

**(BP)****- - BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

**NATIONAL OFFICE**  
 SBC Executive Committee  
 901 Commerce #750  
 Nashville, Tennessee 37203  
 (615) 244-2355  
 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. Hasty, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

March 31, 1986

86-45

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST PASTORS' CONFERENCE**  
 Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta  
 June 8-9, 1986

Theme: Jesus...Author and Finisher

Sunday Evening, June 8, 1986

- 6:30--Special Music, Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra, First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas  
 --Welcome, Morris Chapman, chairman; pastor, First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas  
 --Invocation, Frank Ashby, pastor, Mayfield Road Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas  
 --Congregational Praise, Buster Pray, minister of music, First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas  
 --Special Music, Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra  
 --Edwin Young, pastor, Second Baptist Church, Houston, Texas  
 --Congregational Praise, Buster Pray  
 --Special Music, Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra  
 --Adrian Rogers, pastor, Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.  
 --Congregational Praise, Buster Pray  
 --Offering  
 --Special Music, Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra  
 --Harold Carter, pastor, New Shiloh Baptist Church, Baltimore, Md.  
 --Benediction, Max Cadenhead, pastor, First Baptist Church, Naples, Fla.

Monday Morning, June 9

- 9:00--Special Music, Harmony; Tommy Brinkley, director  
 --Invocation, Omar Pachecano, associate director of missions, El Paso, Texas  
 --Congregational Praise, Buster Pray  
 --Jay Strack, evangelist, Fort Myers, Fla.  
 --Congregational Praise, Buster Pray  
 --Special Music, Ramona Norman, soloist, Wichita Falls, Texas  
 --Harry Garvin, Southern Baptist missionary, Uganda  
 --Special Music, New Song, Atlanta  
 --Testimony, Duane and Iris Blue, Fort Worth, Texas  
 --Congregational Praise, Buster Pray  
 --Bill Tolar, dean, school of theology, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas  
 --Congregational Praise, Buster Pray  
 --Offering  
 --Special Music, New Song  
 --Bailey Smith, evangelist, Del City, Okla.  
 --Benediction, James Johnson, pastor, West Asheville Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C.

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
 LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES**  
 Historical Commission, SBC  
 Nashville, Tennessee

Monday Afternoon, June 9

- 1:15--Special Music, Vernard Johnson, music evangelist, Fort Worth, Texas  
 --Invocation, Russell Begaye, home missionary, Arlington, Texas  
 --Congregational Praise, Larry Black, minister of music, First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss.  
 --Nelson Price, pastor, Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga.  
 --Congregational Praise  
 --Special Music, Chris Chapman, soloist, Wichita Falls, Texas  
 --James Reimer, pastor, Second Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo.  
 --Congregational Praise, Larry Black  
 --Offering  
 --Special Music

-more-

- Election of Officers
- Special Music, Al Holley, music evangelist, Smyrna, Ga.
- Dwight "Ike" Reighard, pastor, New Hope Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ga.
- Congregational Praise, Larry Black
- Special Music, Vernard Johnson
- Joel Gregory, pastor, Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas
- Benediction, Odean Puckett, pastor, First Baptist Church, Natchez, Miss.

#### Monday Evening, June 9

- 6:30—Special Music, Combined Choirs and Orchestras; Eastside Baptist Church, Bill Jack Green, director; Roswell Street Baptist Church, Jim Faull, director; First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, Buster Pray, director
- Invocation, Rob White, pastor, College Park Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala.
- Congregational Praise, Buster Pray
- Offering
- Mini-Concert, Steve Green, music evangelist, Mobile, Ala.
- Jerry Vines, co-pastor, First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.
- Welcome to the Southern Baptist Convention, Charles Stanley, SBC President; pastor, First Baptist Church, Atlanta
- Special Music, Combined Choirs
- David Ring, evangelist, St. Charles, Mo.
- Congregational Praise, Buster Pray
- Special Music, Steve Green and Combined Choirs
- Eugene Ridley, evangelist, Dillsboro, N.C.
- Introduction of new Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference Officers
- Benediction, new president

—30—

#### Pastors' Conference Officers

- Morris Chapman—chairman; pastor, First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas
- Ned Mathews—vice chairman; pastor, Parkwood Baptist Church, Gastonia, N.C.
- Dwight "Ike" Reighard—secretary-treasurer; pastor, New Hope Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ga.

