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86-83

Board's Decision Not To Sell Book Sparks Disagreement With Author

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A decision not to sell a book on controversy within the Southern Baptist Convention at the SBC annual meeting has sparked disagreement between the book's author and Southern Baptist Sunday School Board officials.

"The Truth in Crisis: The Controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention" by James C. Hefley will not be sold at the board's Baptist Book Store exhibit during the convention, to be held in Atlanta June 10-12, said William S. Graham, book store division director.

The decision not to sell the book is in keeping with the board's understanding of the SBC Peace Committee's request that all Southern Baptists exercise restraint from division or controversy, Graham said. He noted the book has been and will continue to be available through any of the chain's 63 book stores and mail order centers across the country.

Hefley, writer-in-residence at Hannibal-LaGrange College in Hannibal, Mo., said he respectfully disagrees with the board's decision not to sell the book at the convention.

"The book is not inflammatory, but even-handed," he said. "It clearly presents both sides of critical issues and provides extensive documentation for events in recent turbulent history."

Hefley noted the book "has been praised by many Southern Baptist leaders, including three former SBC presidents and some members of the Peace Committee." He also expressed "fear that the decision not to sell the book in the convention exhibit will spark objections and perhaps create a furor that will heighten the very tensions which the Peace Committee has been trying to lower."

The board's decision also "is contrary to the Baptist tradition of openness and free inquiry," he continued.

Hefley added he does not see that the book is a problem, even if it "tilts to the right" in its perspective. "The Peace Committee's recent statement on SBC politics states that 'in some denominational papers..., there has been prejudice against the conservative political activists,'" he explained. "The statement does not say that 'some denominational papers' have been prejudiced against the moderates. The point is that the conservative understanding of the issues has not been presented fairly in all denominational media which will be read by hundreds of thousands of Southern Baptists before the convention."

For their part, Sunday School Board officials have disagreed with statements in a news release by Criterion Press, publisher of the book, charging the board is conducting an unofficial boycott of the book.

The news release quotes Robert Mendenhall, director of the book store division's southeastern region, as saying, "It is not in the best interest of the Sunday School Board to sell this book."

Mendenhall said he did not make the statement, which was attributed to him in conversations with Hefley and Publisher George Draper. He said he told Draper in a May 15 telephone conversation, "I am sorry, but we will not stock the book at the convention."

However, Graham said the chain's book stores and mail order centers "are making the book available if it is in stock. In locations that do not have copies on hand, employees will assist persons in obtaining a copy by placing an order for them from the publisher. If customers prefer, we will provide information so they may order the book directly from the publisher."

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Graham released a letter dated May 27 from Hefley in which Hefley wrote to Graham, "I think each of us understands the other's point of view on the book situation. I respect your position and decision, and I believe you respect mine."

In a statement to media, Hefley said, "I understand and appreciate the pressures which the Baptist Book Stores, as departments of a denominational agency, are under in trying to serve all Southern Baptists. I believe that the executives who made the decision not to exhibit the book are acting from honorable and sincere motives in trying to follow the Peace Committee's plea to exercise restraint and prevent deeper division in our denomination."

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Texas State Court To Determine
If Building Site Is Worship Place

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press
6/2/86

DALLAS (BP)—A Texas state district court will decide if a church under construction is a place of worship when it hears a case involving First Baptist Church of Richardson, Texas, and the Dallas County Appraisal District.

The appraisal district claims the Richardson church was not using its facilities as a regular place of worship when the tax year began Jan. 1, 1985. Therefore, facilities should not be tax exempt, and the church is liable for about \$100,000 in taxes. The case is scheduled to go to trial in July.

Church leaders contend that the facilities have been used for worship, and the church should be exempt from paying 1985 taxes. Construction on the church's new \$13 million plant at Central Expressway and Arapaho Street began about two years ago. The appraisal district exempted the church from 1986 taxes.

