence, director
- 9:00 Congregational Singing, Robert Blocker, dean, School of Music, Baylor University, Waco, Texas
- 9:05 Prayer, Anne P. Rosser, co-pastor, Bainbridge-South Hampton Baptist Church, Richmond, Va.
- 9:10 Election of Officers (Fourth)
- 9:25 Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Report
- 9:35 Stewardship Commission Report
- 9:45 Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Report
- 9:55 Christian Life Commission Report
- 10:05 New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Report
- 10:15 Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs Report
- 10:25 Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary Report
- 10:35 Southern Baptist Foundation Report
- 10:45 Prayer Time
- 10:55 Report of the Southern Baptist Convention Canada Planning Group
- 11:05 Business
Election of Officers (Fifth)
Committee on Committees
Committee on Resolutions (First Report)
Miscellaneous Business
- 11:55 Congregational Singing
- 12:00 Music, First Baptist Church Choir, Roanoke, Va., Doyle Spence, director
Scripture and Prayer, Grady B. Wilson, evangelist, Charlotte, N.C.
Convention Sermon, Charles G. Fuller, pastor, First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va.
- 12:30 Benediction, Dalia (Mrs. Michael) Gonzales, missionary to Spain, Fort Worth, Texas
Singing As We Go, "To God Be the Glory"

NO WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

Wednesday Evening, June 12, 1985

- 6:30 Music for Inspiration, Singing Men of Texas; Buryl Red, director
- 7:00 Congregational Singing, William J. Reynolds
- 7:05 Prayer, Clayton Spriggs, associate pastor, Riverside Baptist Church, Ft. Myers, Fla.
- 7:10 Business
- 7:40 Introduction of Local Arrangements Committee
- 7:45 Presentation of Past Presidents
- 7:50 Presentation of Newly Elected SBC Officers
- 7:55 Bold Mission Thrust, Harold C. Bennett
- 8:05 Planned Growth In Giving, Cecil A. Ray, national director of Planned Growth In Giving, Raleigh, N.C.
- 8:15 Congregational Singing, William J. Reynolds
- 8:20 Home Mission Board Report
- 9:00 Benediction, H. Fred Williams, president, Gulf Shore Bibl College, Ft. Myers, Fla.
Singing As We Go, "Spirit of the Living God"

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Thursday Morning, June 13, 1985

- 8:30 Music for Inspiration, Baylor University Choir and Orchestra
 9:00 Congregational Singing, Fes Robertson, 1983-84 president, Southern Baptist Church Music Conference; section supervisor, church music department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn.
 9:05 Prayer, Mark Wolfe, student, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
 9:10 Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary Report
 9:20 Education Commission Report
 9:30 Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Report
 9:40 Radio and Television Commission Report
 9:50 American Baptist Theological Seminary Commission Report
 10:00 Baptist World Alliance Report
 10:10 Prayer Time
 10:20 Brotherhood Commission Report
 10:30 Business
 Resolutions Committee (Final Report)
 12:30 Benediction, Leon Harris, advertising executive, Lubbock, Texas
 Singing As We Go, "His Name Is Wonderful"

Thursday Afternoon, June 13, 1985

- 2:00 Music for Inspiration, mini-concert, John McKay, music evangelist, Fort Worth, Texas
 2:25 Congregational Singing, John McKay
 2:30 Prayer, Mark Fuller, paving contractor, Amarillo, Texas
 2:35 Introduction of Fraternal Representatives
 2:40 American Bible Society Report
 2:50 Woman's Missionary Union Report
 3:00 Historical Commission Report
 3:10 Prayer Time
 3:20 Committee on Denominational Calendar Report
 3:30 Denominational Press Report
 3:40 Business
 4:30 Benediction, Don Cass, pastor, Southcrest Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas
 Singing As We Go, "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"

Convention Officers

- Charles F. Stanley, president; pastor, First Baptist Church, Atlanta
 Zig Ziglar, first vice-president; layman, Dallas
 Don Wideman, second vice-president; pastor, First Baptist Church, North Kansas City, Mo.
 Martin B. Bradley, recording secretary; manager, research services department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn.
 Lee Porter, registration secretary; design editor; Sunday school department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn.
 Harold C. Bennett, treasurer; executive secretary-treasurer, SBC Executive Committee, Nashville, Tenn.
 Wilmer C. Fields, press representative; assistant to the executive secretary and director of public relations, SBC Executive Committee, Nashville, Tenn.
 William J. Reynolds, music director; associate professor of music, Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas

