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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 2, 1986

86-64

Charlotte's Cave Joins
Episcopal Priesthood

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)—Julian Cave, senior minister at St. John's Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C., has resigned his congregation to become an Episcopal priest.

Cave has been pastor of the 1,500-member church 11 years. His resignation will be effective May 31, when he will begin an internship at Holy Comforter Episcopal Church in Charlotte.

"Believe me, the break with Baptists is most painful," Cave told The Charlotte Observer.

He has worked closely with Bishop Robert Estill and Suffragan Bishop Frank Vest of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina in developing his new vocational plans, he said. After the internship in Charlotte, he will spend the 1986-87 academic year at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, "to get immersed in the Episcopal experience."

Both Vest and Marse Grant, editor emeritus of the Biblical Recorder, newsjournal of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, said such denominational switches, although uncommon, had occurred before. They noted John Claypool, former pastor of Southern Baptist churches in Kentucky, Mississippi and Texas, became an Episcopal priest.

Cave, 52, has spent 30 years in Baptist ministry. He has been identified with the moderate-conservative faction within the Southern Baptist Convention and has championed social issue causes and ecumenical projects.

He cited the need for a stronger sense of community with fellow believers as part of the reason he moved to the Episcopal church.

"In Charlotte, though I spoke as a Baptist the (Mecklenburg Baptist) association would discount me as not being a bona fide Baptist," he said. "I have discovered that autonomy means isolation."

Cave has criticized the present leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention and has distanced himself from fundamental-conservative views he says rely on a too-literal interpretation of the Bible.

"Southern Baptists talk a lot about local autonomy, but when you exercise it, it really isolates you from the group," he explained. "You are free to be autonomous as long as the issues are peripheral and cosmetic, not serious or substantive."

"In the Episcopal church, quite frankly, there is an allowance for greater diversity. There's not that kind of pressure for conformity."

Cave's friends have said he was stung in 1983 when he was not reappointed to the 30-member SBC Christian Life Commission, although he was eligible for another four-year term.

The pastor affirmed his congregation, noting his denominational switch "is a statement about me and not you."

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Shared Ministry Brings
New Trust, Involvement

By Jim Lowry

RUSSELLVILLE, Ark. (BP)--Sunday morning pew-sitting does not make a person a part of church. Christians actively must participate in sharing ministry responsibilities, maintains Stephen Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church of Russellville, Ark.

"Our thinking is that we want to have a great ministry, not a great church," Davis continues, noting there is a new atmosphere of mutual trust and responsibility at First Baptist Church because of Shared Ministry, an emphasis which promotes on a biblical basis the development of healthy relationships between pastors, church staff, deacons and church members.

The emphasis affirms the pastor as the overseer/leader of the church who equips members for ministry. This multiplies the ministry of Christ through persons who lead by example.

Last fall, Davis and the other three staff members realized changes were needed if the church was to meet the community's needs, he explains.

After initial meetings and discussions with the deacons, 15 ministry needs were identified, from which six were selected as the most urgent ones to be included in their Shared Ministry effort. The six areas are prayer, single-parent children, senior adults, crisis outreach, counseling and sick persons. Deacons chose an area in which to work and soon realized help was needed.

"After the first month, the deacons came to me and said, 'We can't do everything. How can the church staff accomplish all that is needed?'" Davis reports they asked him. "We can't," was his honest reply.

During the first opportunity to sign up for one of the ministry groups, 153 church members said they wanted to help. In March of this year, church members met for the first time in the ministry groups. Training was led by professionals to give members better expertise to helping people they encounter.

"Sharing ministry generates a sense of value for what the church is all about," Davis explains. "Church members began to understand ministry.

"For instance, communication among our church members has been dramatically improved because the members of different ministry areas must share information to effectively do their work," he says. "The prayer ministry group needs regular reports from all the ministry areas to be effective. And someone in the crisis ministry will often find a person who needs counseling.

