



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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March 14, 1985

85-28

Moonie Mailing Blitz
Price Tag \$10 Million

By Craig Bird

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Approximately 300,000 ministers across the United States have received "a gift for you from some folks who care"—a packet of three video tapes and two books from the Unification Church.

Many of the pastors also are receiving personal follow-up visits from members of the group, disciples of Sun Myung Moon, known as "Moonies."

A Unification Church spokesman told the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board the budget for the effort, based on mailing lists purchased from other sources, was \$10 million. That figure correlates with an earlier HMB estimate the packets cost \$30-\$35 each.

"This is an organized effort to enlist public support both for their church and for Rev. Moon (currently serving an 18-month prison term for failing to pay \$150,000 in personal income taxes)," said Gary Leazer of the Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department and a leading Southern Baptist authority on the Unification Church.

The Unification Church is arguing in the appeals process the income belonged to the church and not to Moon personally and the case is a violation of the group's religious freedom.

The video tapes explain Unification theology on: the principles of creation, the fall of man, the purpose of the messiah, God's work through history and the second coming of Christ. The books are, Outline of the Principle Level 4, a 316-page book published in 1980 which expounds on Moon's basic theological work, The Divine Principle, and God's Warning to the World, a 142-page book containing Moon's "message from prison," copyrighted in 1985.

"They don't understand why we (Southern Baptists) consider them to be a cult and I think it is their hope—a naive hope I feel—our pastors will use the video tapes in their churches and read the books and accept them as a valid Christian religion," he explained.

Some churches, primarily black and Hispanic congregations, apparently have responded favorably to the material and have accepted offers of help from Unification missionaries.

"They will do anything from custodial work to painting the church to holding Bible schools and teaching Sunday school classes," Leazer said.

Leazer explained Moon's theology holds that Jesus was a man—not God—who attained spiritual perfection and became a messiah and is the "spiritual" savior of mankind. However, Moon teaches, since Jesus was unable to complete God's purpose by marrying and producing "perfect" children he cannot provide "physical salvation."

Physical salvation had to await the coming of a "Third Adam" or the "Lord of the Second Advent" to be born in Korea after 1918. Moon was born in Korea in 1920.

A letter included in the packet from Mose Durst, president of the Unification Church of America, urges pastors to "show us your compassion by at least receiving the tapes and reviewing the literature" instead of tossing "our material aside, not giving us a chance to 'tell it like it is.'" A postscript notes Moon will be writing the pastors "personally from Danbury Prison" in the near future "to discuss some issues with you from his heart."

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Most Southern Baptist pastors appear to be taking one of three approaches to the material: destroying it, erasing the three tapes and reusing them, or sending them to the Home Mission Board, 1350 Spring Street, NW, Atlanta 30367.

The interfaith witness department will use the films in training sessions with associations and state conventions and will send three blank tapes to those who send their Unification tapes in.

"Of course, we don't need 10,000 sets of these tapes," Leazer said.

"I certainly didn't want to return it to the Unification Church, because they would just redistribute them to someone else," Ray Vowell, pastor of Highland Baptist Church in Hogansville, Ga., told Baptist Press. "I watched a little of the first tape then just recorded over them—and urged the other pastors I heard from to do the same."

J. Ansley Jordon, director of missions for the Daniell Baptist Association in Georgia, urged pastors in the associational newsletter, to destroy the material and "not to answer in any way—they might use the names of people who reply to try and get Rev. Moon out of jail."

Leazer cautions pastors against over reacting.

"One reason for this mass mailing is because the Unification Church has enough money to do anything it wants," he admitted. "But we need to remember there are only 2,000 to 4,000 fulltime members of the group in the United States.

"If you show any interest at all you can expect a personal visit but if you don't want the Moonies around you just say so and they'll leave."

Ted Cramer, minister of education at Cliff Temple Baptist Church in Dallas was visited by two young men not long after receiving the packet. They invited him to participate in an expense paid trip to learn more about the Unification Church's goals of, "unifications of numerous religions" and the "restoration of one unified world."

This is a continuation of early strategy, according to Leazer.

From July 30 to Aug. 2, 1984 the International Conference for Clergy, an affiliate of the Unification Church, hosted 200 pastors—including at least six Southern Baptists—for a conference on Unification theology in Freeport, The Bahamas.