Pastors' Conference  
To 'Preach Jesus'

Baptist Press  
3/31/86

ATLANTA (BP)—"Jesus...Author and Finisher" will be the theme of the 1986 the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference, June 8-9 in the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

"God just put it on my heart for us to simply preach Jesus at this Pastors' Conference," said Morris Chapman, chairman of the annual gathering, one of the meetings held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, scheduled June 10-12.

Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas, said he believes Southern Baptist "pastors have great needs and there is nothing more thrilling or inspiring than lifting up Jesus. I know Jesus is the answer to every need and I am just hoping it will be a time that our hearts as a people of God can be refreshed and renewed and revived."

He added: "I felt preachers today—individually, in their homes and in their churches—are facing crises and conflict in unparalleled proportions. My prayer is that this Pastors' Conference will be an opportunity for many pastors and their wives to reflect on the reality of just what Jesus can mean to them in what they are facing in their lives and ministries."

The chairman said the meeting has been developed "as a high hour of inspiration. I have invited men who I believe have been faithful in preaching Jesus in a way that has resulted in scores of lives being changed."

He noted he has included missionaries and evangelists as well as lesser-known preachers to participate in the two-day meeting. The theme will begin with a message on the pre-existence of Christ and conclude with a sermon on the pre-eminence of Christ.

—more—

Preachers and themes include Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Houston, pre-existence of Christ; Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., virgin birth; Harold Carter, pastor of New Shiloh Baptist Church, Baltimore, Md., identity of Jesus;

Jay Strack, evangelist from Fort Myers, Fla., Jesus, the same yesterday, today and tomorrow; Harry Garvin, an SBC missionary to Uganda, looking to Jesus; William Tolar, dean of the School of Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, the atonement; Bailey E. Smith, evangelist, Del City, Okla., the cross;

Nelson Price, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., the name of Jesus; James Reimer, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo., the resurrection; Dwight "Ike" Reighard, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ga., anointed to preach Jesus; Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, the ascension and Jesus as advocate;

Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., the second coming; David Ring, evangelist from St. Charles, Mo., a testimonial sermon; and Eugene Ridley, evangelist from Dillsboro, N.C., the pre-eminence of Christ.

Music will be provided by Buster Pray, minister of music at First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas. Mini-concerts will be provided by gospel artists Vernard Johnson of Fort Worth, Texas, and Steve Green of Mobile, Ala.

Chapman said the speakers were selected because they are "powerful preachers. The program has no political implication. You cannot think of the Pastors' Conference without taking into account that it precedes the SBC. I have felt if we could have a high hour of inspiration, hopefully that will spill over into the convention."

—30—

Baptist Press  
3/31/86

WOMEN IN MINISTRY, SBC  
June 7-8, 1986  
Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church  
2715 Peachtree Rd., NE  
Atlanta, Georgia

Theme: "We Preach Not Ourselves"  
(II Corinthians 4:5)

Saturday, June 7, 1986

9:30—Registration

Pre-session Music

10:00—Welcome—Ashli Peak, convener/chairperson of the Women In Ministry, SBC, steering committee, Columbia, Mo.

10:30—"Historical Moment"—dramatic sketch

Business Session—Ashli Peak

10:45—Theme Interpretation—Freddie Neel, drama evangelist, North Augusta, S.C.

11:00—"We Speak Because We Believe"—Pam Scalise, assistant professor of Old Testament, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and Clista Whitehurst Adkins, former professor of Old Testament, Belmont College, Nashville, Tenn., now of Augusta, Ga.

12:00—Basket Lunch—Sharing Our Stories

1:15—"We Have This Ministry"—(Topical Group Meetings)

2:15—"We Preach Christ As Lord"—Christine Gregory, former national Woman's Missionary Union president and SBC vice president, Danville, Va.

