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Southern Baptists Urged
To 'Run Risks' In Missions

By Karen Benson

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--The president of the largest missionary-sending agency in the world has challenged Southern Baptists to "run risks never before run" if they are to win the world for Christ.

R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, claims Bold Mission Thrust will never be successful until individual Christians make significant, sacrificial changes in their thinking and lifestyles.

Bold Mission Thrust is Southern Baptists' plan to do their part to reach the world for Christ by the year 2000.

Speaking through a recently released book, "World in View," Parks claims that "if global evangelization is our consuming passion, we will budget differently, live differently and give differently. We will sacrifice to be the people God is calling us to be."

There must be a "bottom line" if Christians are to be truly missions-minded, Parks says: "We cannot live in comfort, do everything we want to do for ourselves and still reach the world for Jesus Christ. Leftovers will not do."

Global evangelization will not happen, Parks claims, until Christians free themselves from the "unimportant and the trivial."

"We need to grapple with the challenge of allowing ourselves to be freed from material-centered concerns in order to give ourselves to the spiritual concerns of reaching the world with God's good news in Jesus Christ."

Southern Baptists also need to be willing to change the way they think about missions, Parks says, urging all to redraw their "mission maps" and seek to view the world "as God sees it."

Traditional methods of doing missions must be coupled with non-traditional ways of reaching others for Christ, Parks says. But this openness to change will not come without fervent prayer, he says.

"We must pray for openness to this new day and the new opportunities before us," he says. "We must pray because many of our maps are out of date, and we lack wisdom. We must pray as we give ourselves to learning more about this world and how to reach it with the good news of the gospel. We must pray as we discipline ourselves to identify priorities."

Further, Parks says, "We need to identify sharp priorities with the full awareness that to accept them means we will stop doing some of the things we are now doing in order to get on with more important things."

All of this means "we must run risks that we have never run before," Parks says. "The course is uncharted. We have no maps complete in every detail. We have not been there before. We have not talked enough about kingdom matters beyond our own perspective before." But what hangs in the balance, he says, "is the salvation of multitudes of people."

Parks' book, "World in View," is the second release in the A.D. 2000 Series, a joint publishing venture of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., and New Hope publishers in Birmingham, Ala. New Hope is a publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

Pressley Rounds Up
Cowboys For Christ

By Mark Wingfield

HALTOM CITY, Texas (BP)--Three words on an oversized foam cowboy hat in Ted Pressley's office roundup his ministry -- "Jesus loves Cowboys."

The souvenir hat is one of many western items crowding the walls of Pressley's triangular office in an old bank building in northeastern Fort Worth, Texas. From these headquarters, Pressley leads an evangelistic organization that includes 108 chapters in 17 countries.

After graduation from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1972, Pressley founded Cowboys for Christ as a ministry to the rodeo profession. His work has now expanded to include the entire livestock industry.

Pressley preaches at horse shows, stock shows and other livestock events several times each week. Now approaching 50, Pressley is a slender man, with red hair and a handlebar mustache.

Prior to attending Southwestern in Fort Worth, Texas, Pressley managed quarter horse and thoroughbred ranches and competed in rodeos.

"God saved my soul and called me to preach," he said. "I really didn't want to go to seminary. So I put in for Southwestern because I figured I couldn't get in -- and there we were."

Pressley is certain his ministry should be to cowboys: "God called me to the cowboys and I'm going to stay with them. The cowboys will receive their own kind." An outsider may have the same gospel but might not get the cowboys' attention, he said.

Pressley's commitment to cowboys has also led him to minister in prisons. "A lot of cowboys get in prison," he said. "They don't know Jesus and end up in the pen."

Pressley preaches to anyone who will listen. "If the sucker's got a soul, I'll tell him about Jesus," he said.

That openness takes him to places great and small. One day he may preach in a small New Mexico village to 10 men and the next day to thousands in a coliseum. "There's no difference. A soul's a soul," Pressley said.

At a recent horse show in South Dakota, Pressley was on the program "right next to the hootchy-kootchy girls," he said. Ninety-nine people became Christians.

