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- - BAPTIST PRESS

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June 30, 1987

87-97

Fletcher Allen Elected
Tennessee Editor

By Charlie Warren

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board unanimously elected W. Fletcher Allen as editor of the Baptist and Reflector during a called meeting of the board June 26.

Allen, editor of the Baptist True Union, the Baptist newsjournal for Maryland/Delaware for the past four years, will begin his new duties Aug. 17.

He succeeds Alvin C. Shackelford, who left March 15 to become vice-president for public relations of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Fred Isaacs, a layman from Cosby, Tenn., and chairman of the state executive board's administrative committee which also is the board of directors for the Baptist and Reflector, introduced Allen as "a journalist with a pastor's heart" who is "subservient to nobody but Jesus Christ."

The recommendation, which came from a search committee appointed by Isaacs, was approved by the B&R directors in consultation with Tennessee Baptist Executive Secretary Tom Madden before reaching the full executive board.

Madden noted, "I'm convinced we could not get a better person."

During the called meeting, board members asked about Allen's beliefs regarding the Bible, his commitment to fairness and his goals for the newspaper.

"I believe the Bible. I believe all the Bible. I believe everything in the Bible," Allen responded. "I believe it is perfectly trustworthy. It is my authority for not only what I believe but how I live."

He said he has no agenda except to be fair and honest to the people in the churches.

"I promise, with all the integrity I have ... to be fair," Allen said.

He responded that his goals are to increase circulation, to be an advocate for the people, and to make the newspaper the best paper in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Presenting his Christian testimony, Allen noted his conversion experience and a later recommitment at a Billy Graham crusade.

"The Lord has not turned loose of me since then," he said. "I love him. I love his Word."

Before becoming editor of the Maryland/Delaware paper, Allen was associate editor of the Baptist Courier, South Carolina's state Baptist paper, for 17 years.

Earlier, he was assistant advertising and public relations manager for Sonoco Products Company in Hartsville, S.C.; director of news service and alumni editor at Furman University, Greenville, S.C.; and reporter and sports editor for the Florence (S.C.) Morning News. He also was a U.S. Army officer in West Germany, 1954-56.

Allen, born in Darlington County, S.C., is a graduate of Furman University. He is married to the former Betty Fink of Hartsville, S.C. They have four grown daughters.

Education Commission
Adopts Record Budget

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Education Commission adopted a record \$548,300 budget during its annual meeting June 28-29 in Kansas City, Mo.

The budget, which increased about \$10,000 over the previous year, reflects a 2.4 percent increase in receipts from the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget.

About 90 percent of the Nashville-based agency's budget comes through the Cooperative Program. The remainder of the commission's budget is raised through the sale of publications, dues from the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools, interest and other sources.

Bob R. Agee, president of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, was elected chairman of the commission for 1987-88. Other officers include D. Jack Nicholas, president of Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Ark., vice chairman, and William R. Cotton, a layman from Hastings, Fla., secretary.

The 1988 meeting of the Education Commission will be held June 26-27 in Greenville, S.C.

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Boswell Named
Outstanding Educator

Baptist Press
6/30/87

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--James M. Boswell, president emeritus of Cumberland College in Williamsburg, Ky., has been named recipient of the 1987 Charles D. Johnson Outstanding Educator Award.

The award, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Education Commission, was presented to Boswell during the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools in Kansas City, Mo.

Boswell was president of Cumberland College, a Kentucky Baptist school, from 1947 to 1980.

While Boswell was chief administrator at Cumberland, the school grew from a junior college with a pre-World War II enrollment of 200 to a senior college with a current enrollment of almost 2,100 students.

Prior to becoming president at Cumberland, Boswell was a mathematics and physics professor at the college and also coached the school's basketball team.

The award, given annually to an individual who has made significant contributions to Southern Baptist higher education, honors Charles D. Johnson, who wrote "Higher Education of Southern Baptists" and was chairman of the Education Commission from 1932 to 1953.

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South African Students Find
Antidote For Racial Discord

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
6/30/87

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (BP)--A multiracial band of university students in Cape Town, led by a couple from the United States, has begun developing an antidote to the deadly ingredients brewing in South Africa's cauldron of racial unrest.

They're doing it through a Baptist Student Union (BSU) group, which began about two years ago under the leadership of Southern Baptist missionaries Keith and Terry Blakley near the the University of Cape Town.

Since then, the BSU at the University of Cape Town has grown from a small, struggling group to more than 100 students. BSU members there and in smaller programs at Western Cape and Stellenbosch Universities have begun to set aside prejudices and look at each other as human beings.

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They're slowly forging a formula for racial harmony in a crucible of growing relationships among an unlikely mix of white Americans and a rainbow of South Africans -- black, white, Asian and "colored" (South Africa's term for people of mixed race).

Whether South Africans in general heed that formula or not, the students are learning firsthand that wrath produces personal and societal destruction and love produces an environment in which life can blossom.