"The case can have far-reaching effects on the establishment of new missions if money given for missions is required to be diverted to government coffers in the form of property taxes," warned attorney Gary Nash, a member of the church's finance committee.

Roy Armstrong, a lawyer for the appraisal district, contended until the church is completed and used for regular worship services, it is not exempt from taxation.

Oswin Chrisman, a lawyer representing the church, said he has never heard of a church that has been taxed under similar circumstances.

Armstrong said, "There really aren't any cases like this that have been decided under the property tax code."

Ken Nolan, administrative assistant for the appraisal district, said, "I guess it's going to have to come down to a (judicial) interpretation of what constitutes a place of worship and when it becomes a place of worship."

Under the Texas property tax code, religious worship is defined as "individual or group ceremony or meditation, education and fellowship, the purpose of which is to manifest or develop reverence, homage and commitment in behalf of religious faith."

To obtain property tax exemption, a church must show that its property is used primarily as a place of regular religious worship and is reasonably necessary for engaging in religious worship.

Nash said the Texas Supreme Court ruled in 1951 on a case involving a claim that a charity hospital in Houston did not qualify for a tax exemption because its new medical clinic was still under construction.

The court ruled that without the construction work, there would not be a clinic and, therefore, the construction qualified as use of the property for charitable purposes.

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Baptist Leaders Support
Anti-Hunger Legislation

By David Wilkinson

WASHINGTON (BP)—In the afterglow of the celebrated "Hands Across America" fund-raising event, a variety of anti-hunger groups are joining hands in support of legislation intended to provide more assistance for the nation's hungry.

"The Hunger Relief Act of 1986," a comprehensive anti-hunger bill, will provide nearly \$1 billion in additional money for fiscal year 1987 to expand and improve food assistance programs. The legislation does not call for any new federal programs but focuses instead on strengthening the "safety net" already in place, an approach supporters hope will enable the bill to survive the budget-trimming mood in Congress.

Included in the legislation, S. 2495 in the Senate and H.R. 4880 in the House, are proposals which would:

--Increase participation in the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children. While the program now serves 3.3 million people, an estimated 7 million additional women and children eligible for the assistance fail to receive it. The program serves "nutritionally-at-risk" pregnant and post-partum women, infants and children under age five.

--Increase food stamp benefits and improve communication with eligible persons about the availability of such assistance. Studies indicate about 41 percent of those eligible for food stamps do not receive them.

--Improve the nutritional quality of the School Meals Program while reducing the cost of school breakfasts and lunches.

--Increase participation in nutrition programs for the elderly.

Robert Parham, director of hunger concerns for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, praised the legislation as "another weapon in the American arsenal aimed at eliminating hunger." If the bill becomes law, he pointed out, more than 10 times the estimated amount of money raised by "Hands Across America" will go to assist those at risk to hunger.

The legislation has won the support of religious organizations such as Bread for the World, a Christian citizens' group which lobbies for anti-hunger legislation.

Bread for the World President Patricia Ayres, a Southern Baptist layperson, noted the United States now spends more than \$1 million a day on storage of agricultural surplus while 13.8 million children and 3.3 million senior citizens live in poverty.

Also, she said, the Department of Agriculture stores 600 million pounds of surplus cheese while 3 million poor children do not get school lunches and nearly 12 million poor children do not receive school breakfasts.

"The 'Hands Across America' experience, with people of all ages and from all walks of life standing hand-in-hand in support of the hungry and the homeless, was a marvelous symbol of our caring spirit," said Ayers. "But Christian charity must go hand-in-hand with Christian citizenship if we are to find long-term solutions to America's hunger problems."

Ayres joined Parham in urging Southern Baptists to contact their elected representatives in Congress to express support for food assistance programs designed to strengthen the network of services already in place.

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Baptist Ranks In India Swell
As Families Leave Former Gods

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
6/2/86

BANGALORE, India (BP)—The ranks of Baptists in India are swelling at an unprecedented rate as entire households of Hindus and Muslims have begun turning their backs on the gods of their fathers.