"This effort was not a project of the staff and deacons of the church, but the people's and the Lord's," Davis adds. "The people got a vision of what they can do. Now they don't want to miss an opportunity to pitch-in and help.

"There is no set formula for making Shared Ministry work," he continues. "The different goals, personalities and gifts of members require time to let God work with people. Shared Ministry gives church members a tangible avenue of expression for their Christianity. These ministries are how we can carry out the mission of our church.

"When the people began to understand ministry, our church also began to benefit financially," he says. "As people see practical places for their money to be spent, they are supportive.

"At first, nothing happened when we announced the Shared Ministry idea, but then it started. The people got their own vision because they had a whole new accountability to the Lord. With this kind of motivation, people are more ready to get involved.

"My role as pastor has been solidified and enhanced by Shared Ministry," he relates. "Church members are excited and challenged to follow me because they know they can make a difference."

Davis, who has been at First Baptist of Russellville two years, says he firmly believes his church is making a difference in its community, because other churches have contacted him to ask about Shared Ministry.

Shared Ministry is sponsored by the church administration department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

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

Churches Should Provide Counseling
For Farmers, Oil Workers

By Alan Hunt

Baptist Press
5/2/86

WACO, Texas (BP)—A "full-scale" counseling program should be launched by churches to help troubled farmers and workers in oil-related industries, a Texas agricultural official has suggested.

In a speech to Baylor University students about the ethical issues of the farm crisis, David Currie, special assistant with the Texas Department of Agriculture, said, "There are a lot of people that are hurting right now, and we, as Christians, should be caring about those people—regardless of why they got into that situation."

Nationwide, more than 2,000 farmers are "going under" every week, he said. In Texas alone, more than 49,000 farmers have "gone broke" since 1981.

"I am proposing to Texas churches that we try to get three or four Christian couples to act as volunteer field counselors in every county so that when we get a call on our farm crisis hotline, the volunteers can go out and meet with that individual or his or her family and start to give some encouragement," Currie said.

The crisis hotline was established by the Texas Department of Agriculture and the Texas Conference of Churches.

Under Currie's plan, the volunteers could help those in trouble find an attorney if they are facing bankruptcy or help them find a counselor if they are contemplating suicide or experiencing marital problems.

"We need to put together a full-scale ministry program like this to help these people—not only in agriculture, but in oil-related industries as well," he said.

Former pastor of First Baptist Church of Mason, Texas, Currie still preaches regularly. He also ranches 2,400 acres at Paint Rock, near Abilene, Texas, raising sheep and cattle.

He told students a "moral commitment" is needed to save the family farm. "If you just let nature take its course—some people call it good old free enterprise, I call it corporate socialism—the family farm is going to be doomed. It's not going to exist," he warned.

"We have a moral commitment in this country that people should be able to own their own homes. We structure things to make that possible for most people. I think we're going to have to make the same commitment here. We are going to have to say that having people own and operate farms and ranches is good for democracy, it's good for the economy, it keeps employing people, it keeps towns alive, it ensures our food security—and we want that in this country," Currie said.

Agricultural programs should be restructured to allow farmers and ranchers to keep their farms and ranches, he said. He suggested other steps, including an "aggressive and creative marketing campaign" by the farm industry and an education program aimed at consumers.

"You need to understand, for example, that a loaf of bread isn't made at Safeway. We need to educate consumers about our agricultural system—how it works and how it affects them," Currie said. "But we also then have to educate the farmers—trying to help them get out of this jam...and helping them diversify and grow other crops."

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If the farm crisis is allowed to continue, the future of rural America will be threatened, Currie said. With the demise of rural America will go the security of future food supplies—a consequence no one wants to live with.

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(Hunt is a writer in the Baylor office of public relations.)

Convocation Challenges SBC
To Stress Literacy Missions

By Sherri Anthony Brown

Baptist Press
5/2/86

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—One out of three adults in the United States cannot read or write; 60 million people are functionally illiterate.

