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Smith, Rogers, Falwell
Lead Missouri Conference

By Trennis Henderson

ARNOLD, Mo. (BP)--Presenting "an old-fashioned hootenanny for Jesus," former Southern Baptist Convention president Bailey Smith and his "Real Evangelism" organization brought a three-day "Nationwide Conference on Soul-Winning" to the St. Louis area in late February.

Featuring such well-known preachers as current SBC president Adrian Rogers and independent Baptist pastor Jerry Falwell, the conference included 13 sermons by 11 pastors and evangelists.

Smith said the conference was not a "political meeting. What we want to do is have an old-fashioned hootenanny for Jesus. I have instructed every one of our speakers not to get into the convention controversy.

"We are only interested in encouraging our pastors to do old-fashioned soul-winning. We are trying to provide a platform for some men who don't give an 'uncertain sound' to help motivate our pastors and laymen to do soul-winning."

Although the speakers generally succeeded in steering clear of convention politics during their sermons, remarks during introductions and spontaneous comments from the platform were not always as subdued.

Introducing Florida pastor Jerry Vines, evangelist Freddie Gage told the crowd he had voted twice for Adrian Rogers as SBC president and looked forward to voting for him a third time. He then added, "If Jesus does not come, I'm planning on voting for Jerry Vines the first time and the second time."

Responding to that introduction, Vines quipped, "Bro. Freddie, if the Lord will forgive you for saying that, maybe he'll forgive me for enjoying it."

Prior to voicing the closing prayer on the final night of the conference, Rogers compared the fundamental-conservative takeover of the denomination to the biblical account of Naaman being cured of leprosy by dipping seven times in the Jordan River. "We're getting ready for the seventh dip," the SBC president declared. The conservative effort to change the course of the denomination began in 1979.

Smith, a full-time evangelist and former pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., emphasized the need for soul-winning throughout the denomination. Citing recent SBC baptism statistics, he added, "Southern Baptists are now experiencing what many denominations have experienced -- almost no growth or diminishing growth."

Noting that "it takes 55 Southern Baptists a full year to win one person to Jesus Christ," Smith continued, "I believe we need a revival, don't you? I believe we need an emphasis on winning souls.

"You know," Smith told the opening night crowd, "I hear preachers say today, 'Well I don't want to put a guilt trip on you.' Folks, look at me. I want to put a guilt trip on you. If you're guilty of not winning souls, you ought to feel guilty because you are guilty of direct disobedience to God."

During the Friday night service, Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., said, "The key to living victoriously is knowing who you are. ... When you see who you are in Christ, it will explode in your brain and it will radically, dramatically, eternally change how you behave and how you live."

Rogers said all people share the common desire to obtain significance, sufficiency and security. He said Christians can experience those things through recognizing their righteousness, relying on their resources and resting in their relationship to God.

"God doesn't change you so he can love you," Rogers pointed out. "He loves you so he can change you."

Also preaching on Friday night, Vines spoke on "how to go through the fire." He noted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego wouldn't bow, bend or burn.

"It's not easy to go up against the current. It's not easy to buck the tide," said Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla. "The trend of the times is, 'If you want to get along, you've got to go along.' ... These are times when men need to learn to stand and have the courage of their convictions."

Pointing out Neuchadnezzar saw four men walking in the fire but only three came out, Vines added, "When you go through the fire, there's One waiting for you who had already been there. ... God will use the fiery furnace experience to give you an experience with Jesus you've never had before. The path to glory is always the path to the furnace."

During the Thursday night session which featured Falwell, a standing-room-only crowd of more than 2,000 people gathered at the church. Before Falwell's message, three students from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., gave testimonies concerning their experience at the independent Baptist university which Falwell founded and serves as president.

With four Baptist colleges in the state being affiliated with the Missouri Baptist Convention and two of those colleges' presidents sitting in the Thursday night crowd, conference coordinators agreed to make time on the Friday night program for representatives of three of Missouri Baptists' four colleges to have equal time. Current and former students from Hannibal-LaGrange College, Missouri Baptist College and Southwest Baptist University responded by sharing testimonies of their experience in those Missouri Baptist-related institutions.

Introducing Falwell on Thursday night, Smith compared Falwell's ministry to that of Jesus, noting Jesus' enemies said: "'Never a man spoke as this man; this man loveth sinners and eats with them; and he saved others but he can't save himself.' That's true of Jerry Falwell. He is so committed to what he's doing that he can't save himself physically. He just goes and goes and goes."

