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86-81

A Focus On People
Is Sample's Legacy

By Carol Garrett

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--"I'm like Will Rogers. I never met a person I didn't like," is the description Dorothy Sample gives of herself as she reflects on her tenure as national Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union president.

Sample's five-year term ends this June when new officers are elected at the WMU annual meeting in Atlanta.

A love for people has been the focus of Sample's presidency. "I think the greatest joy I've had has been seeing so many women all around the world in Woman's Missionary Union," she says.

Meeting those women has helped Sample realize the importance of giving God what you have, however ordinary your gifts may seem, and being willing to be used by him, she notes.

"I do believe that whatever any of us do, with God as the power in our lives, it will be something through which he will work. And there will be multiplication somewhere," she explains.

Women involved in WMU today are the result of "those who have gone before us letting God use them and multiply their efforts," she says.

For Sample, becoming WMU president was a matter of being willing to be used.

"When I was nominated, the human part of me didn't really want to be president. I had just gotten where I wanted to be professionally. I still had two teen-age children, and I was just at a place where I thought things would be comfortable," she recalls.

But she remembered a philosophy that began to develop years before as she hesitated to take an associational WMU job.

"I remembered a little verse in Ezekiel that said God looks for someone to stand in the gap. Somehow that just stuck with me. If you are the person to do a job, don't worry about those who could do it better, just go ahead and do what you can do," she says.

"Doing what she could do" has meant seeing the annual operating budget of WMU increase from \$5.2 million to almost \$9 million, revising the structure of the WMU executive board for greater effectiveness and helping direct the construction of a new national headquarters building.

"I think the building is one of the highlights of these five years. It's going to make a real difference in the rest of our history," she says.

Sample's focus on people led her as president to strengthen the "dual leadership" of WMU. "I think the genius of WMU has been the involvement of the laywomen. In other words, it is an organization of laywomen. We must maintain the partnership of those who professionally do WMU and the laywomen who really get the job done in the churches," she explains.

Sample says WMU must continue to minister to those laywomen "if we are going to bring these people along to be involved in missions. We've also got to minister to them where they are so they can take their eyes off themselves and be involved in ministering and witnessing to others."

Sample is confident WMU will stay true to its purpose of missions. "I just want us to keep doing what we've been doing for almost 100 years, but do it better, more effectively and involve more people so there will be more praying, giving and going than ever before," she says.

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When her term is over in June, Sample hopes to have more time for involvement in her Flint, Mich., church's WMU. People will continue to be her focus as she teaches and uses her doctorate in psychology to do mission action in her community. She also plans to have a time of spiritual, emotional and physical renewal.

After five years of "standing in the gap" as national WMU president, Dorothy Sample is ready for whatever the future holds. "I feel that you don't have to really push to know the Lord's will. It just unfolds. All you have to do is be available. And then things will happen to you that you would never have dreamed possible," she says.

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Baptist Institutions Need Trustees,
Not 'Laid-Back Good Old Boys'

By Bob Terry

Baptist Press
5/29/86

ST. LOUIS (BP)—"The laid-back good old boy trustee was never helpful and today he is absolutely unacceptable," said James P. Guenther, attorney for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Speaking in St. Louis to a conference of administrators and trustees of institutions affiliated with the Missouri Baptist Convention, Guenther said, "Executive directors and presidents—those people are hired hands. Trustees hold the real power. In the eyes of the law and in the minds of Baptists, trustees are in control of the institutions."

Guenther told the trustees they can either see that an institution is well managed or they can watch it go into bankruptcy. Trustees determine whether an institution ministers as intended or becomes perverted from its cause.

Trusteeship in religious organizations too often has been seen as an honorary position, Guenther said. Meetings consisted of mutual expressions of appreciation where everything and everybody was the best and the administration was without flaw.

"I have often wondered if everything is so easy and success is such a breeze, why don't they lay off about half the employees and cut the salaries of those that remain to reflect what a snap the work really is," Guenther quipped.

