



- - 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. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

May 5, 1986

86-65

Long-Term Commitment Needed
To Solving Problems: Huff

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptists would prefer a "fast fix and a fast cure" to the problems besetting the denomination, SBC Second Vice President Henry Huff said in Nashville.

Instead, what is needed is a long-term commitment to the priorities of missions, evangelism and biblical truth, Huff said in chapel services for employees at the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Southern Baptist Convention building.

"Southern Baptists have a great heritage of religious freedom, of unity in diversity and of doing a very effective job in missions and evangelism," said Huff, an attorney and member of Crescent Hill Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky. "Is our priority today in evangelizing the world with the Bible as our guide, or is our priority being certain that everyone believes the same thing before they can go out and evangelize?"

"What today is the real priority of Southern Baptists?" he asked.

"You would probably hear from Southern Baptist Convention people that it is witnessing to the lost, soul-winning and nurturing of those people who are in our congregations," said Huff. However, he contrasted SBC baptism statistics which have shown a marked decline in recent years.

"It is not that we have lost our way but that there is not much work being done," said Huff. "Certainly I do not feel we can be effective soul winners when we are preoccupied doing battle with one another."

"I am not sure when you are witnessing to an unsaved individual that the person neither knows nor cares in which camp you belong. I am not sure when you feed the hungry in Ethiopia that they care whether this came from a conservative or a fundamentalist," said Huff.

As an example of inability to maintain long-term commitments, Huff cited Bold Mission Thrust, the denomination's effort to win the world to Christ by the year 2000 which was launched in 1980.

"There have been a great many results that this program has already achieved and yet we find that a program that is going to last some 20 years is something that does not appeal too well to the American people," said Huff. "We would like by the means of electronics to reach the world for Christ within the next few months."

"It is not that Southern Baptists have rejected the idea of Bold Mission Thrust," he continued. "It is just that it is a program that is a long time in developing and a long time in seeing the results."

In the current denominational controversy, Huff said one side wants to conserve the Word of God while the other side wants to build bridges to others. One potential problem with the first is isolation from the world while a pitfall of the second is becoming too much like the world.

However, he emphasized, "We need both sides."

"I believe most Southern Baptists devoutly hope and pray every day that the problems that beset us would be left behind, that we could go to Bold Mission Thrust, that we could make Planned Growth in Giving work, that we could use our simultaneous revivals not only as a witness but as a healing mechanism among Baptists," said Huff.

---more---

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES**

Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tenn.

"However, I would be less than honest if I did not state that I do not feel that this is the way we are presently headed. There are divisions in Southern Baptist life. Whether or not we can live with the diversity we have is something that I hope we can soon resolve," he added.

At the same time, Huff predicted that with Southern Baptists' increasing penetration among ethnic groups, "we must recognize that diversity will increase rather than decrease."

As a Sunday school teacher for 35 years and a user of literature produced by the Sunday School Board, Huff said he could appreciate the difficulty of producing materials to meet the needs of a diverse denomination.

"Of all the agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Sunday School Board is the one that holds Southern Baptists together," he said. "There is no one that wraps around the lives of all of our people like the Sunday School Board and its many publications and materials."

He noted the board, like all agencies, is being attacked from all sides and cannot please everyone. "Commitment toward God and competency and intelligence will in the long run show and be plain to be seen by all of our people," he said.

Huff, whose great grandfather donated the land on which Mars Hill College (Baptist college in North Carolina) was built, said, "I would profess to be a Baptist of very long standing. It does not change with the changing tides of motions and resolutions."

He called on Baptists to give priority to developing "a relationship over the entire length of our life with God, a relationship that is both personal and meaningful and can fulfill our lives.

"Priorities simply tell us where we want to go and how we want to get there. Are we willing to pay the price? Are the things that we say really the things that we do?" he concluded.

In introducing Huff, Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder praised the second vice president "for speaking very encouraging support of Bold Mission Thrust and the work of the Peace Committee."

Elder said he had invited the president and the two vice presidents of the convention to speak at the board this spring. President Charles Stanley was unable to accept. First Vice President Winfred Moore will speak in late May.

—30—

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

Churches Springing Up
Across West Africa

By Eric Miller

Baptist Press
5/5/86

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—They start in homes or schools, sometimes under thatched roofs, but "little churches are springing up all over West Africa," reports a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board official.