The first literacy convocation, celebrating 25 years of Southern Baptist Home Mission Board involvement in literacy, opened with these statistics and the challenge to "be the presence of God" through literacy missions.

Christine Gregory, first vice president of the Baptist World Alliance, told 300 participants literacy missions revitalized the Woman's Missionary Union in her church 25 years ago.

"I was so turned off by WMU at that time," said Gregory, who later became national WMU president. "But that first year of literacy missions helped me realize what we could do."

Gregory said involvement in literacy work helps women experience missions personally: "Truth that is not experienced is no better than error; and it may be more dangerous. Don't worry about who you are or what people say of you. Listen to God. Be obedient to him."

In a later session, Carolyn Weatherford, WMU executive director, listed actions necessary to become involved in literacy missions.

"The knowledge that leads to action is the knowledge of peoples' needs," Weatherford said. "This leads the 'haves' to join with the 'have nots.'"

The second action is having an organization that doesn't care who gets the credit, she said. "We must also have love that is unconditional," she continued. "Not love that says 'I will help you if you clean up' or 'if you won't be lazy.' But love because God first loved us."

The final action, Weatherford said, is to practice servanthood that gives up all right to self.

During the final session, Olna Daves of Gastonia, N.C., told how she has taught people how to read for 22 years: "I found out there were 12,444 functional non-readers in Gaston County where I live. At night I would wonder how long it would take for all those people to march by my door. It still makes me shudder."

Daves has taught 33 people to read. Three of her students were high school graduates. She and 14 other people were honored for 20 or more years of literacy mission service.

"You are our heritage, and we thank you for giving yourselves to your students and to us," said Mildred Blankenship, assistant director of church and community ministries for the Home Mission Board. Blankenship presented the certificates of appreciation.

Others honored were Ada Young, Louisville, Ky.; Martha Wheeler, Tallahassee, Fla.; Waldo and Verda Wood, Gainesville, Fla.; Muriel Briggs, Memphis, Tenn.; Sue Stancil, Memphis, Tenn.; Lillian Isaacs, Tallahassee, Fla.; Mazie Walker, Macon, Ga.; Dorothy Johnson, Fredricksburg, Va.; Mrs. Phillip Kelley, Ft. Walton Beach, Fla.; Grace Faulkenberry, Clinchco, Va.; Mary Allred, Nashville, Tenn.; and Phil and Hasseltine Maxwell, Jacksonville, Fla.

Blankenship, who directs the literacy missions program nationally for the Home Mission Board, was awarded the first annual Mildred Blankenship award for 25 years service to literacy. Accepting the award, Blankenship said to the audience, "It couldn't have been done without all of you. This belongs to all of you."

'Deepen Your Commitment'
Autrey Tells Senior Adults

DALLAS (BP)—Senior adults need to deepen their commitment to "the faith that overcomes," said C.B. Autrey, former professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and one-time evangelism division director at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Autrey challenged Texas Baptist senior adults to share the gift of eternal life both through lifestyle and bold verbal witness during the Senior Adult Evangelism/Christian Life Conference at Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin April 28-29. The conference was co-sponsored by the Texas Christian Life Commission and the evangelism division of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

He related his experiences as a pioneer mission pastor in Utah to illustrate God's power to overcome disability. He recalled that in four years and 10 months in the Mormon-dominated area, the young church grew from three members to 659 and started two additional missions.

"With all the circumstances working against us, with all the disabilities, God brought the victory," Autrey said.

He noted the evidence of the Holy Spirit's coming is "your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams," but he discounted the notion that the dreams are recollections of past glories.

"You will dream that you are 35 years old again, you will get up and act like you're 35 years old, and you'll get up and witness like you're 35 years old," said Autrey. When he offered a call to commitment to "speak forth the truth of God," senior adults lined the altar.

"There are enough people at the altar to turn this state upside-down," Autrey said.

In the opening service, Travis Berry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Plano, Texas, characterized witnessing as "something that gets better as life goes on." He said being a real witness means being "a voice saying what we know to be true...a sample of what you want other people to become" and a "laborer together with the Spirit of God."