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Veteran Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers liken the movement to the days of early Christianity, when people en masse came to realize their gods had failed them and embraced Jesus Christ as their only Lord.

The stories range from familiar salvation experiences and destruction of fetishes to reports of miracles. But the result in each case is evidenced by changed hearts among new believers.

Volunteers visiting the predominantly Hindu nation recently related God had prepared Indians they met to understand about Jesus Christ before they arrived to explain how salvation could be found through him. They also reported seeing God's power heal people of various infirmities and free them from symptoms of disorders like seizures and stammering.

"I must confess my faith in prayer has been increased almost 100 percent," said Erial Locke of Americus, Kan. "God showed me miracles I had never seen."

In one instance during a 10-day evangelism crusade ending in early April, a team of Baptists was invited into a Hindu temple in Bangalore, where a team member shared the gospel with the temple priest's wife and 12 others. "I noticed the people putting down mats and bringing in chairs," recalled Ruth Reid from Kansas City, Kan. "My heart skipped a beat, 'Lord, will we be able to share Christ here?'"

A team member clearly spelled out what Jesus had done that their gods could not do. In two or three different ways, Reid said, those attending were told they must "give up their gods to accept Christ. All stood to accept Christ that day in the Hindu temple."

During the same crusade in the town of Kolar Gold Fields about 50 miles outside of Bangalore, an upper-class Hindu family living within earshot of the revival tent's loudspeaker heard Les Arnold of Manhattan, Kan., preaching about the second coming of Christ.

The family climbed into their car and drove closer to the tent. The next morning family members sent word they wanted to talk to Arnold. The wife told him how she had a vision of Jesus by her bed during recent surgery but was unsure how to know Jesus. The husband and wife and their three teen-age children became Christians that day and opened their home for Bible study.

During the evangelistic crusade, 50 Southern Baptist volunteers from Kansas and Nebraska worked with 33 Indian Baptist churches to help lead about 3,000 people to faith in Christ. One church was begun immediately in Bangalore, and others there and in Bombay were expected to start.

Until about three years ago, most Southern Baptist mission work with Indian believers was centered around Bangalore, near the southern tip of this dense nation of 762 million people. But in 1982 the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board expanded outreach through an entity named National Indian Ministries.

National Indian Ministries pooled the efforts of Southern Baptist missionaries and other Baptist groups working in the country. One of its primary goals is to help train national Baptists to start churches in areas without witness.

The number of baptisms reported by groups associated with the ministries is growing, and new churches are springing up throughout the country. Reports show at least 405 churches are now related to the organizations, more than 50 of which were begun by church planters last year. Since January of this year, seven new congregations have begun services in the Bombay area.

In the region of Orissa, a group of 15 Baptist churches set a goal of 60 baptisms last year. By year's end they had recorded nearly 120 baptisms. "They are themselves astonished at the way the Holy Spirit is working these days," said Sri Daniel James, executive director of the Orissa Baptist Evangelistic Crusade.

Nearly 1,500 Indians were baptized in all groups associated with Southern Baptist mission work last year. Southern Baptists counted 18,423 believers in churches associated with their work at the end of 1985.

"people in India are very responsive. They're very willing to listen to the gospel, and they're seeking," said veteran missionary physician Rebekah Naylor, who works at the Baptist Hospital in Bangalore. "They're wide open."

Naylor is leading MasterLife discipleship groups of employees at the hospital. A nurse in one of her groups was so afraid to speak that Naylor was unable to hear her questions during MasterLife sessions. But now the nurse goes back to the hospital after work to share with patients she has cared for during the day.

"She told me about one man who was my patient, who had a leg amputation and it had been very, very slow getting well," said Naylor. "He was very depressed. She sat and talked and talked with him a long time about everything, and then she talked to him about Christ.

"The next day she went back to see him just to see if he felt better, and he said, 'You know, I haven't had any more pain since last night.' She said, 'That's good, but what happened?' And he said, 'Well, I believe now in Christ. After you talked with me I realized Christ was the only way to God. Since then I feel such joy inside that I don't have pain.'"