John Mills, the board's director for West Africa, visited nine West African countries this spring. The "most heartening thing for me to see" was the emerging of the "little embryo churches," he says.

Some churches start with a dozen members, maybe 25. That may seem small, but "you've got to measure progress not only by where you've arrived, but by the distance you've come," he says.

Mills noticed a warm enthusiasm among churches in West Africa. A church starts and then "starts another church that will start another church."

Missionaries "don't have a thing to do with a lot of the churches that start," he notes. "We can't do it. We're not enough. The multiplication of churches is the real hope of winning Africa."

—more—

Much of the warm enthusiasm among West Africans has come about "because they realize how much the missionaries of the Southern Baptists do care because of the help rendered during the drought" last year, Mills believes.

Burkina Faso suffered the worst drought in 30 years, and Southern Baptists distributed more than 6,000 tons of grain in that country last year. Southern Baptists also prayed for rain and rains came.

Since last year, six churches have developed in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, almost doubling the number related to Southern Baptists in that nation's capital.

A dental clinic built recently in Bobo-Dioulasso is expected to draw people from all over Burkina Faso and neighboring countries. Few adequate dental clinics exist in the country, and the Southern Baptist clinic is the best equipped, Mills says.

After a national asked the Southern Baptist dentist if he could have a tooth pulled, the dentist said he would have to wait two weeks for the clinic to open. The national said, "No problem. I can wait. It's been hurting for five years." Many people there have never seen a dentist.

Also in Burkina Faso, where plowing is done with a short-handled hoe, missionaries are introducing the process of plowing with oxen. "You've got to go with an appropriate technology," Mills says. "If you try to go from a short-handled hoe to a tractor, you haven't helped the man. He can't buy a tractor, and if you gave one to him, he couldn't buy fuel or wouldn't know how to drive it."

Along the eastern Mono River area in Togo where the North Carolina partnership is working, there may soon be as many baptized church members as in all of that country now, Mills says.

New believers in the Mono River area are "begging us to come start new churches," he reports. "Missionaries go down the road and people run to stop them just to say, 'Thank you, thank you, thank you'" for work missionaries and volunteers are doing.

Workers in the North Carolina partnership are finishing construction of a steel and concrete bridge across the Mono River. Once the bridge is ready for use, residents no longer will have to make a 75-mile detour to take crops to markets when the river level is up.

About 50 good wells have been drilled in the Mono River area. Ponds have been built to allow for fish farming and irrigation farming. Missionaries and volunteers have been teaching health and nutrition in the villages.

About 15 churches and 15 other preaching stations have been started in the same area. Between January and March, 392 people were baptized there.

In Dakar, Senegal, about 800 Muslims participate in weekly activities in a Southern Baptist center. Activities include sports, reading, discussion groups and Bible studies. About 200 participate in the Bible study each week.

A larger center is scheduled to be built that missionaries hope will attract about 2,000 Muslims per week in Dakar, which is "one of the most Muslim cities on earth," Mills says.

A "tremendous human need" exists across West Africa. "When we minister to them and obviously get nothing out of it ourselves, then they begin to say, 'Hey, why are you doing this?'

"There is a listening and a hearing of the gospel that doesn't come if you just go out and start preaching."

**Annuity Trustees Approve
New Building For 1988**

DALLAS (BP)—After nearly two years of study, trustees have authorized negotiations for lease of a new Southern Baptist Annuity Board home office near downtown Dallas.

The board will negotiate with a Dallas-based developer to design and construct a new building, said Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan. After an initial 20-year lease, the Annuity Board will have the option of extending the lease for another 20 years at competitive market rates.

The board will occupy about 110,000 feet and an expansion space of 30,000 feet will be included if needed in the future, Morgan said.

The new home office, located in the Oak Lawn/Turtle Creek area near downtown Dallas, is expected to be completed in the fall of 1988.

The Annuity Board will work with the developer in designing and overseeing the construction.

Morgan said the trustee relocation committee agreed with construction consultants the board should enter into a long-term lease in lieu of purchasing or constructing a new building.

"In keeping with the fiduciary responsibilities of the board," Morgan said, "we decided the optimum plan would be to lease a build-to-suit building in a location near the Dallas central business district."

Morgan said the board will have "several new amenities, such as free parking and easy access to expressways."

The current building was sold to Lincoln Properties, Inc., in 1984 at a record \$300 per square foot. A lease arrangement allows the board to remain in the building through 1988.