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Volunteerism Makes Impact
On Kansas-Nebraska Baptists

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
5/2/86

TOPEKA, Kan. (BP)—Southern Baptists in Kansas and Nebraska learned first-hand this spring old-fashioned volunteerism is alive and thriving in the Southern Baptist Convention.

An overwhelming response to missions needs was evident as 180 persons from 14 states gave music assistance to 118 of the 296 churches and missions in the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists.

During a Musicians on Mission Workshop, sponsored jointly by the state convention and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church music department, a commissioning service April 19 in Wichita, Kan., formalized the commitment of the volunteer musicians.

The vocalists, instrumentalists and music ministers paid their own expenses and took vacation days to assist with Good News America revivals and training needs.

The geographic distances involved in some music missions opportunities prompted one layman to coordinate free air travel from Wichita for the volunteers. Randy Hardy, marketing manager for Wilco, Inc., and a member of Wichita's Metropolitan Baptist Church, arranged for the services of seven Cessna 210 aircraft and pilots. He said the round-trip travel would exceed 4,500 miles and saved more than \$3,000 in travel expenses.

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One volunteer, Peggy Portillo, head of the music department at the Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary in San Antonio, Texas, spent a week at the Spanish Baptist Mission in Ulysses, Kan. Portillo made demonstration tapes of unfamiliar hymns, brought books and tapes to add to the music library and showed instrumentalists how to transpose music to accompany singers.

Manuel Perez, pastor of the church, said Portillo's visit "gave us a better appreciation of music in the church. The classes she taught on music in the Bible showed that music was used in early Bible times. She drew pictures so we could visualize instruments mentioned in the Old Testament.

"She helped us a lot with the hymnal, to know about the indexes and the histories behind the hymns," he added.

The Spanish Baptist Mission, with a membership of 121, has had only a youth choir, but Perez said because of Portillo's work, "we'll start an adult choir."

David Lewis, a music evangelist and pastor of Proctor's Chapel Baptist Church in Rocky Mount, N.C., assisted career home missionary Dennis Hampton, based in Atkinson, Neb.

Lewis presented vocal and guitar concerts in ranch fellowships and mission churches, travelling an average of 200 miles a day and reaching about 550 persons.

Ingathering had been humbling, Lewis said. "We forget some of the early beginnings of our churches. They don't have the material provisions that some of our churches do, but the spirit is good."

In one Bible study gathering, he said, persons sat on two- by eight-foot planks supported by stumps. They heard him sing in a utility shed, heated by a corn-cob-burning heater.

Cattle ranchers and their families listened with rapt attention to Lewis' renditions of traditional hymns and original compositions.

Hampton said Lewis' music "is the kind of viable cultivative tool that works here. Everything has to be by lifestyle, and his style fits our culture."

A full day's drive southwest of Atkinson, Ed Wyatt and his wife, Joyce, of First Baptist Church of Seminole, Texas, spent two weeks working in the Kaw Valley (Kansas) Association.

A piano tuner, Wyatt spent his days tuning and repairing the sometimes antiquated instruments in churches and missions in eight different towns. Each night, they provided instrumental and vocal music for area revival services.

In eastern Kansas, at the Haskell Indian Mission in Lawrence, Charles and Mary Peak, Cherokee Indians from First Baptist Church of Moore, Okla., worked with Cloyd Harjo, a Creek Indian and pastor of the mission.

The mission choir, predominately students from the Haskell Indian Junior College, learned from Charles Peak about sight reading and song leading, while during the day the mission's children benefitted from the teaching of Mary Peak.

Harjo said the Peaks' work will "help these young people take leadership in Bible studies. Many will have no other Christians at home or participating in the summer missions work some will do after the school year ends."

Harry Taylor, director of the Kansas-Nebraska convention's church music department, described the contribution of volunteers to churches and missions as immeasurable and predicted "the commitment of musicians and the receptivity of the churches will strengthen us."