Committee On Order Of Business

- Larry C. Crawford, physician, Burlington, N.C.
 Morris H. Chapman, pastor, First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas
 J. Nixon Daniel III, attorney, Pensacola, Fla.
 Stan Coffee, pastor, San Jacinto Baptist Church, Amarillo, Texas
 Jay Strack, pastor, Riverside Baptist Church, Ft. Meyers, Fla.
 Fred H. Wolfe, chairman, Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala.

SBC Features Prayer
Times, More Business

DALLAS (BP)--Prayer times at each session and expanded business time are features of the program for the 1985 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 11-13 at the Dallas Convention Center.

The program, released by Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas, and chairman of the committee on order of business, has the theme of "Pray ye therefore...." "The scriptural theme is a call to prayer and to missions which has the potential to grip the heart of every person attending the convention with an overwhelming burden for the unsaved," Chapman said.

One of the highlights of the three-day annual meeting of the 14.3 million member denomination, according to Chapman is "small group prayer sessions which have been inserted into almost every session." The 15-minute prayer times, he said, were added at the request of SBC President Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta.

"He asked that we insert this special time for prayer. He (Stanley) is very conscious of God's people collectively praying for God's will and God's power," Chapman added.

Another feature, he said, is more time for business. "Messengers (to previous conventions) had expressed a desire to have a relatively unlimited amount of time for discussion of any issue," Chapman said. "The commitment of the committee has been to provide that kind of time."

Chapman added he is not predicting the convention will be rancorous, saying he believes "it is totally unpredictable at this time. We (the committee) were simply trying to respond to the expressed desires of messengers. We did not make this decision based on anticipation (of much business)".

One way in which the business time has been expanded has been to start the sessions a half hour earlier, Chapman said. Another has been the elimination of a theme interpretation at every session. Instead, there will be one theme interpretation, delivered at the Tuesday evening meeting.

Tom Elliff, pastor of Applewood Baptist Church in Denver, will deliver the interpretation. Elliff, a former Oklahoma pastor, served briefly on the foreign mission field before having to return to the United States because of family health reasons.

"We felt Tom Elliff personified as much as any man the dual emphasis on prayer and missions," Chapman said. "He has been to the mission field, has a great mission heart and is a man who has put a great emphasis on prayer during his entire ministry. We felt his life gave strong emphasis of Matthew 9:38 (the scriptural text of the program theme)," Chapman added.

The strong emphasis on prayer and missions will be carried through Tuesday and Wednesday nights, with presentations by the Foreign Mission Board (Tuesday) and the Home Mission Board (Wednesday). "We expect those to be extraordinary nights of inspiration and strong statements about Bold Mission Thrust," Chapman said.

He added there will be no business following the presentations, allowing messengers to depart "on a note of inspiration. We hope we will be able to leave the hall each night rejoicing over the great missions advance we have been able to make throughout the world."

Chapman said there will be a business session Wednesday evening but added "it will be in advance of the Home Mission Board presentation."

"Also, each evening Bill Reynolds (convention music director) will begin singing choruses as we are dismissed as a reminder that even when we are having business our ultimate intent is just to praise the Lord," Chapman said.

The convention program also will feature the annual presidential address by Stanley and the convention sermon by Charles Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va.

Missionary Claims Dismissal
Due To Nicaraguan Involvement

By Walker L. Knight

ATLANTA (BP)--James H. Gamble, a Baptist missionary in Anchorage, Alaska, has charged he was dismissed in January by the Alaska Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board because of his intention to visit areas of conflict in Nicaragua.

Alaska Baptist leaders, however, claim Gamble was dismissed for not doing the job he was hired to do and for stepping out of the line of supervision.

Gamble, a Christian Social Ministries worker, had planned to use his vacation starting Feb. 11 on a Witness for Peace on the Nicaraguan-Honduran border.