On the inside, trustees learn things are not as easy as they appear from the outside, Guenther told his listeners. "You will know that the financial campaign never got off the ground or that the new computer won't do half what everyone expects of it. In short, you will learn that doing the Lord's work is hard work and it requires both sweat and skill."

Guenther challenged the trustees to "act like trustees." A trustee is a corporate director who requires that corporate affairs be managed in a legal manner. A trustee also is a fiduciary which implies scrupulous integrity in financial affairs. Civil law also imposes a heavy duty to be faithful to the trust grant him or her, the attorney explained.

Among those things which trustees should master in order to serve effectively, Guenther listed:

- The charter and bylaws of the institution;
- The business and financial plan of the state convention;
- The program assignment of the institution;
- The relationship of the institution to the state executive board and to the churches; and
- How to act according to Baptist polity.

Guenther pointed out that in Baptist life, trustees serve institutions related to Baptist conventions and to churches. "Your institution is part of Christ's church. Never forget that," he urged.

He said some people will reason a board decision should be based on the premise "business is business." But remember, he asked, "the church of Jesus Christ is not Chrysler."

Guenther outlined recommendations for trustees serving Baptist institutions.

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First, recognize conventions must exercise "necessary and prudent" control while allowing institutions to be managed by trustees. "This is a balancing act which requires the constant scrutiny and the best wisdom we can all muster," he said.

Second, avoid tunnel vision. He asked the trustees never to get so caught up with their institutions that the churches feel cut-off from that which they helped initiate.

Third, be committed, hard working trustees. Guenther said leaving institutions in the control of trustees assumes committed and hard working trustees. He called that conclusion "a big assumption that has not always proven to be valid."

"As trustees, you are a key element in our system of checks and balances," he told his listeners.

Fourth, pursue old-fashioned Christian virtues such as honesty. Not only must trustees be honest, but institutions must be honest. Quoting Reinhold Niebuhr, Guenther said, "No individual is ever as evil as the group of which he is a part."

"I have known trustee groups to agree to tell a corporate lie when every single member of the trustee body was personally committed to truth-telling," he continued.

Guenther said one's experience as a trustee should be an exciting part of his or her Christian pilgrimage. He challenged the trustees to hold their actions and the actions of their institutions up to the teachings of Christ.

Fifth, deal with government with "clean hands." Guenther cautioned against "knee-jerk reactions" saying, "We ought to conserve our resources and fight government when it is necessary and when the cost of the fight is worth the principles. But by all means, we should deal with government with clean hands."

Sixth, be tolerant with one another. The strength of a trustee body is in its combined judgments, he explained. That means trustees must be patient with one another as they practically work through all the necessary decision making steps.

Seventh, exercise Christian stewardship. Guenther said trustees need to be increasingly sensitive to the trust and sacrifice conveyed by those who gave the dimes and dollars which make institution possible.

Eighth, do not be grand. "Remember the humility of Christ," he urged. "The public resents hypocrisy."

Ninth, "operate in the sunshine." Guenther asked the trustees to act in ways which will build up the confidence earned by the institution with the Baptist constituency. "There are no secrets in Baptist life," he declared.

Tenth, maintain a proper relationship between the trustee body and the chief executive officer. Trustees are responsible for policy, he explained. They do not manage the day-to-day tasks of the institution. The chief executive should be given a strong hand, he contended, but should be held accountable to the trustees for the welfare of the institution.

"It is not the president, not the faculty, not the hospital administrator. You, not they, are ultimately responsible," Guenther reminded the Missouri trustees. "You are responsible for them. They are not responsible for you."

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SBC Viewers Will
Increase With BTN

Baptist Press
5/29/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The ranks of members keeping a watchful eye on this year's Southern Baptist Convention likely will be increased greatly over past years because of coverage by BTN, the Baptist Telecommunication Network.
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Reports received a month prior to the June 10-12 annual meeting in Atlanta indicate people at a minimum of 500 sites will be tuned in to see what develops during the convention.

