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March 4, 1986

86-28

Lay Leaders Important  
To New Mission Growth

By Joe Westbury

MIAMI (BP)—Church-type missions conceived by laity are twice as likely to constitute into self-supporting churches as those begun by clergy, participants of a national church extension conference were told.

The insight into starting new churches was compiled from a study of 3,963 churches which constituted between 1972 and 1984 said Jack Redford, director of the church extension division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. He noted the report underscores the importance of utilizing laity in launching new congregations.

"When you have a strong lay leadership base in a new mission, you have a core of individuals who will be in the congregation indefinitely," Redford said. "When a pastor begins the work, he sees the community as a group of people to be reached but he has no foundation on which to build, and that can work to his disadvantage."

"We know we must have a committed individual who will invest his time in the community and give it a sense of stability."

A related study of Baptist associational directors of missions revealed 2,500 church-type missions were begun in the Southern Baptist Convention during the 1980-84 church years. One-third of all the missions were begun in Texas, California and Florida, in that order, said Phil Jones of the Home Mission Board's planning and services research department.

Jones defined a church-type mission as a fellowship of believers who gather regularly for worship and Bible study with the intention of constituting as a church.

The study also revealed missions that constituted were more likely to have had 10 or more lay leaders. In contrast, three-fourths of missions that disbanded had five or fewer lay leaders.

"If we're going to reach our (Southern Baptist Convention) goal of 50,000 new churches by the year 2,000, we must constitute 1,000 new churches annually," Redford said. "The last few years we have averaged 400 to 450 a year."

The number of operating church-type missions is on the increase, with about 5,100 now in existence in the SBC, he added.

Redford said sponsoring churches have learned to be better mother churches, "but we're hoping they don't become too paternalistic to the point of hindering the growth of the missions."

Results of the research were released during the national church extension leadership conference in Miami, sponsored by the SBC Home Mission Board church extension division.

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Fire Halted Before  
Fuel Tanks Ignited

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AMMAN, Jordan (BP)--Six Southern Baptist missionaries and two children in Amman, Jordan, escaped injury in a nighttime fire that was extinguished before it ignited five 2,000-liter fuel tanks, most of which were full.

Damage was limited to three furnaces in their apartment building.

The Feb. 7 incident reminded missionaries in Amman "of God's protective care," said Alta Lee Lovegren, press representative of Jordan's Southern Baptist mission.

Residents in the mission-owned building are missionaries Pat Frost, Lynn Smith, Geraldene Volkart, Wilson and Cheryl Tatum and their two children, James, 8, and Russell, 6, and missionary journeyman Patricia Raffield.

One missionary noticed billowing smoke and alerted others in the building to evacuate. Tatum and fellow missionaries Bernie Fairchild and Graydon Hardister and Hardister's son, David, fought the fire with portable extinguishers after the others had evacuated to the Hardister home next door.

It was only the second fire on mission property since Southern Baptist work in Jordan began in 1952. Cause of the fire was thought to be an electrical problem.

Frost is from Parks, Ark.; Smith from Birmingham, Ala.; Volkart from Boonville, Mo.; Wilson Tatum from Shreveport, La.; Cheryl Tatum from Frost, Texas; Raffield from Dexter, Ga.; Fairchild from Great Falls, Mont.; and Hardister from Pine Bluff, Ark.

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Chief Bookkeeper Stevens  
Joins Executive Committee

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Bettie Marie Stevens has joined the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee as chief bookkeeper.

Stevens, who has been supervisor of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's business office since December 1981, succeeds Ada Ruth Kelly, who is retiring after more than 20 years as the Executive Committee's chief bookkeeper. In her new job, Stevens works with Vice President for Business and Finance Tim Hedquist in recording and maintaining all accounting records of the Executive Committee. Her employment was effective March 1.

In addition to her work with the Mississippi Baptist Convention, Stevens was data processing specialist and assistant to the director of business services for the Florida Baptist Convention from March 1968 to November 1981.

She also has been assistant to the comptroller of Gulf Federal Savings and Loan Association in Crestview, Fla., 1963-68; secretary in the Brotherhood department and executive secretary's office and bookkeeper in the business office of the Florida Baptist Convention, 1960-63; and administrative assistant to the comptroller for Gulf Federal Savings and Loan Association in Crestview, 1956-60.

A native of Crestview, Stevens is a graduate of Crestview High School and the American Savings and Loan Institute. She earned a certificate in computer programming from the Computer Languages Corporation of Jacksonville, Fla.