The intended visit to Nicaragua "was a catalyst" which precipitated the dismissal, according to John Allen of Anchorage, executive director for the Alaska Baptist Convention. Allen charged Gamble had contacted HMB personnel over the heads of his local supervisors, adding "I don't even know who Witness for Peace is."

Witness for Peace is an ecumenical faith group, with regional offices throughout the U.S., opposing the "undeclared U.S. war against Nicaragua by participating in a continual, non-violent presence in the areas of conflict."

Volunteers, usually in groups of 18, have been spending two weeks in Nicaragua since 1983. Other Southern Baptists have participated, and Glen Stassen, professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., has been on the group's advisory counsel.

Gamble said he had contacted Paul Adkins of Atlanta, director of Christian social ministries department of the HMB, early in January about his intentions. "I had a 14-day vacation coming up and there was a two-and-a-half week Witness for Peace tour scheduled at the same time. I thought it would be a meaningful way to use my vacation time," he explained.

When he told Adkins he would need two additional days, Adkins warned him the trip was controversial and he could not give him permission for the extra days, only his Alaska supervisors could. Adkins remembers Gamble saying he was not asking him for permission, just informing him he was going.

Adkins pressed him to notify his supervisors--Ferrell Mills, pastor of Faith Baptist Church, a sponsor of a center Gamble was to establish; Judy Rice, state Baptist director for CSM work, and Allen.

Gamble did, a few days after talking with Adkins, reach Judy Rice who was in Birmingham, Ala. When they finally talked, she told him he was to be fired. The dismissal came in a meeting with Allen, Mills, and the president of the Alaska Baptist Convention, Neil Thompson.

According to Gamble, he was given three reasons for the dismissal: 1) his lifestyle was incompatible with the goals and directions and the policy of the HMB and the ABC, 2) he had been counseled not to go to Nicaragua and 3) his protocol was incorrect.

Allen said the lifestyle comment was made during the meeting, but was not given as a reason for the firing. Gamble remembers being told the lifestyle comment referred to "your picketing and your marching and your political activism." He had replied, "I have not been politically active at all while in Alaska."

Gamble admitted by-passing his supervisors, saying he and Mills were not getting along. "I felt he was looking for a reason to dismiss me," he said. Gamble reported nothing was said in the meeting about not doing his job. He did recall Allen had insisted early last year he complete quickly a needs survey, but the survey had taken four-and-a-half months of work.

"I wanted to go to Nicaragua on my vacation with Witness for Peace because the Baptist Convention of Nicaragua had invited all Baptists to enter into dialogue with them. I saw legitimate Baptist cooperation in all of this," Gamble explained, and indicated he still intends to go.

Allen takes exception to Gamble's report. "We hired him to start a center in Mountain View, and a year later we still don't have it going," he said. "I had told him myself in the summer he had to get that center going."

Gamble said he opened the Mountain View Ministry Center in October, meeting in the buildings of two missions of Faith Baptist Church, and serving about 35 children.

"We started after-school programs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and recreation programs on Tuesday and Thursday," he explained. "To conduct these I was given \$50 program money a month and \$50 a month for supplies. I had \$100 in hunger funds, also, and with it we helped three families." Gamble said he also had an advisory council for the center, and he felt the center had been established.

Gamble said in September his state supervisor, Rice, had given him an above average evaluation on his performance appraisal, a copy of which he had. He had met monthly with her, and she had given no indication of displeasure with his work.

Adkins commented, "Jim Gamble has strong concerns on peace and the horrors of war. I told him, if you feel the Holy Spirit is leading you in this direction, you have at it." However, Adkins had warned him on the phone and wrote him he was placing his job in jeopardy.

Adkins sent a copy of his letter to Allen and informed Gerald Palmer, vice-president for missions at the HMB, of the conversation and the letter. Palmer said the decision to dismiss Gamble was a joint decision, based on the recommendation of Allen.

"The Home Mission Board has not taken any action concerning his relationship to us, but based on our information relative to the administrative problems, we concurred with John Allen in the termination of his relationship to that work in Alaska," Palmer said.

"We have not discussed whether Gamble will be used elsewhere," he added.

