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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2351
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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Editor's Note: Following is the first of two articles on ethnic ministry by Roy Howard Beck, associate editor of the National Christian Reporter. The weekly newspaper is a non-denominational publication of the United Methodist conferences of Texas and New Mexico.

Baptists, Assemblies Excel
In Ethnic Inclusiveness

By Roy Howard Beck

DALLAS (BP)--While so-called liberal mainline, Protestants have talked a lot about ethnic inclusiveness during the past decade, Baptists and the Assemblies of God have brought the most ethnic-minority members into their denominations.

In a survey of Protestant denominations, each with more than one million members, the National Christian Reporter found stagnant or small ethnic membership growth among most mainline Protestant churches during that period. But the Assemblies of God, Southern Baptists and American Baptists have burgeoned.

The American Baptist Churches denomination, generally considered as part of the mainline Protestant community, growth primarily came from congregations in black Baptist denominations dually affiliating with American Baptists.

However, ethnic growth in denominations generally considered outside the mainline family--the Assemblies of God (48 percent) and Southern Baptists (70 percent)--mainly resulted from aggressive evangelism and church-starting efforts.

Constant H. Jacquet Jr., editor of "Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches," said there has been a lot of interest in the ethnic-minority composition of denominations. Hard statistics haven't been available in the past, he said. This study relied on surveys, censuses and estimates from each denomination. Because of the unevenness in the quality of the data and date of collection, findings likely are best used for general comparisons.

General comparisons leave little doubt that the "ethnic inclusiveness title" belongs to:

--The Southern Baptist Convention and the Assemblies of God, in terms of which churches doing the most to offer the gospel to ethnic-minority persons and to welcome them into church membership.

--The American Baptist Churches and the Assemblies of God, as the denominations where ethnic-minority people make up the highest percentage of membership.

--The American Baptist Churches and the Southern Baptist Convention for having the largest number of ethnic-minority members.

Southern Baptist leaders acknowledged their denomination has much less of an image of being interested in ethnic minorities than the United Methodist Church. But a traditional concern about each person's soul overrides any cultural biases against non-whites that Southern Baptists might have, said Jim Newton, spokesman for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Southern Baptists have started a net total of nearly 400 black congregations during the last 10 years. Their ministry in languages other than English includes nearly 25,000 members in 4,600 congregations divided among 87 languages.

The Assemblies of God is another denomination that might seem unlikely to emphasize ethnic inclusiveness. It is the largest organization in a Pentecostal movement in which races traditionally have divided into their own denominations, Jacquet explained.

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But the Assemblies' black membership is growing rapidly, and Hispanic membership is burgeoning.

In its Gulf Latin American District alone, the Assemblies have added 118 Hispanic congregations during the past five years. After only three years of having Korean districts, the Assemblies claim 10,000 members in 70 churches.

Jacquet said he previously had been unable to gather data on ethnic membership because many denominations—especially mainline Protestant—have been reluctant to compile it for fear it would be seen as racist. Contacts with Episcopal, Presbyterian and Disciples of Christ leaders supported that assessment.

The American Baptist Churches, where 38 percent of members are ethnic, consider gathering of detailed, reliable statistics very important, said Richard Gladden of the denomination's research office.

"If you have no counts, you have no way to track your movement," he said. "You then are in a constant state of wonderment on where you are. Statistics can be a devilish tool. But they are essential if you are going to do any kind of intentional planning."

Jacquet said he thought the seven denominations listed in the Reporter's charts likely are the most ethnically inclusive among Protestant denominations of more than one million members.

No predominantly black denomination is on the list. They never have been oriented toward inclusiveness, he said, noting he doubted any of them have as high as 1 percent of members who are white, Hispanic or other ethnic origin.

Until told of this study, Jacquet said he assumed the United Methodist Church was the most inclusive Protestant denomination "because of its size and its historic black presence."

That a conservative Protestant (Southern Baptist) and Pentecostal (Assemblies) denomination would surpass nearly all mainline liberal denominations isn't totally surprising, Jacquet said.

They stress personal relationships and conversion, he said, while the mainline churches tend mainly to provide buildings for ethnic groups to use but don't try to evangelize them.

Gladden of the American Baptists said a lot of his denomination's growth has been through black congregations from black denominations seeking a dual affiliation. They do that, he said, to take advantage of the American Baptists' literature and professional advantages for pastors, such as annuities.