The blossom has opened slowly and tentatively under patient nurture by the Blakleys, former Texas Baptist student workers who operate the BSU in their home, where students come into daily contact with them and their three young children.

"I felt I was more accepted at BSU than anywhere," said a black student, who was skeptical at first. "Acceptance creates acceptance."

Acceptance by the Blakleys primed the environment for the students to accept each other, though they circled each other warily in the beginning. But the Blakleys' American nationality and their approach to ministry and spiritual nurture also had a lot to do with their success.

Many students gave them a chance they wouldn't have given a South African because they perceived them as open, non-racial outsiders.

"I wouldn't have joined BSU if they had been South African whites," said a black student who had built up barriers of hurt and distrust.

Students also responded enthusiastically to BSU's concern for ministries to spiritual and physical needs -- especially to Terry Blakley's successful effort to start Khayamandi, a home for South Africa's starving black street children.

"When Terry talked to us about the needs of the black children, we just envisioned giving them a cup of soup," a white student said. "It's phenomenal to see a building with 33 kids living in it. It convinces us the Lord will work through us."

Spiritual nurture has included a variety of approaches, but two things -- the MasterLife discipleship training plan and BSU retreats -- have done most to show students positive counterparts to the cauldron's negative ingredients.

"If we didn't do anything else, I'd do MasterLife," Keith Blakley says. "Students have come into it too shy to talk and come out as maturing Christians who witness to persons of all races and win them to Christ. It's the backbone of everything."

The students agree. "Keith wasn't only interested in numbers, he was interested in me and wanted me to become a disciple of Jesus Christ," a black student said. "MasterLife turned me around."

Against that background, BSU retreats opened up a new way of relating. One retreat, built on the theme, "Father Make Us One," forced them into creative confrontation. Students of all races credit it as a turning point.

Keith Blakley echoes that: "We dealt with what the Scripture says about oneness in Christ and then how we can make that a practical reality in the South African context. We hammered it out in real confrontation and honest sharing -- and it was a life-changing experience."

A white student explained how it set the tone for reconciliation: "We broke into interracial groups and shared how we felt. Blacks admitted hatred. Whites admitted prejudice. It changed the atmosphere. Since then, a spirit of acceptance has begun to jell and we have begun to become colorblind."

"Only two here still treat me as a 'colored,'" added a "colored" student, "and I still see some as 'whites.' But I'm learning to see the merits of what a person can do rather than look at color. Sometimes a human error by a white still causes me to be defensive, but now I try to deal with it instead of being automatically defensive."

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Now he has turned away from violence as an option for solving South African problems toward a career in ministry. A big step toward that came when he repented of deep hatred he felt for anyone in the South African military, which has battled "coloreds" during racial unrest.

At the end of the retreat, he told a white student who served in the army: "Now I can love you and understand you. I realize you're a person like me. You have the same struggles and problems I do. Maybe you don't really want to be in a caspir (large armored vehicle)."

The white student responded that he could never fire on blacks or "coloreds" now that he had learned to see them as people like himself.

The young "colored" man's willingness to give up anger and forgive wasn't easy. Non-whites in South Africa have dealt with deep hurt and feelings of unworthiness from childhood in a society which sends messages in many ways that whites are superior.

"We don't have answers for all problems, but at least we can be with students as they seek them," Keith Blakley said. "Hopefully, BSU can be a melting pot where some misunderstandings can be soothed, some questions answered, some anger dissipated, some prejudice taken away, and a bond of love developed. Only as people come together in oneness in Christ can God really use them and guide South Africa toward revival rather than revolution."

Many South Africans yearn for a revival which would convert their cauldron into a melting pot and discord into the kind of oneness of spirit students find at the Baptist Student Union in Cape Town.

"BSU is a place you can come and be colorblind and unravel your prejudice," a white student said. "You may cringe inside the first time a black puts his arm around you, but then you realize he's the same as you."

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

College President
Gets No Salary

By Terry Barone

Baptist Press
6/30/87

BILLINGS, Mont. (BP)--Bill Robbins is the president of Yellowstone Baptist College, but he doesn't get paid for his work.

Robbins and his wife, Ruth, are Mission Service Corps volunteers from Texas serving at Yellowstone, a four-year Bible college in Billings, Mont.

Mission Service Corps is a volunteer program of the Southern Baptist Convention which gives laypeople the opportunity of serving up to two years in mission work while providing their own support.

A retired professor of psychology from Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas, Robbins said that after retirement he could "only fish and play golf so much. Then I had to do something."

And the Robbinses did. After seeing information about Mission Service Corps in the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the Robbinses wrote the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board requesting information about becoming volunteers.

In 1982, a year after retirement, they traveled to Nevada where they did church survey work. In 1983, they spent three months at Vail Baptist Mission in Red Cliff, Colo., on a preaching assignment.

The Robbinses were then asked to work at the Montana college. They met the college president to talk and pray about their decision.