3:15—"Historical Moment"—Ashli Peak

Business Session

4:15—Break

4:30—"Your Servants for Jesus' Sake"—(Group Meetings Clustered by Vocation)

5:30—Dinner

—more—

7:30—"Historical Moment"—(An Easter Drama), Pat Wooley, playwright, Fort Worth, Texas, and Annette Coleman, director of drama, Dunwoody Baptist Church, Dunwoody, Ga.  
Doxology—Ashli Peak

Sunday, June 8 —Omni International Hotel

9:30—Bible Study—Virginia Barfield, visiting instructor of New Testament, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

10:30—Fellowship

10:55—"Abundant Grace, Much Thanksgiving"—Janet Fuller, Baptist chaplain, Yale University, and director of Baptist Student Union, New Haven, Conn.

Music by the Jubalheirs, women's singing group, Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia

12:00—WMU-sponsored Women in Professional Ministry Luncheon

--30--

Women In Ministry  
Set Annual Meeting

Baptist Press  
3/31/86

ATLANTA (BP)—Southern Baptist women involved in ministry will focus on the purpose and variety of their ministerial roles during the fourth annual meeting of Women in Ministry, SBC, June 7-8 in Atlanta.

Between 500 and 600 women are expected for the event, held prior to the June 10-12 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, said Irene Bennett, program coordinator and minister of education and youth at Evans Baptist Church in Evans, Ga. The June 7 sessions will be held at Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, and the June 8 session at the Omni International Hotel.

Theme for the meeting will be "We Preach Not Ourselves," based on II Corinthians 4:5—"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves for your sake."

That Scripture verse will be illustrated through various meeting components, Bennett said.

"We Speak Because We Believe" will be addressed by Pam Scalise, assistant professor of Old Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and Clista Whitehurst Adkins, former professor of Old Testament at Belmont College, Nashville, Tenn., now of Augusta, Ga.

Christine Gregory, former national president of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union and SBC vice president of Danville, Va., will speak on "We Preach Christ as Lord."

Participants will divide into issue-oriented groups to study various facets of the subtheme, "We Have This Ministry," Bennett said. They will divide according to vocations to examine another subtheme, "Your Servants for Jesus' Sake."

The purpose of the meeting and its theme is to allow women in ministry "to learn about one another's ministries so they will be encouraged by each other's stories and work," Bennett explained. She said the meeting has been planned to provide women ministers with exposure to a large number of their colleagues and to allow them to examine the variety of ministerial roles open to women.

The event also will feature a Sunday morning worship service; presentation of "The Lower Room," a two-act Easter drama; business sessions; "Historical Moment" dramatic sketches; and a Women in Professional Ministry Luncheon, hosted by Woman's Missionary Union.

--30--

Appeals Court Throws Out  
Challenge To Vatican Envoy

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press  
3/31/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—A federal appellate court has rejected arguments that President Reagan violated the U.S. Constitution by sending an ambassador to the Vatican two years ago.

--more--

In a unanimous decision, a three-judge panel of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia threw out a challenge to Reagan's action, ruling that Americans United for Separation of Church and State—along with 20 religious bodies and 83 individuals—had no legal standing to bring the lawsuit. Even if they had been granted standing, the court ruled further, their arguments would have failed since the president alone has the power to appoint ambassadors.

Americans United Executive Director Robert L. Maddox, a Southern Baptist minister, said his organization will appeal the decision. He said the group may ask for a rehearing of the case, this time before the entire court of appeals, or may petition the Supreme Court directly to take up the matter.

"It is clear that the appellate court panel did not understand the full implications of our constitutional objections to the diplomatic exchange," Maddox said, adding, "We have a popular president and a popular pope. But that must not obscure the fact that our nation is governed by the Constitution. The president has no authority under the Constitution to set up a formal relationship with a church."