Morgan noted the present 26-year-old facility was sold because the property value had increased to allow the board to make a substantial profit. He also said the building had deteriorated and was becoming inefficient to operate.

The president accepted the resignation of endowment officer D. William Dodson, Jr., who is taking medical disability. Dodson underwent heart by-pass surgery in November. John D. Bloskas, associate endowment director, was appointed interim director.

Assets for the first quarter grew 26.7 percent to a record \$113.8 million, raising the asset base to \$1.8 billion, trustees learned.

Net income totaled \$101 million, exceeding any other previous first quarter earnings by \$56.9 million.

The strong stock market pushed the unit value of the Variable Fund to a record of \$6.21.

--30--

ABTS Commissioners
Adopt Record Budget

Baptist Press
5/5/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary adopted a record budget of \$287,800 for 1986-87 at its annual meeting in early May.

The budget represents only a 1.5 percent increase over the previous year, because the seminary commission received the smallest Cooperative Program increase of any Southern Baptist Convention agency.

Commission members serve as Southern Baptists' trustees for American Baptist College of the American Baptist Theological Seminary, a Bible college co-sponsored with the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.

--more--

Commission members voted to place \$5,000 in the George E. Capps Scholarship Fund at American Baptist College of American Baptist Theological Seminary. Capps, former associate director of the SBC Education Commission who died last June, was staff support for the American Baptist Theological Seminary Commission.

Kenneth L. Castleberry, pastor of Dalewood Baptist Church in Nashville, was elected chairman of the commission for 1986-87. Other officers include Marshall Gupton, pastor of Una Baptist Church in Nashville, vice chairman, and Roy D. Raddin, director of missions, Washington Baptist Association in Greenville, Miss., recording secretary.

The 1987 meeting of the seminary commission will be April 30 in Nashville.

—30—

Shurden Speaks At Samford
About 'Hee Haw Theology'

By Larry Yarborough Jr.

Baptist Press
5/5/86

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Simon Peter was the stumbling, bumbling Barney Fife of Mayberry, and Jesus, like Andy Griffith, was the only person in town who could always find the good in him.

This is how the late comic Grady Nutt perceived Simon Peter.

Walter B. Shurden quoted Nutt as once saying, "There is something within this nut worth unshelling." And that is exactly what Shurden did at Samford University.

Shurden, chairman of the department of Christianity and Callaway Professor of Christianity at Mercer University, Macon, Ga., was the guest speaker at Samford University's annual Staley Distinguished Christian Scholar Lecture Program.

Shurden, a close friend of the late Grady Nutt, spoke to Samford students about "Hee Haw Theology: The Legacy of Grady Nutt." Shurden told students that Grady Nutt, a regular on the "Hee Haw" television show, left "a legacy worth sharing."

According to Shurden, more Christians are uptight at church than anywhere else in the world.

"Grady Nutt had imagination," Shurden said. "That's something our pulpits lack today. Because Nutt was at peace with who he was, he had the ability to let his imagination run wild. He compared the relationship between Peter and James to that of Barney and Andy in Mayberry."

Humor made Nutt's theology unique. Shurden said that Nutt had the freedom to express humor because he accepted who he was and accepted others for who they were. He was at peace with himself because he had learned to be unashamed of his past.

"What a tragedy to deny your past and try to live like someone you're not," Shurden told students.

Shurden said that Nutt also was well acquainted with tragedy in life. He said that like many others, Grady Nutt found marriage long after the wedding.

Of Grady Nutt's relationship with his wife, Eleanor, Shurden quoted Nutt as saying, "Early on in our marriage, Eleanor and Grady were very much in love...with Grady. I erased the blackboard of her personality with a wet cloth and then wrote whatever I liked on it. And the more she ceased to be herself the less I liked/loved her."

"Grady Nutt realized that comedy and tragedy grow from a common root," Shurden said. "That root is what life is and what we know it could and should be."

Because Nutt accepted what his life was, he was comfortable enough to loosen up, make fun, and take great pleasure in helping others enjoy their lives.

Shurden said the essence of living for Nutt was to look back on the brink of death and with a solid smile say, "I'm glad I did that."

—30—

(Yarborough is a student at Samford University who works in the school's information office.)

LYNN MAY
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
901 COMMERCE
NASHVILLE, TN 37203

901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

BAPTIST PRESS