Cowboys for Christ publishes a monthly newspaper called The Christian Ranchman. Pressley also writes a syndicated column called "Rule Book Talk" for secular livestock magazines. All rodeo riders have a rule book they must follow, Pressley said, adding, "My rule book, of course, is the Bible."

Pressley has appeared on television programs on CBN, PTL and the BBC. Cowboys for Christ produces video programs that are shown on cable networks around the country.

Despite the far-flung reaches of his ministry, Pressley realizes he cannot single-handedly win the world for Christ. "God told me, 'I want you bloom where you're planted,'" he said. "If you bloom where you're planted, seeds are going to fall and spread."

Seeds of the Cowboys for Christ ministry have blossomed all over the world, so that Pressley's ministry often extends beyond the cowboy circuit, especially in foreign countries. Last year while in Poland, he preached at the nation's largest Catholic church, home church of Pope John Paul II. From that trip he has a Polish coat-of-armor the people gave him. That token hangs on his office wall among the branding irons, spurs and stuffed animal heads.

Pressley also has hung a collection of horseshoes on the wall, with the open ends facing down. He purposely hung them that way, against the cowboy tradition that horseshoes should be hung upside down so the luck won't run out. "I don't live by luck," Pressley explained. "I live by Jesus."

Samford Gifts
Top \$16 Million

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Private contributions to Samford University exceeded \$16.2 million in 1986-87, eclipsing the previous record of \$10.1 million set in 1985-86, President Thomas E. Corts reported. The school's fiscal year ended May 31.

The surge in gifts was sparked by early receipts from Samford Commitment, a fund-raising campaign which passed its \$28 million goal this spring after only eight months of its planned three-year solicitation schedule.

Gifts and pledges to the campaign are expected to exceed \$31 million by the end of the current fiscal year, Corts said.

The Samford Annual Fund, earmarked for current operating needs of the Alabama Baptist school, also set an all-time record, going over \$1 million for the first time.

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Seminary Student Starts First
Black Mission In Mississippi

By Breena Kent Paine

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Churches that once were racist are now opening up, according to Eddie Jones, a student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary who started the first black Southern Baptist mission in Mississippi.

To become a Southern Baptist and fulfill his "vision" of an evangelistic church with outreach, ministry, Sunday school and church training programs for blacks, Jones had to cross barriers of racism.

Jones, who graduated in May from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, was not always a Southern Baptist. His decision to join the denomination only came three years ago, when he wanted to start a church that would emphasize outreach in ministry to blacks.

"A lot of pastors in our area were not concerned about starting up another church. They felt like we had enough," said Jones. But he felt there was no ministry to blacks that stressed the things he wanted stressed.

Jones had started a Bible study at noon in a shipyard in Pascagoula, Miss. One of the men who attended the Bible study suggested that he talk with the director of ministry for Jackson County Baptist Association, David Lee.

Lee's "prayer was to do some work with blacks," said Jones. For years the association had been trying to start such a work but had been unsuccessful. Jones' vision was an answer to that prayer.

"He said they would help me if I started a Southern Baptist mission," said Jones.

So, Jones was ordained as a Southern Baptist minister in early 1984. "One of the things that made me excited about being Southern Baptist was that they had the same vision." They had the funds, they cared and they were willing to help "without any regret," he said.

"There was an elderly white man at the questioning session for my ordination. He was weeping and crying, and said that he'd been praying that the Lord would have a ministry with the blacks. And he was happy and excited ... that the Lord would let him live to see this day."

But Jones had many barriers to cross. "A lot of blacks and a lot of whites let me know they were against it," he said. "National Baptists wanted to stay National Baptist, and Southern Baptists, Southern Baptist.

"But what color is love?" asked Jones. "Love is you and me, that's what it really is. I am love -- Jesus Christ in me." Many are "blinded," he added. "They don't see the real reason why I'm there. They see it as, 'You sold out to the white man,' rather than 'God's using you to reach people for the Lord.'

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"But we shouldn't look at Christians as white Southern Baptists and black National Baptists; we should look at them as Christians," he said.

Faced with criticism and prejudice, Jones "asked the Lord to confirm my ministry in Southern Baptist work." And God did. At the first Southern Baptist church where he preached, two people accepted Christ as Savior. Jones took the sign as a green light.