But the appellate panel specifically rejected that argument, holding the issue was not U.S. diplomatic relations with a church, but with another sovereign state. "The State of the City of the Vatican is a territorial sovereignty, however small its size and population," the court stated. "The head of the Roman Catholic Church controls the government of that sovereign territory. No other religious organization that is a plaintiff, or in which individual plaintiffs are members, is similarly situated."

The court ruled further that none of the plaintiffs had standing to sue the president, either as taxpayers or citizens. Neither did they achieve legal standing by claiming the exchange of ambassadors victimized all religious bodies other than the Roman Catholic Church. Plaintiffs failed to make "any causal connection" between their "alleged injuries" and the president's action, the panel found.

Reagan announced two years ago he planned to nominate a long-time political adviser and member of his "California cabinet," real estate developer William A. Wilson, as U.S. ambassador to the Vatican. The announcement followed the Senate's November 1983 repeal of a ban against formal diplomatic relations dating to 1867. Senate action came on a voice vote with no floor debate. Nor were hearings on the matter held in any Senate committee. Wilson was confirmed as ambassador March 7, 1984.

Besides Americans United, other plaintiffs in the challenge included the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., Progressive National Baptist Convention, Baptist General Association of Virginia and numerous Baptist ministers.

Although the Southern Baptist Convention instructed its Executive Committee during the 1984 annual meeting in Kansas City to take steps to join the lawsuit, the body voted the following September not to do so. Some Executive Committee members opposing the action cited possible embarrassment to Reagan during his 1984 re-election bid.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is a friend-of-the-court party to the suit.

—30—

Dunn, Others Ask Reagan  
To Sign Torture Treaty

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press  
3/31/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs Executive Director James M. Dunn and 10 other American Christian leaders have asked President Reagan to sign a United Nations-sponsored treaty condemning the practice of torture throughout the world.

In an open letter dated Good Friday 1986, the 11 wrote, "On this day we as Christians feel an awesome responsibility to speak out against torture. By his willingness to submit to death by a particularly heinous form of torture, our Lord entered into solidarity with all those who in any age are tortured. When they suffer, he continues to suffer."

--more--

Signers of the letter quoted approvingly from statements condemning the practice of torture made earlier by the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches and the Baptist World Alliance. During the Baptist World Congress last summer in Los Angeles, the worldwide body of Baptists stated, "It is a fitting and proper expression of the sovereignty of God...to speak forthrightly and take action in our lives against torture...as incompatible with the teachings of Christ Jesus."

The letter congratulated Reagan for his recent support of the Genocide Convention, another U.N.-sponsored treaty that had languished in the U.S. Senate until the president announced his support. The Senate ratified the treaty Feb. 19 on an 83-11 vote.

The U.N. General Assembly unanimously adopted the torture treaty—formally known as the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment—in December 1984. Noting the United States supported the treaty in the U.N. but is not among nearly 50 nations that since have ratified the document, the 11 asked Reagan to direct the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. to sign the treaty and to submit it to the Senate for ratification.

The U.S. Department of State endorsed the treaty last September, saying the United States considers it "the best possible draft, fairly representing a carefully considered composite of various views."

Arguing that "the use of torture as an instrument of state policy is a growing phenomenon" currently engaged in by as many as one-third of all nations, the Christian leaders said they "look with hope to the U.S.'s return to a leading role in promoting action against torture."

Besides Dunn, other signers included Marshall Lorenzo Shepard, president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention; Arie Brouwer, general secretary of the National Council of the Churches of Christ; Edmond Lee Browning, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church; Avery Post, president of the United Church of Christ; the leaders of three branches of American Lutheranism; a representative of the Friends United Meeting; and the primates of the Antiochian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church in America.

—30—

Bookkeeper Kelly Ready  
For New Set Of Figures

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press  
3/31/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Twenty years and \$2 billion later, Ada Ruth Kelly and Southern Baptists are ready for a new set of figures.

Kelly is only the third bookkeeper in the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee's 69-year history. Since 1965, she has distributed more than two billion Southern Baptist dollars, sending money to mission and ministry points worldwide.