With a potential of 825 subscribers this year, the number of viewers could equal or exceed the number of persons attending. Last year's BTN audience was estimated to be about 20,000 by Joe Denney, director of the telecommunications department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Denney said the number of viewing sites could go as high as 1,000 this year, with a total audience which could surpass the number of messengers in Atlanta. The entire program of the 1986 SBC will be carried on BTN with an unscrambled signal, permitting anyone with a satellite receiving antenna to watch the proceedings.

A logical explanation for the increase in the number of viewing sites could be the eastern location of this year's convention compared to Dallas. For instance, the Puget Sound Baptist Association in Seattle, is about 2,600 miles from Atlanta in a car or plane, and just the flip of a switch via BTN.

David Holden, director of missions for the Puget Sound Association, said BTN "brings the convention to our association. We can save the Lord's money by not going to Atlanta."

He said several people in the Northwest who usually attend the annual convention are planning to stay at home and watch on BTN this year.

The state with the most reported viewing sites for this year is Texas, with 72. Georgia is second with 49. Following that are Florida, Alabama, Missouri, South Carolina and Oklahoma.

California will have the largest number of viewing sites in the western part of the country, with at least 18. Also planning to watch are eight groups in Arizona, six in New Mexico and others in Colorado, Utah, Montana and South Dakota.

Special interest probably will be shown by Baptists in St. Louis, in anticipation of what they have to look forward to next year when they host the convention.

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Pastor Says Sunday School Meets
Church's Outreach Responsibility

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
5/29/86

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)—Leaders at one of the largest churches in the Southern Baptist Convention believe the Sunday school is the only outreach organization the church needs.

"Outreach is one of the primary purposes of the Sunday school. You don't need any other organization to get the job done," says Richard Jackson, senior pastor of the 16,000-member North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church.

The church's Monday night visitation was established before Jackson became pastor there 19 years ago. "I wish I could take credit for it," he says. "I didn't think it was the right time for visitation. But it was working and I left it alone."

More than 700 Sunday school members participate in the weekly visitation. That wasn't the case when Jackson became pastor. "We had 800 members, but 200 was about all we could reach in worship service attendance," he remembers.

Now, the Sunday school enrollment is more than 10,000, and attendance averages more than 4,300.

Setting a priority for visitation has been the key to the successful system. "Everyone knows it is our priority because we continue to emphasize it," Jackson says.

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The Sunday school is the focus for visitation because it is the most effective organization for outreach. "Outreach, teaching and discipleship are the primary responsibilities of the church and Sunday school does those," Jackson explains. "If we don't get anything else done, that's okay. Evangelism, teaching and discipleship are most important."

When someone visits the church, there is a responsibility to contact them, says pastor Joe Ford, who recently joined the staff from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"They are looking for something. They may see North Phoenix Baptist Church as the only place left to find what they are looking for," Ford notes.

Even before a Sunday school member knocks on a prospect's door, that person likely has already received a phone call from a staff member or one of the 180 deacons. Visitor cards are divided among staff members and deacons after Sunday morning services, and calls are made that afternoon.

Then visitors likely will be visited within two weeks of their first visit to a worship service at the church, according to Ford.

As many as 300 visitors attend the church each Sunday, providing a continuing list of prospects for visitation. Visitors to the church family life center are added to the visitation list.

On Monday night, following a soup-and-salad supper, Sunday school members collect visitation assignments which are sorted by Sunday school departments.

The system is managed with computer-generated prospect cards. An outreach clerk works full time updating the prospect information.

The Sunday school visitation is more effective than a staff or deacon visitation program, Jackson says.

Members are able to reach more people than the staff or deacons could. "We have two pastors, but we have 16,000 ministers. Each member is a minister. We elevate the ministry of the individual," Jackson says.

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