R. Rex Lindsay, executive director of the two-state convention, observed the volunteer musicians "brought an enthusiasm and excitement that has been caught by our people. They have enlivened our worship experience, enriched our lives and enhanced our image with, and witness to, the people of our communities."

A comprehensive measurement of intensive Christian volunteerism across such a wide geographic area of heartland American may never be completed. A sample of the long-term value, however, can be seen in the smiles of Christians enjoying the rare chance to sing hymns together and heard in the voices of newly converted Indians singing "Oh, magnify the Lord, for he is worthy to be praised."

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

Hubbard Believes Media
Will Strengthen Preaching

Baptist Press
5/2/86

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—The "electric church" ultimately may strengthen the local church by leading to more meaningful worship, said David Allen Hubbard, president of Fuller Theological Seminary.

Hubbard recently presented the E.Y. Mullins lectures on preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. During an interview at the seminary, Hubbard explained media will make an impact on preaching by challenging pastors to be better communicators.

"If I am going to talk about family life, I'd better be pretty good for a congregation that's going to watch James Dobson on film next weekend," he said. "My wife and I watch Lloyd Ogilvie most of the time on Sunday morning at 8. When we go off to First Baptist Church, I hope my pastor is aware that one of America's greatest preachers is available to us while we are sipping a second cup of coffee in the morning. That means we have to take preaching in the congregation more seriously, because the best people in the land are instantly available to us."

Hubbard said he also believes churches can utilize new media technologies to broaden the local church's ministry. One example he cited is use of videotaped services for shut-ins and hospitalized members.

He expressed hope the media will stimulate churches to a "more lively experience of fellowship" in worship. "That is the thing we can offer most in contrast to the media, where you are there in isolation to watch a performance," he said, claiming many churches are guilty of just such a worship style, with worshippers becoming spectators rather than participants.

"In our free-church tradition, particularly as Baptists, we talk of the priesthood of believers, then we non-priest every believer in church," he asserted. "They don't go there as priests; they go as spectators. The pastor and choir do the whole thing, and we don't give them much opportunity to offer their sacrifices of praise to God.

"I think we are denying our own theology by the way we conduct our worship."

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Christians Must Take
Church To Resorts

By Leisa A. Hammett

Baptist Press
5/2/86

LYNCHBURG, Va. (BP)—The resort and leisure movement of the late 1970's created a unique culture and new challenges for evangelical Christians, a Southern Baptist resort and leisure ministries consultant told participants in a resort ministries seminar.

And the challenges will continue, said Chuck Clayton, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board national resort and leisure ministries specialist. By year 2000 tourism is predicted to be the world's largest industry, boasting two billion tourists annually, he said.

"To reach people who live the resort and leisure lifestyle with the good news of Jesus Christ," he said, "Christians are going to have to go to those areas."

Clayton and nearly 70 Southern Baptist laypeople, pastors and missionaries from resort settings across the nation met at Eagle Eyrie Baptist Assembly in Lynchburg, Va., to share their ideas, frustrations and successes in reaching tourists, resort employees and residents with the gospel.

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Bob Raus, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor of church recreation, said about 60 percent of Baptist congregations also are not in church on Sundays because of leisure pursuits--boating, camping, fishing, and so forth. Societal pressures practically force people to have recreational outlets, he explained.

Southern Baptist churches stem from a rural culture, said Clayton. "In the past a person could not go very far--their life and work demanded that they be back in time to milk the cow, gather eggs, water stock or tend the store," he said. "Today people identify themselves by the way they play."

Clayton observed the historic Protestant work ethic is segregating churches from people leading the resort/leisure lifestyle. The leisure phenomenon throws a kink into church visitations. The people visited either are not at home or they will not be at church on Sunday because it does not fit into their resort and leisure lifestyle.

"Southern Baptists historically operate from the strong work ethic and the traditional values stance. Out of that we try to communicate the Christian faith to people who are of a totally different mindset," he said.