Southern Baptists have seen some of the same thing. But their leaders said most new black Southern Baptist congregations since 1974 have been brand new with no affiliation with black denominations.

In terms of ethnic inclusiveness in positions of leadership, the Reporter survey found mainline Protestants far ahead of the Assemblies and Southern Baptists.

Gladden said the American Baptist Churches denomination is so close to being the first "true, pan-ethnic" denomination many black congregations are naturally drawn to it. In 1971, blacks accounted for 23.3 percent of American Baptists, he said. In 1984, that percentage had risen to 34.9 percent. "We're moving toward that ratio on our boards and agencies," he noted.

Frank Helme of the Disciples said that with 5 percent of its members ethnic minority, the denomination tries to fill 20 percent of agency positions with ethnic-minority persons. That is similar to the United Methodist church's percentage.

But statistics gathered for the charts do not indicate any necessary relationship between inclusiveness in leadership and growth in ethnic-minority members.

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(Reprinted by permission of the National Christian Reporter, Dallas, Texas.)
(BP) artwork mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Baptist Press.

Baptist Ministry Continues
To Victims Of Armero Disaster

By Leland Webb

IBAGUE, Colombia (BP)--From their new Center of Hope in Ibague, Baptists in Colombia are seeking to meet continuing spiritual and physical needs of refugees from the volcanic eruption that destroyed the western Colombian city of Armero in November.

The ministries and concern they already have shown have resulted in contacts and opportunities for witness that at least one Southern Baptist missionary calls unprecedented.

Baptists opened the center as a base from which to offer continuing ministry to survivors of the disaster, which claimed an estimated 24,000 lives. Through the center Baptists are providing various kinds of occupational therapy and practical training to help restore the refugees to self-sufficiency. As part of evangelistic outreach, Bible study is held at the center each Thursday night.

In Lerida, a town only a few miles south of where Armero stood, two homes have been opened for Baptist worship services as a result of Baptist assistance to a family, reports missionary associate Bob Caperton. He and his wife, Joan, temporarily have been reassigned to Ibague from Barranquilla to assist with the center.

"About 20 attended the first service and 30 were in another in a neighbor's home," says Caperton. Most of the rebuilding for Armero survivors apparently will be in Lerida.

Baptist work in Guayabal, a town a few miles north of the old Armero site, "is very promising," adds Caperton. More than 200 people attended an open-air worship service conducted by Baptists in mid-February at the place where a number of refugees temporarily have been housed, he reports.

Seven patients released from the Ibague hospital for the afternoon were among refugees and others attending an informal opening and reception at the Center of Hope in early February.

The first to arrive was Jose Orozco, 20, who had been a math teacher at Armero and who lost his right leg above the knee in the disaster. When Southern Baptist missionaries James and Mary Nell Giles first visited Orozco at the Ibague hospital, they found him despondent and unresponsive, despite gifts of devotional books and other materials they brought. Finally she brought him an electronic calculator left behind months earlier by a team of Baptist volunteers from the United States. When Orozco received it, he had "a smile from ear to ear, just like a light had been turned on," she says.

The missionaries gave him a Bible and continued to offer him a Christian witness. "We just saw a complete transformation in him," she says. "He is just a new person now and really knows the Lord."

The question has been raised of whether Baptists should be doing spiritual work or social work, she says. "To me, when a Christian does social work, it IS spiritual work."

Two days before the center's opening reception, more than 20 people responded to an invitation to accept Christ as Savior after a religious film was shown at the center. The 75 people attending included not only refugees but also residents from the neighborhood where the center has been established in a rented house.

Missionary ministry to patients at Federico Lleras Hospital in Ibague opened the way to distribute Bibles to patients and staff, Mary Nell Giles reports, adding, Baptists gave out hundreds of Bibles at the hospital and at refugee centers in the period following the disaster.

In her 27 years as a missionary in Colombia, she says, "I don't think I've ever seen the Lord open doors for us like he has since this time of Armero."

Baptists have been asked by local leaders to set up a rehabilitation center for amputees at the Ibague hospital. Caperton and Rafael Blanco, Colombian Baptist home missionary assigned to the Center of Hope, represented Baptists at a mid-February meeting of Red Cross, government and civic leaders to seek ways to get help more directly to survivors.