Robbins said with his academic background and interest in missions and Christian education he felt God "leading us to move to Montana for a year to serve as academic dean for the college."

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In the 1960s, the Robbinses lived in South Dakota, where he was teaching. While there, they helped begin Huron Baptist Church in Huron.

"We had a taste of what pioneer missions was all about," she said. "Because of the positive experience we had, we knew we would definitely be interested in going to Montana."

Robbins agreed, adding he felt sure God used all of his "experiences and drew them out to use them at the proper time."

While serving as academic dean, he taught psychology. Near the end of their term, the former president resigned and the board of directors asked Robbins to serve as president.

Robbins is busy with administrative duties and teaching psychology classes at the school owned by the Montana Southern Baptist Fellowship. She also is busy managing the book store and serving as secretary to the academic dean.

Both say working at the college is "a fulltime job that has been a good experience."

"We've been able to do a lot to help make Yellowstone a real college," Robbins said.

When the couple first went to Billings in 1982, the school had five students. Now 27 are enrolled. "We have had an increase in enrollment each semester since coming to the school," she said.

All the students, faculty and administration are born-again Christians, according to the Robbinses. "This has been marvelous," Robbins explained. "Because of this, we have seen our function to create an atmosphere in which discipleship can take place."

Robbins also has helped the college organize a strong Baptist Student Union on campus. She said the students have a strong ministry through puppets and other activities.

"Members of the BSU are ministering and working in churches throughout the state weekly," Robbins said, adding this is valuable for the students, since they are being trained as Christian vocational workers.

During this past school year, Robbins started a spiritual emphasis week on campus. Don Williford, pastor of First Baptist Church of Brownwood, Texas, was the guest speaker.

The Robbinses were members of First Baptist when they lived in Brownwood. "They (First Baptist members) have been very supportive of us, not only through their constant prayers, but through monetary gifts to the college," Mrs. Robbins said. Two Sunday school classes and a few individuals in the church financially support the school on a regular basis.

Robbins said other MSC volunteers serving at the school are "a big help." They are Ken and Jane Cunningham, maintenance and building of Texas; Ida Owen, librarian, Mississippi; Harold and Judy Veltkamp, maintenance and book store worker, Montana; and Mable Moran, cook, Texas.

When asked how long he would serve at the school, Robbins said: "I don't know. But I will know when the Lord is through with me, and I'll be ready to move on to what he has in store for me."

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Just 1 Year Out Of Seminary,
Arnold Makes Padre Island Waves

By Elizabeth Watson

Baptist Press
6/30/87

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, Texas (BP)--Charlie Arnold's most effective pastoral tools are sunscreen and gospel tracts.

Most of Arnold's peers from the 1986 graduating class of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, are busy tending more traditional flocks. But Arnold's pastoral role includes meeting summer vacationers and "winter Texans" on beaches of South Padre Island, a skinny five-mile resort island just off the southern Texas coast.

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As pastor of the island's only church, Arnold works with South Padre's 1,066 permanent residents, most of whom are retirees. Arnold practices what he calls "lifestyle" ministry when he's not preparing sermons for the 79-member Island Baptist Church or his weekly columns for the island newspaper.

"As I go about my daily routine, I try to be everyone's friend in the name of Jesus," he said.

Arnold packs tracts in his raquetball cans and distributes them to people he meets at the health club. Recently he led the club manager to become a Christian.

There isn't a permanent resident on the island who doesn't know Arnold. People regularly stop him on the street and thank him for his question-and-answer newspaper column, "The Catechizer."

On Sundays Arnold dons a tie for his pulpit role. But his congregation's apparel ranges from cut-offs and Hawaiian shirts to three-piece suits.

"We almost always have more visitors than members," he said.

The island's biggest influx of visitors comes at spring break. This March more than 200,000 college revelers swamped the island.

Island Baptist Church, joining forces with 10 Baptist Student Unions, sponsored sunburn aid stations, volleyball games, concerts and bonfires. Church members and BSU students distributed more than 8,000 gospel tracts, resulting in 55 commitments of faith in Christ.

"We'd crash parties at hotels and ask students if they had received a 'souvenir' tract yet," Arnold said. "Most of them would dive for the tracts."

On the back of the tracts were printed the church telephone number and an invitation to call anytime they needed help. "We told them to call us if they got too drunk to drive home, lost their money or got in trouble," Arnold said.

"We got several hundred calls, eight of which resulted in professions of faith," he said.

Arnold wants to establish a permanent "mission outreach post" on the island. "More than 5 million people visit South Padre Island each year," he said. "We need a facility that will serve as a bunkhouse for mission workers and Sunday school space."

Arnold has 11 Texas Baptist youth groups lined up this summer for mission projects on the island. "With 39,000 people per day visiting the island from virtually every country in the world, the opportunity is astounding," he said.

The fact that Arnold graduated from seminary just one year ago doesn't limit his vision or determination. He has plans to make waves on Padre Island.