Gamble, a native of Birmingham, Ala., graduated from Samford University, in Birmingham, Southern Seminary and the Worden School of Social Science, Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas. He served as a US-2 volunteer with the HMB in Oklahoma City.

Allen said Gamble was given 30 days' severance pay, 30 days' vacation pay and would be given \$1,000 relocation pay if he chooses to leave Alaska.

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Denomination's Future Depends
On Elected Leaders, Ray Says

Baptist Press
2/1/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The future of their denomination is at stake when Southern Baptists elect leaders of the 14.3 million member body, according to Cecil Ray.

Ray, director of Southern Baptists' national Planned Growth In Giving Campaign, wrote in the most recent issue of Baptist History and Heritage, "Periods of growth and harmony in the denomination have come when the purposes of leaders and people have been united toward a common goal."

Yet, Ray warns, "A fickle electorate...can destroy its adopted goals. More than once, a Baptist convention has climaxed a long study by prayerfully adopting a worthy program or goal, only then to destroy the effort by electing a convention president uncommitted to it.

"For example," Ray continues, "to adopt a great goal for mission support through the Cooperative Program (the national unified budget of the Southern Baptist Convention) and then elect key leaders who have demonstrated little support for the Cooperative Program is to negate the goal."

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Ray's comments appear in the January issue of the journal published by the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. The issue, devoted to examination of "The Leadership Heritage of Southern Baptists," includes six other leadership essays.

Ray, former general secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, says great leaders have been behind every major Southern Baptist achievement. He notes the issue of leadership is critical because history reveals the denomination goes the way of its leaders and "what happens to a denomination eventually happens to its churches."

Ray identifies three "critical issues" facing Southern Baptists and their leadership: the qualification issue, the purpose issue, and the diversity issue.

Within the qualification issue, Ray lists five observations surrounding the qualifications of elected leaders.

First, persons are qualified by identification. "Persons aligned with a movement or crusade tend to judge a leader's qualifications by how he or she relates to that movement. One who is devoted to that particular cause, loyal to the others in the movement, and skillful in promoting it is considered qualified; other qualifications count for little."

Qualification by demonstrated ability is Ray's second observation. He says Baptists tend to elect leaders noted for success in their professional lives, "even though successful experience in their given field may be extraneous to the position involved." Ray claims the success syndrome is dangerous when success is valued more than required leadership abilities.

Next, Ray lists qualification by knowledge. Leaders should understand the workings of Baptists well enough to make wise decisions. "To be a convention president, for example, without knowing Baptist polity is a situation fraught with trouble. To be a trustee and know nothing of the convention-assigned task of the agency or institution is dangerous," he says.

Qualification by loyalty is Ray's fourth concern. He says failure is likely when the elected leader lacks commitment to the organization's purpose. "To choose a leader whose main purpose and goal are different from those adopted by the group is bound to bring dissension," according to Ray.

Finally, a leader must be qualified as a peacemaker. "Blessed is a Christian leader whose skills bring people together. Unity rarely prevails except when leaders come primarily from the center and when they work for and within a consensus of the majority," Ray feels.

In his second section, the purpose issue, Ray asks, "Do messengers from the churches come together to chart Baptists' course in Christian missions or to state positions on doctrinal, moral, social, and political issues? Is a Baptist convention's agenda primarily that of a people with a God-given Good News story for a lost world or that of a people with a mandate for social and religious reform?"

He suggests Convention interest is shifting toward issues even though the SBC Constitution makes the missionary emphasis clear. "If the Convention does shift its priority from its missionary operations to taking stands on issues, it will change Baptists' nature and denominational work," Ray warns.

Baptists, according to Ray, will have to choose which dominates: missions or issues.

Diversity is a third area of concern. Ray notes Southern Baptists were once a rural people in the South, mostly of Anglo-Saxon extraction.

Today, however, Southern Baptists are city and rural, located in the north, east, south and west. They are "highly and poorly educated, rich and poor, professional and blue-collar, and a rainbow of white, red, black, brown and yellow," he points out.