He started Christ Temple Baptist Church in his living room. However, in the meantime, he preached in other Southern Baptist churches. "A lot of racial areas I went into just to break the ice," said Jones.

He tried, unsuccessfully at first, to find a church to sponsor the new mission. Finally, Ingalls Avenue Baptist Church in Pascagoula, Miss., agreed to be a sponsor.

It was not long before several other churches began "pitching in and helping out," said Jones. Now "the churches are all open" to helping out the black Southern Baptist mission.

In fact, two other black churches in Mississippi have become Southern Baptist.

Jones said: "The Mississippi Baptist Convention has opened their doors up to blacks in more ways than one. I don't see any prejudice standing in the way. It's totally a major breakthrough. We are examples of what it really should be."

In three years, Christ Temple Baptist Church has grown from seven people meeting in the Jones' living room to an enrollment of about 160 meeting in an actual church building. In the first year alone, 30 to 40 people were baptized.

Sponsored by neighboring churches and the Jackson County Baptist Association, the church maintains mission status but is involved in a number of ministries in the community. "We have a good outreach program, a food closet, a clothing closet, a bus ministry to bring in the poor, low-income areas," Jones reported.

He has been trained by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board to be a black church development specialist in the areas of Sunday school and church training. "I work with the state Sunday school and training director to help meet the needs of blacks in the state of Mississippi in those areas," said Jones.

He and his wife, Barbara, have four children -- Regina, 9; Kena, 7; Christina, 5; and Eddie Jr., 8 months.

"We want to be a beacon light in our city," Jones said, "that kind of light that would challenge all churches, whether black or white, to work for the Lord."

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(BP) photo available upon request from New Orleans Seminary.

Volunteers Find Ministry
Where Need Is Greatest

By Frank Wm. White

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Randy and Mary Ann Galloway wanted to find a place to serve God and minister to students where the need was greatest.

When they became Mission Service Corps workers in Canada six months ago, they found what they were seeking.

"In Canada the work is there, the needs are there but there are no workers," Galloway said while attending a Mission Service Corps student worker orientation recently at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

There are only four paid Southern Baptist campus ministers in all of Canada, with three additional Mission Service Corps student worker volunteers, he pointed out.

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Galloway is working with colleges and universities in Vancouver, British Columbia, with Capilano Southern Baptist Association, and at the same time assisting in planting a church.

The Galloways' arrival doubled the number of Southern Baptist student workers for the 20 colleges and two universities in Vancouver with a total of more than 100,000 students.

Galloway envisions student work becoming a foundation for winning students to Christ and then relying on those students to help plant churches throughout the nation.

The need for establishing churches in Canada is evidenced by the fact that less than 1 percent of the 1.5 million people in the Vancouver area go to any church. "Churches are not a part of the culture in western Canada," said Galloway.

What he described as a basic distrust of any religious organization has made it difficult to establish churches. The Galloways are assisting Warren and Barbara McKenzie as church planters at South Lonsdale Baptist Chapel in North Vancouver.

The McKenzies began three years ago, and the church now has about 40 members.

Starting campus new work is not a new challenge to the Galloways who, in eight years while he served as Baptist Student Union director at California Baptist College in Riverside, started BSUs on seven of the 15 campuses in the area.

Leaving that work -- and Mary Ann's career as director of health services and health and hygiene instructor -- was difficult for the Galloways. "The idea of planting a church in a new country and starting new campus work was appealing to us," he said.

Galloway hopes to be able to recruit and train new BSU workers for other campuses.

Unlike the job in Riverside, where Galloway was paid by the local association and the state convention, as Mission Service Corps volunteers, the Galloways must raise their own funds.

"We thought that would be the biggest hurdle, but fund-raising relationships have been great," Galloway said.

Friends and former BSU acquaintances from their native Texas as well as BSU associates are among the Southern Baptists from throughout the convention who have helped fund their work, Galloway said.

MSC volunteers are commissioned by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Volunteers in student work are selected jointly by the Home Mission Board and the national student ministries department of the Sunday School Board.