Many of the estimated 60 to 80 victims who lost limbs as a result of the volcano disaster are expected to receive artificial replacements provided by Baptists. The Colombia Mission, organization of Southern Baptist missionaries, will make available the prosthetic devices as patients are ready for fitting at hospitals in Ibague or Bogota, the capital.

A number of the artificial limbs will come from a supply valued at about \$6,000 and assembled over a period of several years by Jerrell Ballard, a prosthetic specialist who was a missionary associate in Colombia for 10 years. In cases where the correct size of prosthesis is not among the stock, Ballard hopes to locate the right device in the United States and supply it to Colombian doctors.

The artificial limbs had remained in storage at Baptist Hospital in Barranquilla for more than two years after the Ballards found it necessary to return to the United States. The volcano disaster, which resulted in an unusual number of injuries requiring amputation, created an urgent need for the prostheses.

"We're fortunate to have these supplies on hand right now to meet a need that's crucial," says Ballard, who spent a week in Colombia consulting on the use of the limbs. Christian F. Siewers, a prosthetic specialist of Fayetteville, N.C., also spent a week there examining and measuring patients for prostheses.

The request for Baptists to assist at the Ibague hospital "means we will need a prosthetist to come from time to time and give technical assistance," says James Giles, who is disaster relief coordinator for the Baptist mission.

Missionaries stationed at International Baptist Theological Seminary in Cali plan to continue a ministry to the area, says Giles, who also is seminary president. Plans are to send teams of students and faculty members regularly on weekends for evangelism as well as offering counseling, handicraft training and other services to survivors as they reorder their lives.

Contact between missionaries and disaster victims has involved the missionaries personally, says Mary Nell Giles, who helped to reunite some family members among survivors in the confusion following the eruption. "We're so bonded together now, we're just like family," she says.

"They just can't give up hope," she says of the survivors nearly three months after the disaster. "They still all have hope that they're going to find all their family members living somewhere. This, of course, is what really breaks our heart--to see that they cannot bury them yet."

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board made about \$300,000 available for relief after the disaster, Ellis Leagans, administrative chairman of the Colombia Mission, reported to the Volcano Task Force at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota. Besides enabling opening the Center of Hope, funds also have provided medicines, portable power plants, food, blankets and numerous other items.

Colombian Baptist home missionaries serving at the Center of Hope besides Rafael Blanco, who is taking a year off from study at the seminary in Cali, are his wife, Mary, and Lidia Kelly, a recent seminary graduate.

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

Southern Brazil Flood Region
Hit By Devastating Drought

By Mike Chute

Baptist Press
3/10/86

CURITIBA, Brazil (BP)—Brazil's southern region, hit hard by flooding in the past few years, is now in the midst of a devastating drought, which has destroyed crops and forced the rationing of water and electricity.

Though the weather has been dry for several months, the drought became critical in mid-February when rivers and reservoirs went dry. The world famous Iguacu Falls nearly are dry.

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Southern Baptist missionary Sistie Givens said the water levels in city reservoirs of Curitiba, Parana, are "so low that the water is light brown in color and has to be boiled to use." There are fears of epidemics due to the lack of pure water.

She and other missionaries feel the situation may worsen because that part of Brazil is beginning its usual dry season, which normally lasts until July.

Nearly half of the coffee, wheat and soybean crops have been lost in the area. Those products are the main sources of income for the agricultural region, which has been a rich farming area.

Brazilians in the region, already experiencing high inflation, now are facing still higher consumer prices because of the unavailability of some products.

The drought has "particularly affected the poor people and the babies," said Givens, disaster relief coordinator for the South Brazil Mission.

"There are very definitely some people who are very hungry," she added. "The situation is very, very serious. Most things are expensive if they are available at all."

Givens called upon Southern Baptists in the United States to "pray that the people will have courage. They're losing hope."

The state governments of Parana, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul tried rationing water for several weeks, but that proved to be a poor solution. For two weeks, those governments have been rationing electricity to cut back water consumption since water is used to produce electricity.

Givens said the water rationing plan did not work because it adversely affected hospitals and schools. During the rationing, she said, the people were given water every fourth day.

Some residences have water boxes in the attic that collect water, but most people cannot afford such a storage system. The box is connected to street pipes and collects water at certain times of the day as the municipal water is turned on.

As part of the conservation efforts, residents have been given a consumption chart to check their electrical use every three days to determine if they are exceeding their allotment. If residences do exceed the monthly limit, the electricity is turned off.