"Almost all these Baptists agree on the central doctrines of the Christian faith while maintaining differences on such matters as the method of divine inspiration, how God created the world, and how God will bring time to an end," he writes. But, some Baptists like this new diversity while others find it "distasteful, even frightening."

The editorial concludes with a five-point guideline to match elected leaders with convention objectives.

1. The purpose question—What does he/she want to accomplish most if elected?
2. The unity question—Is he/she known for creating unity or divisions?
3. The loyalty question—Is this person known for supporting the denomination and its financial lifeline, the Cooperative Program?
4. The knowledge question—Does he/she understand how the convention functions and what work it does?
5. The identification question—Who wants this person elected and why?

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Gor , Hollis Discuss
Bioethics On ABC

By Tim Fields

Baptist Press
2/1/85

WASHINGTON (BP)—Two Southern Baptists speaking on national television have called for increasing dialogue between scientists and religious leaders about biomedical breakthroughs which expand the ability to create and prolong life by artificial means.

Senator Albert Gore Jr. (D-Tenn.) and Harry N. Hollis Jr., director of special moral concerns for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission in Nashville, were among symposium members moderated by ABC News Commentator George Will on "Dimensions."

Panel members discussed the moral, economic and legal implications surrounding such biomedical breakthroughs as artificial heart transplants, use of baboon hearts in humans, new experiments in genetic engineering and reproductive technologies.

"One of the ironies of our century is that the hard sciences have been developing much more rapidly than human ability to accelerate the development of new bioethical structures to guide us in making these difficult decisions," Gore explained. "The issues we are confronted with today may well be pikers compared to the ones soon to confront us as a result of genetic engineering and other related developments."

Gore warned new scientific breakthroughs may even affect one's occupational choices as well as those of their children and grandchildren.

"Scientists are learning how to predict which people are going to have an enhanced risk for which illness," Gore said. "Large employers are now looking for genetic screening tests to find out whether or not people applying for jobs have a slightly increased chance of getting some occupational illness."

"Is it fair to deny a job to that person and that person's children and grandchildren because their genetic heritage gives them a slightly increased risk?" he asked.

"Discussions like this are extremely important if for no other reason than as practice for the new era we are soon going to be confronting as a result of genetic technology," Gore said.

Hollis, editor of the book, A Matter Of Life And Death, said biomedical issues of this nature are too important to leave to any one group such as Congress or scientists. "Biomedical decisions of this magnitude must be interdisciplinary decisions based on facts and on moral values," he said. "We must call members of religious communities to become more involved."

Hollis added in the past some religious people have spoken rather dogmatically and without adequate knowledge and have thus made it more difficult for more informed members of religious communities to offer their insights.

"It is very important for there to be increasing dialogue between the scientific community and the religious communities to look at what is already a revolution and which is going to be a much greater problem in the future," he said. "We also need to inform seminarians about the Judeo-Christian emphasis that human beings work with God in the continuation of creation and, therefore, we should find responsible ways to make life fully human."

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Hollis said education about biomedical decision making offers us great hope for the future, but for now we have to deal with tough decisions as they occur. Christians simply cannot let these decisions be determined by marketplace forces," he said.

The ABC "Directions" program, entitled "Hard Choices--The Biomedical Challenge," was presented in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission and other religious organizations. Free transcripts of the program can be secured by writing to "Directions," ABC News, 1926 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023.

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Youth Problems
Are Universal

By David Haywood

Baptist Press
2/1/85

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Churches will not be able to meet the needs of their youth until they change the traditional mindset that young people who attend church don't have problems, Jim Gibson is convinced.

"Youth who come to church have the same types of problems as those who don't attend church," said Gibson, minister to youth, First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., during Rec Lab at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

"We should never take lightly any youth who comes to us with a situation that is frustrating to him," said Gibson. "A crisis to a young person may not be a crisis to an adult, but it is real to the youth, so we must try to help."

For example, "Four out of every five youth suffer from loneliness and a poor self image. Most of the youth I deal with say they would like to change themselves," he said.

Because the gospel is a message of acceptance, the church should be a natural place for youth to turn for help when they have problems, he noted.

When dealing with youth in crisis, Gibson suggested the first step is to determine the problem. "Look for the root problem because often we only see the symptoms, such as bad grades, loneliness or rebellion," he said.