The hospital has been the cornerstone of work in Bangalore, around which a convention of about 250 churches has been developed. Most of the growth has taken place over the past three years, during which more than 200 new congregations have begun.

Activity at the hospital has increased since it was dedicated in 1973. The hospital reported a total of nearly 7,000 people who attended mid-week worship services and more than 4,000 who came on Sundays last year. The pastoral care staff visited nearly 250 patients at their homes after discharge last year.

One of the most significant changes in the direction of Baptist work in India, Naylor said, could be the inroads begun into the lives of affluent people. Baptists in Bangalore have worked primarily with the poor masses. But Naylor, for example, has begun working with an interdenominational group of medical students and practitioners who hold meetings at which professions of faith are made regularly.

"In the future these people will obviously be responsible citizens," she said. "They'll be the leaders."

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Septagenarian Graduates
From New Orleans Seminary

By Breena Kent

Baptist Press
6/2/86

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Seventy-one-year-old Rene B. Jacques has proven it is never too late to graduate from seminary. He received an associate of divinity degree in pastoral ministry this spring from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Jacques was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in 1915, and turned 71 just days after he earned his degree. He has three children and five grandchildren.

Although French is his native language, he attended classes in Spanish through the New Orleans Seminary extension center in Miami, Fla.

Jacques received his call to "sacerdocio," or priesthood, in 1971 through a vision from God. "Three times God called me in my dream," says Jacques in broken Spanish with French intermixed. Three times he said to me that it was not the hand of man, but the will of God (for me to be a pastor)."

After 11 years of serving as president of the men's association in a church in New York, Jacques felt God calling him to move to Miami for seminary.

Now, after studying four years for his degree, Jacques is waiting for "lo que Dios quiera" (whatever God wants).

Presently Sunday school director and deacon at Eglise Evangelique Baptiste Haitienne in Pampano Beach, Fla., Jacques hopes to be pastor of a French-speaking church one day.

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Flood Damages Mission
Property In Thailand

BANGKOK, Thailand (BP)—Floodwater two feet deep swept through the Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary in Bangkok in May, ruining doors and damaging beds and other items such as books and graduation gowns.

Standing floodwater also warped the doors of Calvary Baptist Church in Bangkok and covered ground floors in the homes of Southern Baptist missionaries Richard and Linda Blount and Bill and Kaaren Hitt.

The May flooding was touched off by Bangkok's heaviest rain in 500 years, said Chamlong Srimuang, governor of the city. Fifteen inches of rain fell in 24 hours, inundating the city, halting commerce and eventually leading to the deaths of at least 50 people.

The flood dealt damage to files, music materials and books on the campus of the Baptist seminary. Doors swelled and separated, and teak pews in the chapel sat in two feet of water for several days. Four pianos had to be lifted above the water on blocks.

Water several inches deep seeped into storage units on the faculty compound next-door, soaking mattresses and whatever else stood outside sealed metal drums. Water was found inside nearly every mission vehicle on the seminary compound.

The Hitts of San Benito and Corpus Christi, Texas, respectively, woke up the night of the heaviest rain as their bed became wet. Hitt opened the door to move furniture into an enclosed pickup truck, while their 13-year-old son, Billy, caught seven fish and a crab that floated into their living room.

The Blounts, first-year missionaries from Newport News, Va., were forced to move from their apartment by water that stood 10 inches deep. They moved in with another missionary family until the water receded.

Mission-related property sustained much less damage than during a flood three years ago, however. Then, much of the city was under water for two to four months.

Missionaries Bill and Susan Smith of Richmond, Va., and Bellaire, Texas, respectively, escaped the water damage they suffered in that flood. They have started keeping a sandbox and dozens of empty cloth sacks near the only opening in a concrete wall around their house.

This time, when water began to rise in the street, the Smith children—Karen, Julie and Mike—started shoveling sand into the cloth sacks and piling them at the gate. The sandbags, plus a pump in the yard, kept their house free from water.