She was president of the SBC Computer Users Association in 1975-76.

Stevens became a Christian at the age of 12 and has been a lifelong active church member. She is fluent in sign language and has acted as an interpreter for the deaf.

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Bible Study Plan Offers  
Bridge For Unchurched

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press  
3/4/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Bernadette Salviano sees a new mission field for Southern Baptists in the "yuppie" world of business professionals.

"I'm a missionary in the business world," Salviano, graphic arts manager for Purvis Systems, of Middletown, R.I., said while attending an Outreach Bible Study National Institute in Nashville, Tenn.

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The aggressive generation in the high-tech business world--popularly known as yuppies--is finding success but not happiness, Salviano explained.

Yuppies are just one of the many groups of people who previously have been disassociated from churches but which could be prime target groups for the Outreach Bible Study program developed by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, said Salviano, who has been involved in marketing and advertising for more than 20 years.

Outreach Bible Study, to be launched in October 1986, involves church-sponsored short-term Bible study groups held away from church buildings to involve persons who are not Christians or who do not attend church.

"People are really searching. They're searching for God but will grab on to anything that comes along to fill the void," Salviano said.

She understands struggling and searching for something. She practiced Buddhism for 10 years and tried other religions and cults before an employee invited her to a Bible study group.

Salviano found what she had been seeking in the group similar to what has been designed in Outreach Bible Study. But she said she would never have gone to a church or Sunday school.

The group that met at an apartment to "talk about things" was non-threatening to her self-image. A formal church setting where she did not know what was going on would have been threatening to her as it is to others who did not grow up with a church association, she said.

"An invitation to Bible Study," the materials for Outreach Bible Study, are written for persons without a church background or a familiarity with the Bible. Church and Bible terms are explained in common terminology.

The setting for Outreach Bible Study groups is to be homes, apartments, community centers and other places, rather than a local church. At the conclusion of the eight-week unit, participants will be invited to participate in Sunday school.

Salviano uses Life and Work Series curriculum as a Sunday school teacher at Middletown Baptist Church in Middletown, R.I. But, she said, that material is not suited for persons unfamiliar with the Bible.

"Those people are intimidated when they go into a Sunday school class with people who are so familiar with the Bible and Bible terms that they take for granted," she explained. "Outreach Bible Study bridges the gap. It's one of the most positive things I've seen in this area."

Salviano's enthusiasm is uncontained when she begins talking about the marketing possibilities for Outreach Bible Study. She said she would like to see it marketed interdenominationally.

"Imagine the Sunday School Board putting materials in the hands of other denominations to help make a change in this society," she said. "So many people don't have an anchor; this is just what they need."

With Outreach Bible Study, Salviano predicted Southern Baptists will be on the forefront of reaching unchurched people.

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

Redemption, Integrity Necessary  
For SBC, Workshop Leaders Say

By Ken Camp and Tim Tune

Baptist Press  
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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Only by dealing redemptively with each other and recognizing the integrity of those with whom they differ will Southern Baptists be reconciled, conference leaders said at the 1986 Texas Christian Life Commission workshop in Fort Worth, Texas, Feb. 24-26.

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"Reconciliation: Dealing With Divisive Issues in Churches" was the theme as more than 200 participants addressed such issues as the role of women, biblical authority, abortion, war and peace and church and state.

Looking at the issue of women in life and ministry, Minette Drumwright, special assistant to the president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, discussed biblical texts pertaining to the role of women.

Drumwright acknowledged women's ordination as "the most volatile issue concerning the role of women," and she noted biblical passages that could be used either to support or oppose the practice. She also called into question the modern understanding of ordination.

Drumwright cited studies which show Southern Baptist laypersons have "surprisingly open views" on the role of women in ministry. She encouraged those with differing views to acknowledge "those with whom we disagree are indeed getting their views from the Bible," adding, reconciliation among Southern Baptists over the issue of women in ministry is dependent upon genuine revival.

There is an "absolute minimum of divisiveness" among Southern Baptists concerning the authority of the Bible, said Ray Summers, retired chairman of the department of religion at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and former professor of New Testament at Southwestern and Southern Baptist Theological Seminaries, in his address on "The Nature of Biblical Authority."

To illustrate his point, Summers quoted several confessional statements from documents of Southern and Southwestern seminaries and also from the Baptist Faith and Message. However, Baptist confessions of faith also attempt "to leave a clear place for interpreting the Scriptures under the leadership of the Holy Spirit," he said.