All expenses for the registrants, including airfare, were paid by the Unification Church. Expenses for food and lodging, but not airfare, were provided for spouses. The conference budget was rumored to be \$86,000 according to Norm Langston of the HMB interfaith witness department and one of the participants in the conference.

The emphasis now has shifted to regional conferences in such sites as Omaha, Neb., Tulsa, Okla., and Gatlinburg, Tenn., Leazer said. The HMB recommends pastors treat invitations to the conferences with caution. "If they go they should make up their own minds, keep a low profile at the conferences lest something they say be used to promote Unification causes, and take advantage of prior information before going."

The HMB has information on the Moonies, as well as other cults, available upon request.

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Home Mission Board Acts
On Ordination, Farm Crisis By Jim Newton and Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
3/14/85

ATLANTA (BP)—Directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board have reaffirmed their guidelines on ordination, urged prayer for the nation's farm crisis, and acted on a proposal to establish crisis pregnancy centers.

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During their annual spring board meeting, directors also elected new officers, named an executive vice-president and two new staffers, approved a reorganization of the board's missions ministries division and set up new guidelines for state conventions to qualify for Home Mission Board assistance.

For the second year in a row, the 84-member board reaffirmed its stance that ordination is a matter for local churches to determine and is not a requirement for missionary appointment or approval by the board.

The motion, which passed 39-32, came after an hour's discussion concerning action by the 24-member Home Mission Board executive committee last December granting Church Pastoral Assistance (C.P.A.) to Debra Griffis-Woodberry, pastor of Broadneck Baptist Mission, Annapolis, Md. She was the first ordained woman ever approved for such aid by the board.

In giving the background on the December action, Home Mission Board President William G. Tanner pointed out the executive committee had not violated board policies, guidelines or process in any way. He reminded the board ordination never has been a qualification for missionary appointment or approval, and the board meeting in March 1984 had reaffirmed this policy.

Tanner also pointed out there was no desire on the part of the board to disregard or be insensitive to a resolution adopted by the 1984 Southern Baptist Convention opposing ordination of women. "We have never purposely aligned ourselves in a position opposing the Southern Baptist Convention," he said.

Although Tanner encouraged open discussion by the board, he cautioned against polarization on the issue. He pointed out the controversy could hurt contributions through the current Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, and drastically affect the board's efforts in "reaching our nation for Christ."

A motion asking for appointment of a seven-member committee of board members to study the issue for a year was replaced by a substitute motion to keep the agency's current guidelines in place without change.

Board members also acted on a motion to develop crisis pregnancy centers which was referred to the board by messengers at the 1984 Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City, Mo.

The motion, brought to the convention floor by Calvin Kelly, an Alabama pastor, called for a study of "the need and feasibility of the Home Mission Board's sponsoring additional crisis pregnancy centers in strategically located U.S. cities."

The board's Christian social ministries department reported state convention child care agencies "indicated they are working in this area and feel very positive about what they are doing regarding problem pregnancies and do not see the need for the Home Mission Board to get involved in establishing centers."

However, board members did approve recommendations to sponsor four regional seminars or workshops in 1986-87 "to train or re-train pastors and others in counseling resources related to women with problem pregnancies and also how to assist families of young women with problem pregnancies."

The board voted to provide materials explaining alternatives to abortion for use by associations and churches, to develop a directory of local resources offering abortion alternatives for pregnant women, and to establish an ad hoc committee to "discuss alternatives to abortion."

The recommendations from the board will be submitted to the 1985 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Dallas, June 11-13.

Board members also adopted a statement calling on "Southern Baptists across this land to hold up for prayer our farm related families."

The statement, brought to board members by the rural-urban missions department, called for support for the "five million Southern Baptists" who are members of 22,000 congregations which will be directly affected by the current crisis facing family farms. According to news reports, 93,000 U.S. farms are technically insolvent or on the verge of going broke.

The livelihoods of farmers, ranchers and others in farm-related industries and businesses are threatened by the current farm crisis, the statement noted. "We call for prayer for the thousands of rural and village congregations whose very existence is threatened if these families lose their farms and homes and must move away in search of alternate employment," the statement added.

The statement also called for prayer as legislators and administration officials work to form policy related to the issue.

In election of new officers, the board selected Travis Wigington, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Norman, Okla., as the new chairman, succeeding Jerry Gilmore of Dallas.

Elected first vice-chairman was Marvin Prude, retired president of Sunnyside Refining Co., Birmingham, Ala., and named second vice-chairman was D.F. Norman, director of pastoral ministries for the Georgia Baptist Convention, Atlanta.