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Baptist Workers In Ethiopia
Start Crop, Animal Projects

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
6/2/86

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (BP)—A tuluget is a tuft of hair left on an Ethiopian child's otherwise-shaven head. If death comes, tradition holds, an angel can grab the tuluget to lift the child to heaven.

Death and the threat of famine are as much a part of Ethiopian culture as the tuluget. "They're one dry spell away from famine at all times," says Southern Baptist missionary Jerry Bedsole, a veterinarian. "They live from crop to crop."

To make the dry spells less deadly, the Ethiopian government's Ministry of Agriculture and Southern Baptist missionaries in Ethiopia have signed an initial agreement for Southern Baptist development work in one area. The long-range agreement is one of the first between the government and a private agency active in famine relief.

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Southern Baptists will undertake crop and animal projects in a canyon region between the Rift Valley and the Blue Nile, where they operate five feeding stations battling several years of drought. Ninety-eight percent of the people in the area depend on their harvests to survive.

Additional volunteers—at least one agriculturist and one veterinarian—will be needed beyond the 23 Southern Baptists already working in Ethiopia.

Through development projects, Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers will be "working with people at the level of their needs," explains Lynn Groce, mission organization chairman and an agriculturist. Close contact with individual farmers and their families will provide opportunities "to share Christ's love and concern for the whole man."

Ethiopia, Africa's poorest country per capita, critically needs development aid, says Dag Hareide, United Nations rehabilitation coordinator in Ethiopia and a Norwegian Lutheran.

Despite \$1.3 billion in emergency assistance last year, the country receives the least amount of long-term aid per capita in Africa—about \$10 per person compared to the continent's \$25 average, Hareide notes.

Other drought-stricken countries, he adds, receive six to seven times more development aid per capita than Ethiopia.

Famine has afflicted Ethiopia about every 10 years "for as long as we have written sources, for as long as we know...and it will come again," Hareide says. The famine in recent years, he adds, has been the most widespread and catastrophic of this century.

Experts predict Ethiopia's population of 44 million—Africa's second-largest will double by the year 2000, reports Ed Mason, a Southern Baptist volunteer administrator from Tallahassee, Fla. "You wonder, if they have trouble feeding 44 million people, how in the world are they going to feed 88 million?"

Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers will work with several farmers' associations, or rural governmental districts of 250 to 300 families, in small-scale projects to serve as models for other associations.

Initial efforts will include terracing and other soil conservation techniques, seed improvements for better harvests, breeding programs to build the stamina of oxen, sheep and other animals and veterinary medicine. Measures for clean drinking water also may be involved.

The projects "will seek to attack the root problems rather than dealing with the symptoms of a time of crisis," says R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, who visited Ethiopia in April.

Supervising each project will be a three-member committee of one representative of Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture, one farmers' representative and one representative of the Southern Baptists.

Two Southern Baptist volunteers already have begun development work in the region. "Water specialist Mike Camden from Abingdon, Va., has capped two springs at the village of Rabel to eliminate mud and animal waste from the water. Veterinarian Charles Field from Tallahassee is conducting mobile clinics.

Southern Baptist missionaries also have supplied wheat seed to 12,000 families and corn seed to 8,000. Further seed distribution is planned.

Groce says the farmland "has an amazing ability to recover" with proper care over several growing seasons. But agricultural changes come slowly.

Subsistence farmers cannot afford to take risks with their meager fields, he notes. "Concrete, demonstrable agricultural methods" are a must, as is day-to-day contact with the farmers.

"We're not trying to start large-scale cattle farmers, chicken farmers or sheep farmers," Bedsole points out. The projects will not double or triple the farmers' incomes, but it may yield small increases in meat, milk, eggs, wool or various crops.