Interpretation is "what it's all about," he noted. "You teachers and preachers had just as well go back to plowing" if interpretation is not valid.

Observing the abortion debate is characterized both by stated issues and by unstated, "or at least understated" issues, Dan McGee, religion professor at Baylor University, challenged listeners to recognize all factors involved in dialogue between pro-life and pro-choice forces.

McGee began by touching on key stated issues such as the status of the fetus, the competing interests and rights of the fetus, the mother and society, and the matter of matching morality with integrity.

Turning to the unstated issues, McGee examined the impact of the increasing visibility of the fetus in the past 20 years through medical technology. Other subliminal issues having an impact on the abortion debate include the changing role of women, the reduced emphasis on procreation in modern American society, the active versus the passive view of human control of history and the static versus the dynamic perception of reality, he said.

Offering hope for reconciliation, McGee said both pro-life and pro-choice advocates should recognize the common Christian values to which they are appealing, such as the value of human life and a commitment to the interests of the weak and dispossessed. He warned against becoming part of single-issue political movements.

The only real cure for war is the hope that is in Jesus Christ and the grace of God which sustains human life, said Doug Tipps, pastor of River Oaks Baptist Church in Houston, in his presentation on "War and Peace."

Though Baptists "may bring a great deal of diversity to this discussion," Tipps said, "there is reason that we should hope for reconciliation in this matter."

In his presentation on church and state, Bill Tillman, assistant professor at Southwestern seminary, called for a renewed awareness of Baptist history.

Looking at the Anglican, Lutheran and Calvinist models on church-state relations in contrast to the Anabaptist-Baptist models throughout church history, Tillman warned many Baptists have lost sight of their heritage.

"Many who have come to be a part of us are more Reformed in their theology than Baptist," he said. Tillman explained that in Reformed theology, emphasis is placed on the sovereignty of God, virtually to the exclusion of the priesthood of the believer. On the other hand, among Anabaptists and Baptists, while there is belief in the sovereignty of God, this is brought into creative tension with a strong belief in the priesthood of the believer.

"We may be further up the creek than we already realize in expressing Reformed theology and methodology not truly representative of our heritage," he said. "Indeed, we may already have burst on through the Reformation barrier in a kind of retrogression of history and become more Catholic than we know."

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Professor Challenges Baptists  
To Rediscover 'Baptist-ness'

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
3/4/86

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—In regard to their current church-state position, Southern Baptists are like Humphrey, the hump-backed whale who left his natural environment, swam up the Sacramento River, and captured the nation's attention for nearly a month before being lured back out to sea last fall, said Bill Tillman, assistant professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Tillman made the analogy during a presentation on church and state at the closing session of the 1986 Texas Christian Life Commission workshop in Fort Worth Feb. 26.

"For whatever reason, the poor thing acted as if he forgot he was a whale," said Tillman. "He entered into a compromise with his environment which ultimately would have led to his demise.

"Could it be that many among us have forgotten, or maybe never have known, what it means to be a Baptist?" he asked. "I think so."

Looking at the Anglican, Lutheran and Calvinist models on church-state relationships in contrast to the Anabaptist-Baptist models throughout church history, Tillman warned many Baptists have lost sight of their heritage.

"Many who have come to be a part of us are more Reformed in their theology than Baptist," he said.

In Reformed theology, emphasis is placed on the sovereignty of God, virtually to the exclusion of the priesthood of the believer, he explained. On the other hand, while Anabaptists and Baptists believe in the sovereignty of God that belief is brought into creative tension with a strong conviction about the priesthood of the believer, he added.

"We may be further up the creek than we already realize in expressing Reformed theology and methodology not truly representative of our heritage," he said. "Indeed, we may have already burst on through the Reformation barrier in a kind of retrogression of history and become more Catholic than we know."

Tillman reminded his listeners Humphrey was rescued from the river and led back to sea by appeals to his "whaleness," specifically echolocation recordings of other humpbacks that led him back to his salt-water home. Tillman said Baptists, similarly, can be rescued from their current church-state confusion by being helped to "be Baptists" through education.

"Check your own echolocations. Trace the development of Baptists. Work through their theological positions. If that is who you are, then be about the business of proclaiming that," he urged.

"The end of the tale of the whale by the name of Humphrey? Most of us know it," he said. "He swam out of his self-imposed prison at peace again with his environment and man.

"The end of our tale? Church and state matters will long be with us," Tillman said. "It remains to be seen if we are able to be as successful as Humphrey."

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