Everything that uses electricity either has been eliminated or cut back by 40 percent. Elevators, escalators and air conditioning in buildings are turned off. Stores are allowed a minimum amount of lighting. Every other street light is disconnected.

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Biblical Music Has Power,
Elder Tells Missionaries

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
3/10/86

VAN NUYS, Calif. (BP)--Baptists have no more business singing a song that is not biblical than they have preaching a sermon that is not biblically accurate, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder said.

Speaking to 400 musicians and music missionaries, Elder told participants in the first Musicians on Mission Workshop the focus of church music should be "Jesus Christ is the Savior".

"I thank God that most of the musicians I know have studied the text to be sure it is biblical," he said. "Christianity is a singing religion. Baptists historically have been a singing people. We come by this honestly and biblically. There is power in music in the midst of Southern Baptists."

Citing the need for "the enabling power of God for musicians on mission," he urged volunteers for music missions to receive power from God through a holy life, discipline, participation in the gathered church and study of the biblical message.

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Musicians on Mission is a five-year emphasis in support of Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust plan to reach the world for Christ by the year 2000. It is sponsored by the Sunday School Board's church music department.

Sponsored jointly with the church music department of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, the Musicians on Mission Workshop West was the first in a series of workshops continuing through 1990.

More than 450 persons registered for classes during the workshop, and about 700 people, including choirs and other musical groups, participated in the two-day event.

In conjunction with the workshop, some participants volunteered to work in California churches that had requested music assistance through the state church music department. A total of 30 Musicians on Mission worked in 22 churches before and after the workshop, providing music leadership and music education skills.

The next Musicians on Mission workshop will be April 17-19 in Wichita, Kan.

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Volunteer Beats the Devil
To Be A Musician on Mission

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
3/10/86

VAN NUYS, Calif. (BP)--When Peggy Martin made a commitment to music missions last year at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, she didn't know how she would become involved or she would have to fight off the devil in the process.

Martin, an employee of the Oak Ridge (Tenn.) National Laboratories, is not a professional church musician. More than 30 years' experience in music has come to her through working in her church and district Baptist association.

Yet she offered herself on faith, trusting God to show her what to do.

After sharing her decision with her pastor, Martin waited and prayed. In a matter of weeks, more than \$900 was made available by her church, Central Baptist-Bearden in Knoxville, Tenn., to pay her expenses for a week's mission service in California and to attend the Musicians on Mission Workshop in Van Nuys.

As a part of the workshop, some participants volunteered to provide music assistance in churches that requested help. Martin was assigned to First Southern Baptist Church of Santa Paula by the Southern Baptist General Convention of California.

Everything seemed to be going smoothly, and Martin was excited about the missions opportunity. But what she describes as a "fight with the devil" made the effort to serve God an even greater challenge.

A case of pneumonia, a relapse and a middle-aged experience with measles knocked her off her feet in three successive punches. Determined to fight back, she took prescribed medicines for 40 days and continued to go to work despite pneumonia, all to preserve precious vacation days for mission work.

Friends and fellow workers boosted her spirits, she says, when one paid the photocopying costs for her teaching materials and another paid a bill to mail them to California. Yet another made the needed dress she was too ill to make.

But Martin soon learned it doesn't pay to get too relaxed after overcoming obstacles.

The day she was to depart Knoxville, an ice and snow storm created havoc on the highways. Mack Bingham, her minister of education, came to the rescue with a four-wheel-drive Jeep for the trip to the airport.

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Her trials were far from over. The airplane she boarded for Los Angeles slid off the runway and had to be towed. Three successive efforts to scrape the runway and de-ice the airplane were required before the flight got under way.

Arriving in what should have been sunny California, Martin was greeted by the torrential rainstorms that flooded much of the state in mid-February.

Martin's first morning with the children's Sunday school class brought her yet another letdown. Only two children attended. Undaunted, she proceeded with her teaching, delighting the small class.

That night, six attended. On Tuesday, 13 children were present, and by Wednesday, three classes totaled 43 children.

Tears come to Martin's eyes as she tells of the boy who hugged her at the end of the last day and said, "I wish you could be here next week."

No doubt, Martin's stint as a volunteer music missionary and the circumstances surrounding it will remain with her for life, but she minimizes her role.

"Old dumb me from Tennessee just watched God work," she said.

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

Florida Convention Employee
Arrested On Mail Theft Charge

By Greg Warner

Baptist Press
3/10/86

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--An employee of the Florida Baptist Convention has entered a guilty plea to a charge of stealing mail from a postal branch office in Jacksonville.