"The leisure lifestyle," claimed Clayton, "is as unique as an ethnic culture. It is a mission field.... One of the places to reach secular America is to go where they play."

Christians also must understand a church worship service is probably the last place that a person who is paying \$27 for a ski lift ticket in Vail, Colo., wants to go, he said. People go to resort areas to escape their problems. But instead of escaping them, they bring them along--loneliness, isolation, family crises.

"Resorts have all the trappings of urban culture--crowds, noise, technology amid a pastoral setting," he explained. "They are not looking for God or to be preached to, but they come with needs and aspirations."

Opportunities for resort missions, said Clayton, include any setting or special event where people spend leisure time--usually away from their private residence. Southern Baptist resort ministers--laity and clergy--currently are ministering at raceways, flea markets, ski slopes, theme parks and festivals. Their ministries include giving free water, counseling, witnessing, forming relationships, performing and event participation.

Effective resort missions include more than clowns and puppets, a ministry of presence, said Clayton. "It takes a balance of church planting--which must be an indigenous congregation--evangelism and ministry to reach people and communicate about a God that loves and cares for them.

"There are a lot of people who do not know Jesus...in resort settings as well as metropolitan areas. The important thing," Clayton concluded, "is that we reach them with the message of Jesus."

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Son Of FMB Official
Killed In Car Crash

Baptist Press
5/2/86

RAINELLE, W.Va. (BP)--Lewis Gray Myers, the 23-year-old son of Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board staff member Lewis I. Myers, died early May 1 when the car he was driving collided with a truck on U.S. Highway 60 in West Virginia. The truck driver was not injured.

Myers was enroute from Richmond, Va., to Louisville, Ky., to visit friends. He had been working at a ski lodge in the Aspen, Colo., area, and had come to Richmond to visit his family and attend the April 26 wedding of his sister, Margaret.

He was born in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) while his parents were missionaries in Vietnam. The family later moved to Richmond, where his father has worked in several Foreign Mission Board staff positions, most recently as director of the new Cooperative Services International office.

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Myers attended the University of Virginia in Charlottesville for several years after finishing high school in Richmond, and recently had been planning to complete his studies.

He is survived by his father; his mother, Toni; two sisters and a brother.

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Brotherhood Trustees
Approve 1986-87 Budget

Baptist Press
5/2/86

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)—Trustees of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission approved a 1986-87 operating budget of \$3,285,188 for the agency and received staff reports on a wide range of topics during their April 25-26 meeting.

Income for funding the budget includes a projected amount of \$924,000 from the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program and \$2,097,578 from sales of materials.

The program services division of work at the Brotherhood Commission will receive \$1,398,798 of the budget to develop and implement the agency's plan to help churches involve men and boys in missions. It will take \$666,100 to fund administrative services; \$610,410 for business services and \$583,880 for support services.

Brotherhood Commission President James H. Smith told trustees he was "never more positive about anything in life than I am about what's going on here in terms of how this agency will help the laity impact the world for Christ in the future."

They also listened to reports on the Fellowship of Baptist Men, a Brotherhood enlargement campaign, and the seventh national Pioneer Royal Ambassador Congress to be held in Memphis, Aug. 4-6, 1986.

In his remarks, Smith described the excitement with the Fellowship of Baptist Men which provides missions opportunities according to men's gifts, vocations and special interests. He said the fellowship is like a "parallel track to units of Baptist men in local churches."

"Under the umbrella of Brotherhood, men will be given the opportunity to study missions, have Christian fellowship and to get involved in missions as never before," he added.

In his report on the Brotherhood enlargement campaign, Charles Ragland, Florida Brotherhood director and chairman of the enlargement committee, said the major thrust of the effort will be to start new units of work in local churches. "We want to help pastors get the concept of what it's like to have every man and boy involved in missions through Brotherhood," he said.

More than 500 men and boys already have registered for the national Royal Ambassador Congress with more than 2,500 expected to attend, according to Russell Griffin, director of the children and youth department at the Brotherhood Commission.