But following her retirement this spring, Kelly will trade SBC Cooperative Program budget figures for figures of speech. She intends to earn a college degree in English, with a minor in French. Instead of signing SBC checks, she'll be writing term papers.

Her friends and co-workers won't be surprised if she graduates at the head of her class. They recognize the enthusiasm, intelligence and integrity that has marked her work with the Executive Committee for more than 30 years, since she signed on as a part-time secretary in 1951.

Her adaptability has carried her through more than one-quarter of the convention's history, and about half the Executive Committee's lifespan. She's seen changes, even as some elements have remained the same.

For an example of change, some of her new textbooks will cost more than her weekly wages when she started with the Executive Committee. Eighty-five cents an hour doesn't add up very quickly, even though it was "not bad" almost 35 years ago.

And wages aren't the only things which have changed during those years.

—more—

The Executive Committee has known four homes, starting in six or seven rooms on the second floor at the Baptist Sunday School Board, and finally the seventh floor of the one-year-old SBC Building, back across the street from the Sunday School Board, in Nashville.

The committee's staff has doubled from the 10 members it had back then. Stewardship promotion has been taken up by the SBC Stewardship Commission.

The Executive Committee no longer sends checks to the convention agencies that receive Cooperative Program funds. Now the committee's bank wires the money to the agencies' banks.

In just the two decades since she has been bookkeeper, SBC Cooperative Program receipts have climbed from \$22,570,858 in 1965 to \$117,526,691 in 1984-85. All together, \$2,014,703,120—including Cooperative Program and designated funds—has passed through the Executive Committee during her bookkeeping tenure.

But changes don't tell the whole story.

For every summer except one since 1957, the soft-spoken belle of Baptist bookkeepers has traveled to the SBC annual meeting. One of her primary tasks has been to help publish the "Daily Bulletin" which is provided to messengers each day of each convention meeting. A consistent memory of SBC meetings—blurred by its repetition—is of blinding hours in printshops around the country, proofreading copy, she jokes.

Another constant in Ada Ruth Kelly's life has been the way Cooperative Program funds have been disbursed to the various SBC agencies. Even with the advent of the computer for other functions, "we still use the same peg-board system that was designed by the Burroughs Corp. especially for the Executive Committee," she says.

Another unswerving element of her years in Southern Baptist life has been her appreciation for Baptist people. She's especially fond of memories of one bona-fide legend with whom she has worked.

One of her early-year assignments was to be part-time secretary for Austin Crouch, the committee's first executive secretary—widely credited with saving Southern Baptists from financial ruin during the Great Depression—who then was executive secretary emeritus.

"Although his hearing and eyesight were poor, Dr. Crouch still made his daily rounds, just to check on everybody," she remembers. "He paid attention, too. If it appeared you weren't feeling well, he'd leave for a minute and invariably come back with an aspirin or cough drop. And he always showed concern for my children, who were young then. I still treasure some of the books he gave them."

Crouch was 87 years old and on a trip in 1957 when Kelly was assigned to work with him part-time. When he returned to Nashville, they spent a September afternoon talking about plans for work he wanted to do and how she could help.

Later that evening she learned he was killed when he was struck by a car while getting off a city bus near his home. "It was such a shock," she recalls. "He was a great man, so kind and thoughtful."

Kind and thoughtful only start the terms of endearment Kelly's co-workers cite about her.

"When I came to the Executive Committee in 1979, almost immediately I felt she was a person in whom I could place a great deal of confidence," says Harold C. Bennett, president of the committee. "She is trustworthy and reflects a great deal of responsibility," noting financial records Kelly has kept for the convention always have received unqualified audit reports.

"Her personal outlook on her work with the Executive Committee has been positive and enthusiastic," he says.

"This has not been just a job, but a calling for Ada Ruth," adds Porter Routh, Bennett's successor who worked with Kelly for 28 years. "She also always has been very faithful to her church.