Discussing ministry into the 21st century, Falwell pointed to "Soviet Union expansionism on our southern borders and a Congress lacking the spine to do anything about it. I don't know who sent that money down to the Contras but I applaud them."

"I think of the troubles of teenage pregnancies and 1.5 million abortions annually and the drug epidemic and the secularizing of our society, the purging our nation of any and all religious heritage," he continued. "As far as the textbooks are concerned, a child can grow up in America's public schools and receive exactly the same secular education as one would receive in the Soviet Union."

He insisted that "if we are going to be on the cutting edge ... there are certain absolutely essential requirements for the 21st century servant." He said those requirements include proper priorities, preparation and perseverance.

Other speakers during the three-day conference included Stan Coffey, pastor of San Jacinto Baptist Church in Amarillo, Texas; Jack Milwood, pastor of First Baptist Church in Chickasaw, Ala.; Nelson Price, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga.; and evangelists Manley Beasley, Ron Dunn, Bill Stafford and Jay Strack.

BWA To Send Bible
Study Books To USSR

WASHINGTON (BP)--Bible study material in the Russian language is to be placed in the hands of evangelical pastors and church workers in the Soviet Union following a decade-long effort by the Baptist World Alliance and the Mennonite Central Committee.

The All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB) in the USSR is to receive 5,000 sets of a Russian-language translation of the William Barclay Commentary on the New Testament. The project, under discussion since 1976 and in preparation for five years, will result in some 75,000 total volumes being distributed to AUCECB leaders.

BWA officials said the import authorization was agreed to during a February meeting between AUCECB General Secretary Alexei M. Bichkov and Konstantin M. Karchev, chairman of the Council of Religious Affairs of the Soviet Council of Ministers.

Also participating were BWA Deputy General Secretary Denton Lotz of Washington; European Baptist Federation General Secretary Knud Wumplemann of Copenhagen, Denmark; Asian Baptist Federation General Secretary Edwin Lopez of Manila, Philippines; and Mennonite World Conference Executive Secretary Paul Kraybill of Akron, Pa.

According to the BWA, the import application approval is without precedent in terms of the number of pieces of Christian literature authorized for importation.

The Barclay Commentary was chosen by AUCECB leaders after a review of several possibilities. Soviet leader Kharchev said he read the commentary and found it to be a "totally religious" work which poses no political obstacles to the importation.

Fifteen volumes of the 17-volume set have been translated and the two final volumes are in production. The work was translated into Russian by Marvin Ziegenhagel of Mainz, West Germany, and will be printed by the Mennonite-related Herald Press in Scottsdale, Pa. Shipment of the books are being coordinated by the United Bible Societies international headquarters in Stuttgart, West Germany.

BWA officials said the project, to be shared equally by the BWA and the Mennonites, will cost \$500,000. They added the BWA needs at least \$100,000 in gifts to be able to meet its share.

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(Material for this article was provided by John M. Wilkes, director of communications for the BWA, and Stanley Crabb, director of European Baptist Press, Ruschlikon, Switzerland.)

Hull Named Provost
At Sanford University

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--William E. Hull, a Southern Baptist pastor and former provost of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been named to the new position of provost of Sanford University in Birmingham, Ala.

A Sanford graduate and Birmingham native, Hull will assume the position of chief academic officer of the 4,000-student Alabama Baptist university June 1.

Hull "is a tough-minded academician with a pastor's heart," said Sanford President Thomas E. Corts. "His task is to lead Sanford to even greater academic heights. He has the intellect, scholarly experience, Baptist roots and the unique perspective of an alumnus who values what Old Howard and Sanford stand for."

Sanford was Howard College prior to a name change in 1965.

Hull, a member of the Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee, has been pastor of First Baptist Church of Shreveport, La., since 1975. Previously, he worked at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., as professor; chairman of the New Testament department, 1958-60; director of graduate studies, 1968-70; dean of the School of Theology, 1969-75; and provost, 1972-75.

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Hull, 56, attended Phillips High School in Birmingham and graduated from Samford in 1951. He earned master's and doctoral degrees from Southern Seminary.

Hull has been on a number of committees in the Louisiana Baptist Convention, Southern Baptist Convention and Baptist World Alliance. He has been president of the Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, SBC representative to the North American Baptist Fellowship, and chairman of the BWA Commission on Baptist Doctrine and BWA Commission on Pastoral Leadership.

His wife is the former Wylodine Hester of Wedowee, Ala., also a Samford graduate. They are parents of a grown son and daughter.