Allen Knight, 27, a service center attendant in the Baptist Building, could be sentenced up to five years in prison and fined up to \$250,000 on the charge. He entered his plea March 7 after having been arrested Feb. 27.

Knight's arrest followed a four-week investigation by postal officials into the disappearance of some 500 letters from the Southside postal station. Postal Inspector Richard Johnson said Knight was arrested after trying to conceal a package that had been planted as part of the investigation. Johnson said Knight, in a sworn confession taken after his arrest, admitted to the Feb. 27 theft and implicated himself in the disappearance of some other mail.

Knight, whose work duties require him to pick up and deliver FBC mail from the postal branch one block from convention offices, had been a suspect in the investigation for some time. His supervisors were notified of the investigation Feb. 20 and asked to cooperate.

Postal officials said Knight's confession indicated financial difficulties. "His motive was to obtain cash," Johnson said, "but I don't think he got very much."

Knight, who is married and has three young children, was placed on "suspended employee status" by the convention following his arrest. He was terminated March 7.

Don Hepburn, director of public relations for the state convention, said Knight, who was hired two years ago, falsified his employment application in order to conceal the fact he had served time in prison for previous criminal convictions for petty larceny and forgery.

Hepburn said the theft did not involve FBC mail or money, adding, "All Cooperative Program and mission offerings are received in a special locked mailbox and handled by the bank."

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February Cooperative Program Receipts
Climb Almost 19 Percent In One Year

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptist Cooperative Program receipts for February climbed almost 19 percent beyond totals for the same period last year.

February contributions to the national Cooperative Program—the Southern Baptist Convention's unified missions, education and ministry budget—totaled \$10,883,413.90, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee.

The February total represents an increase of \$1,667,623.32, or 18.10 percent, over contributions in February 1985, which were \$9,215,790.58, Bennett said. Cooperative Program contributions for the first five months of the 1985-86 fiscal year are \$52,747,576.78, up 9.94 percent from the \$47,977,326.14 total for the same period in 1984-85.

The Cooperative Program gains stand opposed to an annual 3.9 percent Consumer Price Index inflation rate, said Tim Hedquist, Executive Committee vice president for business and finance.

That is good news because of the role the Cooperative Program plays in Southern Baptist life, Bennett noted.

"The Cooperative Program is the lifeline to world missions for Southern Baptists. We believe in and strongly support missions and evangelism," he said. "Individually, Southern Baptists are supporting missions with gifts to their churches. Churches are responding and giving greater amounts to missions through the Cooperative Program (channeled through state Baptist conventions). State conventions have responded with greater percentages going to the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program."

Bennett joined A.R. Fagan, president of the SBC Stewardship Commission, in expressing their belief that the convention's Planned Growth in Giving emphasis has helped to build the Cooperative Program increases. Planned Growth in Giving is a new SBC campaign designed to encourage Southern Baptists to systematically increase their giving to their churches and to encourage churches, state conventions and the national convention to channel more funds to the denomination's worldwide mission concerns.

The entire campaign is geared to fuel Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust emphasis, which is designed to lead them to present the gospel of Christ to the whole world by the year 2000.

Fagan noted the February Cooperative Program total reflects increased giving on the part of individual Southern Baptists, as well as increased giving to the Cooperative Program by churches and through state conventions, all of which are "strongly emphasized through Planned Growth in Giving."

However, Bennett urged Southern Baptists not to grow complacent. "Reports of increased contributions can lead to the impression that we're doing well, causing us to slack off," he said. "We must continue to increase our giving significantly if Southern Baptists are going to make the (1985-86 Cooperative Program) budget of only \$130 million. We've got to have more months of 18 percent increases to make \$130 million. The last months of this fiscal year are extremely important."

National monthly Cooperative Program receipts must average \$11,036,060.46 if Southern Baptists are to reach the \$130 million goal for the 1985-86 fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30.

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Note to editors: Individual state totals for February are available from the (BP) central office in Nashville.

Study Bible Release
Set for June 1988

By Terri Lackey and Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The content of a new study Bible designed to interpret "great biblical doctrines" for laypeople, closed the planning stage and entered the writing stage as 25 writers headed for home to put pen to paper.