A plus for the development projects is the industriousness of Ethiopia's subsistence farmers. Dawn to dusk, they plow their land by oxen. They have no tractors, and irrigation systems are rare. Farmers in the lowlands work as far up the canyon slopes as possible in soil peppered with rocks. "What they can't plow with an oxen, they break with a mallet," Field says. "They utilize every available square inch."

The drought still sidelines many. One mother of two has not seen her husband since he headed toward Addis Ababa in search of work three months ago. "If my husband's brother were able to get some oxen and seed," she says, "he would immediately go to work and plow."

Where Southern Baptists work, the drought has depleted the region of at least 2,000 oxen.

"You have to admire them that they have enough determination to get up in the morning," Mason observes. "I'd hate to face a day where I didn't know where food was coming from, how I was going to feed my children." A desperate situation, he says, is all they've had to look forward to for months.

Bedsole sees a parallel between the hope that development projects can bring and Jesus' ministry. Jesus met numerous physical needs, "and it was the springboard to share the love of God."

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(Toalston recently returned from a reporting trip to Ethiopia and Uganda.)

Broaden Cultural Outlook,
Southern Baptists Urged

By Sherri Anthony Brown

Baptist Press
6/2/86

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—"Southern Baptists have brought their southern culture to a western culture, and they're building fortresses trying to keep 'different' people out," a Southern Baptist pastor said at a conference on models for metropolitan ministry.

Jess Moody, pastor of First Baptist Church of Van Nuys, Calif., told conferees at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, two attitudes spring up when one group—Caucasians—is surrounded by different racial and cultural groups. "Either they become bigots and try to keep everyone else out or they open the gates and say the Lord loves us all," he said.

Speaking against the prejudices of many transplanted Southern Baptists, Moody said Baptists must learn they are "no better than anybody else in this world. It's time we understand that this world needs love. We need to forsake this idea that we're better than others."

Moody also told the pastors and associational directors: "We better get our churches divorced from culture. We better get out to the society around us. Face it instead of protecting yourselves from it."

The conference, co-sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Baptist General Convention of Texas and Southwestern Seminary, also included John Savage, director of a consulting firm, Leadership Education and Development.

Discussing apathetic and bored church members, Savage pointed out about 8 million of 14 million Southern Baptists are inactive.

In research of inactive members—those who had been active and then dropped out of all church activities—Savage discovered 95 percent left the church after experiencing a private cluster of anxiety-provoking events.

Such events can be related to the family or the workplace. But, said Savage, the church member always sends out a cry for help, even if it is subtle and hidden in other behavior.

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"To get them to return to church, you must get to the original cluster of pain," Savage explained. To do this effectively, Savage said he believes "laypersons and pastors must learn how to listen to pain and anxiety."

"There is no way a pastor can listen to all the cries for help in a church—that's a neurotic belief," Savage said. Therefore, both laypersons and pastors should be trained to listen to pain and anxiety.

People often are reluctant to listen to others because "hearing the pain of others makes you become more aware of your own pain. And that hurts," Savage related.

"But no one ever died from entering into their pain," he said. However, "they have died from avoiding their pain—through heart attacks, strokes and other stress-related illnesses."

In conclusion, Savage discussed his latest research which revealed "religious conversion can be positive, but also highly destructive."

A person often is in life chaos prior to conversion, Savage explained. With conversion comes instant solution, "but often it is actually denial. Such individuals seal off all the pain in their lives and then 30 years later it comes flying back at them. Rather than the conversion experience giving courage to face the pain, it allows them to close it off and let it stockpile."

To prevent this danger, Savage suggested after a conversion experience someone ask the person, "What's going on in your life?"

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Black Missionary Discovers
'Identification' No Problem

By Mike Chute

Baptist Press
6/2/86

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP)—As hard as they try to identify with people overseas, Southern Baptist missionaries rarely are mistaken for nationals. Everything being equal, missionaries can't change their skin color, which usually is white.

In contrast, Milton C. Williams Jr., a semester missionary, was sometimes mistaken for a Brazilian. That's because his skin is black.