"She was always dependable," Routh continues. "People would say how much money I handled, but I didn't. Ada Ruth Kelly did. Southern Baptists always could be certain she sent every penny where it was supposed to go. She embodied integrity."

Bennett, Routh and others rest assured Ada Ruth Kelly will remain the same in retirement as she has in her career. Even with a new college degree in the future, that's not likely to change.

--30--

Southern Seminary VP  
Badgett Dillard Dies

Baptist Press  
3/31/86

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Badgett Dillard, executive vice president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, died March 29 in Louisville, Ky., following a battle with cancer. He was 57.

Dillard was on Southern seminary's administrative staff for more than three decades. He was named director of publicity in 1953. He held four other seminary posts before he was named vice president for business affairs in 1972. In 1982 the executive vice president title was added to his business responsibilities.

Prior to joining the seminary staff, Dillard was minister of education at First Baptist Church of Gainesville, Ga.

A native of Jackson County, N.C., Dillard earned an undergraduate degree at Berea College in Berea, Ky., which last year honored him as Alumnus of the Year. He earned graduate degrees from Southern seminary, the University of Louisville and Indiana University.

An active member of Louisville's Walnut Street Baptist Church, Dillard was named Layman of the Year by the Long Run Baptist Association in 1981.

Dillard has been listed in Who's Who in Religion, Kentucky Lives, and Who's Who in American College and University Administration.

He is survived by his wife, the former Polly Hargis, and two children, Stephen and Ayn, all of Louisville.

--30--

Church-Starting Can Erode  
Decline In Denomination

By Joe Westbury

Baptist Press  
3/31/86

ATLANTA (BP)--With their rising affluence, Southern Baptists have written off working-class America to charismatic denominations and stand in danger of declining if they don't rediscover their grassroots population base, participants at a conference on starting churches were told.

"We have lost folks from Southern Baptist life because we could not speak to them in their language because of our increasing social status," Jack Redford, director of the church extension division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, told the conference at Dunwoody Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta.

Acknowledging most SBC churches level off in membership at 10 years of age and 90 percent of Southern Baptist churches are not growing at all, Redford called for a national thrust in church-starting by the denomination's 37,000 congregations.

"If we don't figure a way to get these churches off that plateau, we're going to follow in the footsteps of other mainline denominations which are declining in membership. We have to hurry up and reach new folks for Christ," he stressed.

--more--



The denomination's ministerial backlog is more than adequate with a current supply of 15,000 pastors who are inactive for a variety of reasons and with 2,500 annual Baptist college and seminary graduates who are seeking a pastoral ministry. "I can't believe God would call this many people to service and there not be an avenue of ministry for them," he added.

Nelson Tilton, director of the board's church starting department, said research shows new churches grow faster and reach more people than established churches.

"Old churches do not normally reach a community's new population for a variety of reasons," he said, adding, the primary reason is because the church power structure is not conducive to assimilating new members and the social structure already has been established around cliques.

Some churches simply have lost their vision and need a challenge in their ministry, Tilton said. Those churches have excellent opportunities to share the gospel by sponsoring new missions in their community.

Harry Fowler, a consultant for Creative Growth Dynamics of Raleigh, N.C., reported the number of churches of all denominations in the United States declined between 1900 and 1986, falling from one for every 370 residents to one for every 833.

"The United States is the world's fourth largest mission field behind the Soviet Union, China and India," he added.

America is not the "Christian nation" most people think it is, Fowler said. He cited statistics that showed North Carolina is 53 percent unchurched while West Virginia is 80 percent unchurched. Texas alone has seven million non-Christians, he added.

Conference participants heard from a slate of pastors and a director of missions who gave practical insight into launching new churches.

Jim Chavis, pastor of the host church, admitted at one time as a pastor he was afraid of starting new missions.

"As a pastor, I have to admit that church starting is a threat to my security, particularly when I have to give up some of my strongest members," he said. "Each pastor has to struggle with deciding to build an ecclesiastical empire or to follow the New Testament example of starting new churches.