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Barefoot Named Union
University President

Baptist Press
3/3/87

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)—Hiran E. Barefoot, 59, vice president for academic affairs at Union University, has been elected president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention-affiliated school.

Barefoot has been interim president of the 1,500-student university since former president Robert Craig resigned in June 1986, to become president of East Texas Baptist University in Marshall, Texas.

Barefoot, a native of Mantee, Miss., has been associated with the school for 30 years, serving as teacher, department and division chairman, academic dean and, for the past 10 years, vice president of academic affairs.

He is a graduate of Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss., and holds an earned doctorate from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He has done post graduate study at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, N.M., the University of St. Andrews in Scotland and the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

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Romo Calls Internationals
'Untapped Mission Field'

By Joe Westbury

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NEW YORK (BP)—As Southern Baptists make inroads into evangelizing America's ethnic population, they should not overlook the growing number of internationals who visit the country each year, Southern Baptist language missions leaders were told.

"More than 14 million international tourists, sea and air crewmen, diplomats, students and professionals came to the United States last year. An additional 163 million tourists and visitors not requiring visas entered the country legally from Canada and Mexico," said Oscar Romo, director of the language missions division for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"This influx of people from all nations gives Southern Baptists tremendous opportunities for evangelizing, congregationalizing and ministering."

Romo said the denomination can make a global impact by sharing God's love with internationals who return to their home countries, many of which are closed to missionaries, Romo said. Often, the new believers return to their homelands and begin new churches, he added.

The 200 participants attending the 30th annual language missions leadership conference in New York explored new methods of reaching internationals in their states, including ministries to seamen, military personnel, diplomats, professionals and tourists.

Ted Mall, national ethnic missionary and director of Christian ministries to the United Nations, said such ministries can produce beneficial rapport for Southern Baptist world missions enterprises.

"On the foreign mission fields, many of the internationals have influence in formulating their countries' governmental and legislative policies that can affect our mission efforts," said Mall, who ministers among diplomats on a daily basis. "A better understanding of Christianity and the church is certainly helpful in producing a favorable climate for our mission endeavors." *

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On the related topic of ministering among American ethnics, Romo called on Southern Baptists to acknowledge the growth of ethnic congregations in the denomination and to accelerate their efforts while the ethnics are responsive to the gospel. The receptiveness probably will cease as the new ethnics settle into American society and become secularized, he warned.

"Although missiologists have stated that Southern Baptists are probably five to 10 years ahead of most denominations in reaching the ethnics, and others have indicated that the denomination is not only the largest Spanish-speaking convention but the most assimilated, we are still reaching less than one-half of 1 percent of all language-culture persons in our nation," Romo said.

The language missions director repeated his challenge for the denomination to reach 3 percent, or about 2.4 million ethnics, by the year 2000.

"The growth of ethnic congregations and their commitment to Southern Baptists is beyond belief, considering that 72 of the 87 ethnic groups have no (Bible study) materials in their language. Unless corrected, such lack of contextual language materials will have a negative impact on future growth of the denomination," Romo predicted.

Southern Baptists at the grass roots level, especially those in transitory communities, should become aware of reaching language-culture persons in their own neighborhoods, he added. Such an approach calls for including ethnics as viable members of the congregation rather than as step-child members of the church.

Robert Banks, executive vice president and interim president of the board, told participants establishing churches with ethnics and blacks is the key to reaching American cities Christ.

"We cannot ignore reaching such a large segment of our population. The large cities are where the majority of ethnic and black Americans live, and we must develop a more aggressive strategy in starting congregations in those areas," he said.

Banks called for a strategy of reaching blacks that would boost their congregational strength beyond the 1,100 churches currently affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. He further cited a need for more Hispanic congregations in metropolitan areas, since 84 percent of the language group lives in the nation's cities.

Banks urged the expansion while acknowledging a possible downturn in gifts to home missions through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and Southern Baptist Cooperative Program. To ensure such a goal, the agency would have to practice a more creative form of stewardship, he said.

Gerald Palmer, vice president of the board and director of the missions section of the agency, affirmed the goal and said denominational mission goals will not be reached without an enhanced commitment to reaching America's black and ethnic populations. Such an effort will take cooperation between agencies and congregations at all levels of Southern Baptist life, he added.

Palmer challenged Southern Baptists to work for a day "when every church will not say, 'Why do we need a language congregation?' but will say 'Why not?' ... a time when the question will not be, 'Will they fit under our tent?' but, 'How big can we make the tent so that it covers everyone?'"

"The missions and evangelism task is bigger than any and all of us," Palmer said. "If our goals are to be met, cooperation is essential."