The Disciple's Study Bible will be published in June 1988 by Holman Bible Publishers in cooperation with the church training department, both of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

The 25 writers, who included Southern Baptist seminary professors, pastors and denominational workers, attended a conference at the Sunday School Board March 2-4 for orientation and specific assignments related to the study Bible.

Writers were invited to attend the three-day seminar "so everyone involved in the publishing process would be aware of overall goals and individual responsibilities," said Johnnie Godwin, director of Holman.

Some of the Bible's concepts include footnotes of biblical doctrines, an introduction for each Old and New Testament book, cross references for scriptures and a doctrinal index and summary.

"These writers are going to give comprehensive coverage to the doctrines of the Bible," Godwin said. "We want what they are writing to interrelate, but we don't want any unnecessary overlapping."

"The idea of this study Bible is to build around the great doctrines of the Bible. This is a great concept. There's not anything like it in existence," said Roy Edgemon, director of the church training department.

The Disciple's Study Bible, which will be published in the King James version and the New International Version, is designed particularly to help laypersons study the great doctrines. It will provide pastors and other religious educators a new resource for leading doctrinal studies for lay audiences, Edgemon said, noting the Bible's target audience is "anyone who wants to study the Word."

"The study Bible will primarily meet the needs of Southern Baptists and the broader Christian community," Godwin said.

Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder told the writers attending the conference they were probably "doing an eternal work."

"You are dealing with cognitive understanding and historical perception in your interpretation of Holy Scripture," Elder said. "It is possible you are doing an eternal work."

Elder also praised both departments for working cooperatively on the study Bible.

Representatives from Holman and church training met for the first time early in 1985 to begin planning for the Disciple's Study Bible, Edgemon said.

One of the important aspects of the Bible is it is to be "portable," Edgemon said. "We wanted a size that would be convenient for the pastor to take to the pulpit and which would be comfortable for anyone to carry to and from church. It's not designed to be a coffee table piece."

The Disciple's Study Bible, through cooperation between Holman Bible Publishers and the church training department, will provide a new resource to help laypersons better understand biblical doctrines, Godwin added.

Professor Claims Questions
About Adam Hinder Gospel

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--"Don't waste valuable pulpit time fussing over foolish questions just because someone claims they're important," Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary Professor Craig Skinner counseled students beginning his class in evangelistic preaching.

"The pulpit exists to proclaim the Gospel of grace and build up Christian believers," Skinner said. "Don't get sidetracked into discussing biblical trivia which can hinder the Great Commission. Christ called us to get on with the job of making disciples, not to juggle jots and tittles to please those who shout loudest for our attention."

Skinner referred to "a popular quiz-sheet" now in circulation which asks, "Was Adam a real man? Answer 'yes' or 'no'—nothing else!"

He described such a question as carrying two imported assumptions--that only one of those two answers can be correct and that either one of those answers necessarily excludes the other.

The professor said proposers of such questions infer "because the word translated 'Adam' in the early chapters of Genesis is used for the proper name of an individual, 'yes' can be the only answer to their question from those who believe the Bible."

"However, they ignore the fact that the same Hebrew word, used over 500 times in the Old Testament, is most often translated as 'mankind' or collective 'man,'" he said. "They also ignore Paul's strong statements, in Romans and Corinthians, where he asserts Adam to be the representative man for sinners just as Christ is the 'second Adam' and the representative man for the saved.

"Adam, therefore, is both real and representative man. The same Bible which asserts his historicity also asserts his symbolic and representative character."

Skinner noted the body enshrined in the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., is that of a "real soldier," but he pointed out the soldier interred there also is a "representative soldier whom our nation honors, and by doing so honors all soldiers."

"No answer as to his identity can be given by a simple 'yes' or 'no.' To be honest and complete, the answer must embrace both perspectives," he insisted.

"Jesus was a real man--a specific human individual. But he was also representative man who 'bore our sins in his own body on the tree,'" Skinner said. "The Adam question likewise demands a 'both...and' rather than an 'either...or' answer, if it is to be a genuine one."

Other Christians cannot judge the motives of people who distributed the quiz sheet, Skinner warned.

"Probably many believe simplistic answers to complex theological questions will clarify other confusing issues," he said. "But questions so imprecisely framed only make complexities more chaotic and divert attention from the primary tasks of missions and evangelism.

"Paul said it best in 2 Timothy 2:23: 'Have nothing to do with silly and ill-informed controversies, which lead inevitably, as you know, to strife.'"

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