"One Sunday morning as we began a mission, we gutted an entire young married department. They and their tithes just disappeared from our congregation," he explained. "But the Lord has since showed us a ministry church established, on its feet and ready to call its first pastor."

Dunwoody Baptist Church, where Chavis has been pastor for 13 years, has become a pioneer in the field by adding a full-time church starter to its staff. The congregation already has passed its goal of beginning three new churches this decade and is expected to double that figure by 1990.

Chavis testified that much to his surprise, church-starting did not deplete his congregation but actually increased his membership and budget receipts.

The conference was sponsored jointly by the SBC Home Mission Board church extension division and Dunwoody Baptist Church.

—30—

Missionary Works Hard  
To Become Unemployed

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
3/31/86

MT. SHASTA, Calif. (BP)—Philip Nall worked himself out of his last two jobs and hopes he can do that again.

While planning to lose a job may seem an unusual goal for a young husband and father, Nall sees it as successful completion of mission effort.

—more—

In 1982, Nall resigned his seven-and-one-half-year position as minister of music and youth at Del Cerro Baptist Church in San Diego. He and his wife, Gay, sold their home and furniture, bought a motor home and moved with their two small children to Pleasant Hill, Calif.

Such a drastic change in lifestyle was a dream come true for Nall. He had been touched by the needs he saw as he took youth and adults on mission trips over the years. Now he would do full time what many experience for only a week or so each year. But for such a full-time endeavor, Nall has had to find churches and individuals who would help support him.

Nall typifies the spirit of "Musicians on Mission," a five-year Bold Mission Thrust emphasis of the church music department of the Baptist Sunday School Board. Through the emphasis, musicians are urged to use their gifts to share the gospel of Christ on mission fields in their communities and in mission service in the United States and around the world. It's all part of the Bold Mission Thrust plan to tell everyone on earth about Christ by the year 2000.

"There are not too many people who should do what I'm doing," he acknowledges. "Financially, it doesn't make any sense. I was comfortable in my job and had a good salary. I lost 70 percent of my income."

But Nall saw the benefits in terms other than money. "The need is so great and the people are so appreciative of what you do," he says. "I went into it knowing the churches each would have their own set of needs."

Nall says working in churches that cannot afford a second staff person provides "a training program for the churches. It shows them what another staff person can do, what it is like to have a greater variety of programs and what the cost would be."

At Pleasant Hill, he worked at Grace Community Baptist Church, a mission whose pressing need was for property. In addition to establishing a children's choir, worship choir, adult ensemble, a church training program and helping lead all Sunday school teachers to earn leadership diplomas, Nall spent a lot of time working with the city government to meet zoning and permit requirements for church property. "That freed the pastor to visit, study and preach," he says.

After a year, he moved again.

At First Baptist Church of Arleta, Calif., Nall worked on the "rebirth" of a church that had dwindled to a handful of members. For two years he helped remodel the too-large sanctuary to obtain added classrooms and was music, youth and education minister.

He reports now the church has grown and supports three part-time leaders—one for each of the roles he had.

Today, he is at First Baptist Church of Mt. Shasta, Calif., a small congregation in a town of 3,500 people. Although there are several other evangelical churches in town, Nall says First Baptist is the only church that has a choir. He has helped establish a church council and a full Wednesday night program, complete with fellowship supper, Sunday school weekly workers' meeting and choir practice.

"I want to be able to walk away from this church knowing it is strong enough to support the staff it needs," he says.

When his work as a Mission Service Corps volunteer in Mt. Shasta ends in another year and a half, he plans to return to a full-time church position. While his family has supported the economic hardships and short-term friendships that have come with their style of mission service, Nall feels his children will need a permanent home for their teenage years.

"I love what I'm doing," he reflects. "I've worked in 12 Southern Baptist churches. That experience needs to be used in whatever the Lord calls me to do."

But for now, Nall continues working toward a goal "to create a position in this church that I would want, and then to be able to walk away."

LYNN MAY  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
901 COMMERCE  
NASHVILLE, TN 37203

901 Commerce #750  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

**BAPTIST PRESS**