Williams, now back in Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., laughingly recalls how Brazilians would ask him to translate for his red-haired, blue-eyed sponsor. But missionary Philip Flournoy, an MK (missionary kid) who grew up in Brazil, speaks Portuguese fluently. Williams doesn't.

A few blacks have ministered in Brazil, but veteran missionaries think Williams was the first black semester missionary to serve in Rio de Janeiro.

Pioneering in the "white world" is nothing new for this Virginia Southern Baptist. His pioneer spirit developed in the Williams home where open-minded parents allowed their children to participate in activities among whites. Raised on the "other side of the railroad tracks," Williams acknowledges such activity "took me out of my black peer group." But he believes it broadened his perspectives.

Williams was nurtured through East End Baptist Church of Suffolk, Va., a Southern Baptist church. He describes East End as the "cultural center for the black community" of Suffolk and calls it a "typical black Baptist congregation."

However, East End also is different from most black Baptist congregations. It is one of about 40 black churches in Virginia that support the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention.

His pioneer spirit was displayed at Virginia State University, where he started the first Baptist Student Union on that traditionally black campus. He went on to become president of the National Baptist Student Retreat, sponsored by Southern Baptists for black students.

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His pioneering attitude further was encouraged by a black pastor, C.J. Word, who told Williams: "You were born black, you'll die black. There's a 90 percent chance you will pastor black congregations. So you will lose nothing by attending a white seminary."

With that advice, Williams became one of 65 black Americans studying at Southern Seminary.

Williams' pioneer spirit has continued at Louisville's Hurstbourne Baptist Church, where he is the church's only black member and sings in the choir.

"God has blessed me to be involved in both worlds," Williams says of such pioneering. "I've been a member of black and white congregations and understand how both operate. How many blacks, how many whites can say that? I truly believe it is a blessing from God."

Williams feels that blessing continued through his missionary stint in Brazil. His job of building chapels gave him the opportunity to see Brazil. He had opportunities to preach wherever he went. He sang in English and Portuguese. He spoke at youth rallies. He saw what God is doing in Brazil.

Financed by fellow Southern Seminary students, Williams' work in Brazil also afforded time for personal reflection. But it was not necessarily a time for answers, only possibilities. There is the "possibility" of missions for his life after the Brazil experience.

"This opportunity has been priceless. I don't have a friend who can say he has done this," Williams said as he prepared to leave Brazil. "I really don't know what God has in store for me. I can only prepare myself for whatever possibilities come up; that's why I am at Southern. That's all I can do. I trust God for the rest."

Out of the 3,600 Southern Baptist missionaries around the world, only three are black, says Willie Simmons, manager of the black church relations section of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Only 25 of the 6,000 volunteers overseas last year were black.

In April, board trustees approved an endowment fund of \$10,000 to help black students enter seminary and do volunteer mission work overseas.

The fund is for blacks who feel a "definite call to foreign missions" but are financially unable to attend seminary or do overseas volunteer work, Simmons says.

The SBC has about 1,000 predominantly black churches and 250,000 to 275,000 black Southern Baptists. "With that many black Southern Baptists, we should have more than three black career missionaries," Simmons says.

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

Baker, Clanton Receive New
Assignments At Baylor

Baptist Press
6/2/86

WACO, Texas (BP)—Baylor University historian Dr. Eugene W. Baker has been named special assistant to the president and press secretary effective June 1.

In the newly-created position, "Baker will serve as a key university spokesman within the office of the president and direct the operations of the office of public relations," according to Baylor President Herbert H. Reynolds.

Reynolds also announced that current public relations director David Clanton is being named to the new post of project director, innovative technology for teaching, also effective June 1. In this position, "Clanton will plan for the establishment of advanced technological programs to enhance instruction within the university as recommended by the 1984-86 self-study," Reynolds said.

The Baylor president added both "Dr. Baker and Mr. Clanton possess excellent professional backgrounds for these endeavors and that Baylor is fortunate to be able to meet new and pressing needs without having to bring in additional executive personnel."

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