"We must be able to talk one-to-one with youth and make sure they feel free to share with us," Gibson said. "In counseling, be a friend, not a judge or a parent. Be honest and make sure youth know you can disagree with their actions and still love them."

He feels it is imperative parents become involved, especially if laws are being broken. He said this should be done very carefully and with the full knowledge of the young person.

The next step in helping youth deal with crisis is to discuss with them alternatives for action. "Do not dictate your solution to the problem, lead to it," Gibson warned. "Lead the parents and young person to understand love is not going to be withdrawn no matter what the outcome or decision."

Finally, Gibson said all involvement must agree on some form of action. "Young people have problems and until we understand that the youth in church are no different, we are not going to be very effective in helping them deal with their problems," he said.

Rec Lab is sponsored by the church recreation department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

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

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Weather conditions caused this edition of Baptist Press to be mailed Feb. 4 instead of Feb. 1.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

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23 Church Planters
Commissioned By HMB

By Michael Tutterow

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (BP)—The gospel must be central to achieve church growth, a missions leader has reminded a group of church planter apprentices.

Gerald B. Palmer, vice-president for missions for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, offered tips on church growth to church planter apprentices at their commissioning service.

The 23 church planter apprentices were commissioned by the Home Mission Board Jan. 27 in a special service at Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church in Riverside, Calif. The missionaries will begin churches in California, Hawaii and Nevada during the next two years.

Reading from the New Testament book of Acts, Palmer told the new missionaries to view growth as more than numerical. Though the early church grew in numbers, he explained, it was "the quality of life" in the first century church drew people to the church.

The early church grew because its leaders relied on power from God's Spirit, noted Palmer. The power to be on mission already has been given to Christians today, Palmer told the group. "(God's Spirit) is with you even unto the ends of California, Nevada and Winnemucca," he added, referring to the missionaries' places of service.

The message of Christ's virgin birth, sinless life, sacrificial death, resurrection and second coming are central themes the early church proclaimed as the good news, Palmer said, and though methods may differ, "If you do not preach (these themes), nothing else is valid."

Church growth results from church members caring for one another, he continued, pointing out the early church grew when each person was considered important.

"Many people today sit on the fringe of our churches" because they feel unimportant, lamented Palmer. But as missionaries, "You must take the message that God says they're important."

Similarly, for church growth to occur, no person or group should be bypassed by the church, he said, noting the early church shattered racial and cultural barriers "until the whole target audience was every creature."

Southern Baptists still need to make headway into crossing barriers with the gospel, so he warned the missionaries not to be slow to overcome racial differences. "Don't expect God's blessing until your heart and your church doors are open to everyone," he said. "You can't make them all come in, but you can be open to all."

Palmer warned against tending to church concerns to the exclusion of missions outreach. "Southern Baptists were born in missions, we survived in missions and we have grown through missions," he said. "Without missions we will die. And your church will die if you do not reach out beyond yourself."

The commissioning service, only the second such service specifically for church planters, was held in California to coincide with the state's emphasis on church starting. Of the 23 missionaries commissioned, California will receive 17.

The church planters, their home states and places of service are: Phillip and Terri Badley, Mississippi/Kentucky, Canyon Country, Calif.; Douglas and Linda Brown, California/Oklahoma, Chula Vista, Calif.; Glenn Galloway, Arizona, Antelope, Calif.; Robert and Rebecca George, both of California, Cambria, Calif.; Frank (Thomas) and Teresa Hall, Ohio/California, Santa Maria, Calif.; Mark and Cardi Holmes, both of Arkansas, San Diego; Timothy and Jennifer Stinnette, Virginia/Florida, Scripps Ranch, Calif.; Randy and Susan Wilson, both of Mississippi, Chatsworth, Calif.; and Robert and Ace Wilson, both of Kentucky, Los Angeles.

Also commissioned were Don and Deanna Frank, both of Missouri, to work in Eleele, Hawaii; Dani and Karen Tomita, Hawaii/Louisiana, Kalama Valley, Hawaii; and Darrell and Beverly Regensberg, New Mexico/Texas, Winnemucca, Nev.

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