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North American Baptists Visit
Kiev At Time Of Nuclear Incident

Baptist Press
5/2/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—Eleven North American Baptists who were in the Soviet Union city of Kiev at the time of the nuclear accident at nearby Chernobyl reported they did not know about the accident until at least two days later.

Reinhold J. Kerstan, leader of the Baptist World Alliance-sponsored tour group, has since been tested and found to have above-normal radiation exposure.

The group which Kerstan led spent the weekend of April 26-28 in Kiev, 60 miles south of Chernobyl. They arrived some time after the nuclear reactor failed on Saturday, but they did not learn of the problem until they were in Moscow the following Monday. All but two members of the group returned to the United States April 31, leaving the others in Paris.

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When he arrived home, Kerstan, director of promotion and development for the alliance, based in the metropolitan Washington suburb of McLean, Va., had fatigue and throat irritation--quite usual symptoms following such visits with their heavy schedules of speaking to churches and religious organizations.

On May 1, he underwent five hours of testing at the George Washington University radiation safety center in Washington, where initial results from thyroid examinations showed radiation absorption above normal, although "not at a danger level."

By the time Kerstan had his examination, it was too late for iodine or other precautionary treatment. However, medical experts said the abnormally high radiation "could disappear within four weeks" and promised further results from hair, skin and membrane tests within 48 hours. Kerstan's clothing and shoes were examined carefully. The shoes he wore during the time he was in Kiev retained considerable radiation.

He said life in Kiev, the third-largest city in the Soviet Union, seemed quite normal during the time the group was there.

"The only apparently unusual thing was a world championship bicycle race which brought huge crowds into the streets and obvious preparations for the national observance of May 1st in the USSR," he said. But he recalls seeing and hearing numerous ambulances along the race course.

"My first thoughts were that the Ukrainians really were guarding against any injury to the international athletic competitors," Kerstan said. He believes, in retrospect, emergency squads were using the avenues laid off in advance for the cycle race to bring injured persons from the Chernobyl sector into the Kiev area for treatment.

"We were shocked that we were not told" of the nuclear accident, said J. Dalton Havard, pastor of Sugar Creek Baptist Church in Sugar Land, Texas, and a member of the group. "It was rather shocking to think that we might have been wading around in it (the radioactivity) and it was...days when we found out about it."

Meanwhile, the BWA group took part in Sunday worship at two of the several Baptist churches in and around Kiev. Before leaving for Moscow April 28, Kerstan held talks on Baptist World Alliance concerns and the ministries carried out by some 2,500 Baptist churches in the Ukraine.

"If any of the Kiev Baptists had any knowledge of the Chernobyl incident, they offered no hint of it," Kerstan said. "I think nobody knew."

Other than an overnight hotel stop in Moscow before returning home, the group concluded its USSR visit in Kiev. Earlier they had visited Baptist churches in Tbilisi, Sochi and Odessa.

People in a larger BWA party meanwhile were visiting Baptist centers in the central Asian cities of Irkutsk, Alma Ata and Tashkent. None of the North Americans realized anything extraordinary had occurred until they boarded the Air France liner in Moscow, where western newspapers were distributed to passengers.

"We saw our first reports of the incident in reading the pages of Le Monde, Frankfurter Allgemeine and International Herald Tribune," Kerstan said.

Besides Kerstan and Havard, members of the Kiev portion of the tour were Calvin and Jamie Dunham of Kingston Springs, Tenn.; Mr. and Mrs. Jamie Jackson of Sugar Land; Ruben Bakko of Santa Clara, Calif.; Lou Rose and Sasha Woolery of San Jose, Calif.; and Al and Kent Stover of Kelowna, British Columbia.

Kerstan has contacted the other tour members regarding the results of his examinations.

"Of much greater importance than any radiation exposure, however, was our exposure to the real life of people in the Soviet Union, especially to Christian believers with whom we worshipped in their churches," Kerstan claimed.

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