Re-elected secretary and assistant secretary, respectively, were Helen Landers of Jonesboro, Ga., and Barbara Fain of Dunwoody, Ga.

In other actions, the board approved a reorganization of the agency's missions ministries division, adding a new position of associate division director, dissolving the present Christian social ministries department, and creating two new departments to deal with Christian social ministries.

The church and community ministries department will relate to missionaries who serve with associations and churches. It also will include the work of the national consultant for the blind and handicapped and the work of literacy missions.

A newly created Christian social ministries centers department will relate to missionaries serving institutions and Baptist centers.

In other actions, the board promoted Bob Banks from vice-president for administration to executive vice-president, and named two new associates in the evangelism section.

Jack R. Smith, state director of evangelism for Pennsylvania-South Jersey, was named associate director of personal evangelism, and Darrell D. King, a Mission Service Corps volunteer, was named associate to the special assistant in spiritual awakening.

The board also updated minimum requirements for new state conventions to qualify for HMB assistance.

Guidelines, initially adopted in 1953, were revised to raise the minimum number of churches and church membership needed for a state convention to receive HMB assistance. Old guidelines required a state convention to have 70 churches and 10,000 members or 50 churches and 12,500 members one year before the organizational meeting of the convention.

Board members raised the number to 80 churches and 12,000 members, 70 churches and 13,500 members, or 60 churches and 15,000 members.

The board also approved "a five-year continuous relationship of the churches in a regional fellowship organization sponsored by the conventions with which they are affiliated" rather than the previous two-year requirement.

Congressman Praises Baker
As Church-State Scholar

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)—A leading House sponsor of the "equal access" legislation enacted by Congress last year has paid tribute to the late John W. Baker as "one of the nation's foremost scholars on church-state relations."

Rep. Don Bonker, D-Wash., saluted Baker, general counsel and director of research for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, in a March 7 tribute printed in the Congressional Record. Baker, whose tenure with the BJCPA covered 15 years, died Jan. 12 of heart failure.

"I had worked closely with Dr. Baker in the last Congress on the Equal Access Act and on efforts to prevent State-sponsored exercises of religion," said Bonker, who along with the late Kentucky lawmaker, Rep. Carl D. Perkins, led efforts in the House to pass equal access legislation. That measure permits secondary school students to meet for religious and other purposes before and after school on the same basis as other student-initiated, noncurriculum-related groups.

"During that time, I came to admire and respect John Baker and to rely on his counsel, for he was not only a man of great knowledge and wisdom, but also had the personal qualities of balance, fairness, and grace that made him credible and respected even among political adversaries," Bonker continued. "In the delicate and potentially divisive area of policies and religion, John was uniquely qualified to bring reason, equity and compromise to the most controversial issues."

Bonker also praised Baker's reputation for bringing together lawyers representing churches and civil liberties groups on a wide range of causes dealing with religious liberty issues.

"While I mourn the passing of this great man," Bonker concluded, "his accomplishments, his example, and his spirit remain with us."

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Baptist Hospital Reopens
In Indonesia After Moving

Baptist Press
3/14/85

WAY HALIM, Indonesia (BP)—A Baptist hospital forced to move from its location in Bukittinggi, Indonesia, reopened in Lampung Province on the island of Sumatra in February.

The clinic of Immanuel Baptist Hospital received 30 out-patients during its first day of operation Feb. 21. In-patients were expected to be admitted beginning in mid-March.

More than 40 of the staff of 70 who worked at the Bukittinggi location moved to the new 50-bed, \$2 million hospital. Facilities include the clinic, a surgery suite with three operating rooms, wards, administrative offices, housing and storage buildings, a nurses' dormitory and a morgue.

Hospital Director Win Applewhite, a Southern Baptist missionary doctor from Georgia, said Immanuel is functioning smoothly. Other Southern Baptist missionaries working at the hospital include physicians Gene Ruble of Virginia and Oliver Gilliland of Louisiana; lab technician Mariam Misner of Missouri and Bobby Jones of Oklahoma, a general evangelist who oversaw construction.

The original Immanuel Baptist Hospital at Bukittinggi opened in 1975 but was officially sold to the Indonesian government six years later because of Muslim opposition in the area. Terms of the agreement called for Baptists to systematically turn over control of the hospital. Now the government runs the Bukittinggi facility entirely. Two Baptist congregations begun in the Bukittinggi area still meet.

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