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October 12, 1987

87-152

Subcommittee Reviews Tax
Exemption Of TV Ministries

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

WASHINGTON (BP)--A House subcommittee looked at the application of federal tax rules to television ministries during a hearing that featured tax administrators and religious broadcasters.

In addition to testimony by Internal Revenue Service and Treasury Department officials, the House Oversight Subcommittee also heard from some of the best-known names in television ministries, including Jerry Falwell of the Old Time Gospel Hour, D. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Ministries and John Ankerberg of the John Ankerberg Evangelistic Association.

Subcommittee Chairman J.J. Pickle, D-Texas, said the hearing was scheduled to help answer questions raised during recent months about the tax-exempt status of television ministries. He emphasized the need to consider the IRS's administration and enforcement of present tax law and television ministries' interpretation of and compliance with those rules.

"I want to make it clear that the subcommittee is not undertaking to investigate any specific television ministry or tax-exempt organization," Pickle said. "We are not questioning religious practices or beliefs. The subcommittee will be addressing only those issues relating to the federal tax rules."

Lawrence Gibbs, IRS commissioner, described the difficulties his agency has in administering tax rules when a television ministry claims exemption as a church rather than as a religious organization.

Gibbs called the lack of a statutory definition of the term "church" as the "first and most basic problem in administering the tax laws in this area." He said Congress has left the determination of whether an organization is a church to the IRS, the courts and the organization itself.

Although he said some television ministries do not claim church status, Gibbs testified that special exceptions created by Congress make classification as a church more favorable than classification as a religious organization. Churches and organizations that claim church status are exempt from applying with the IRS for federal income tax exemption, from filing annual information returns with the IRS and from being subject to regular audit reviews by the IRS, he said.

"In my discussion of these rules, I fully appreciate the sensitivity of the issues and the difficulty of establishing statutory rules that protect the independence of churches while also protecting the interests of all taxpayers from the few who would abuse these protections," Gibbs said. "However, I wish to emphasize that the rules pertaining to churches are very difficult to administer. This is true not only because of the sensitive legal and constitutional questions or interpretation that we are regularly required to make, but because the service does not have ready access to basic information that provides the foundation for our examination program of both taxable and other non-taxable organizations."

Gibbs listed the need for public confidence in tax administration as the "most compelling reason" for a public record in exempt organization matters. He said since church organizations are exempt from submitting such records, "this element of public confidence may be missing." He added the congressional purpose behind the public availability of such records is "that publicity itself is a check against potential abuses."

The commissioner told subcommittee members about the establishment of an exempt organization advisory group that recently held its first meeting.

"A lively topic of discussion concerned the problems of administering Internal Revenue Code provisions relating to churches," Gibbs said. "We received many helpful comments and suggestions. One of these was a request by church representatives to begin a new dialogue directly with the service, in the same spirit of mutual understanding that led to a successful resolution of the problem of Form 990 return filings by integrated church auxiliaries.

"Working together, Congress, the church community and the administration may be able to formulate new rules or interpretations that adequately protect the rights of the many honest churches and other religious organizations while allowing us to detect and deter the abuses of a few."

In their questioning of Gibbs, subcommittee members were divided over whether changes are needed in current tax laws that relate to churches.

Rep. Richard T. Schulze, R-Pa., told Gibbs he "feels apologetic" because the IRS has not been given the tools it needs to do its job. Rep. Beryl Anthony Jr., D-Ark., countered that Congress has provided adequate tools, but the IRS has failed to use them.

Arguing against Rep. Ronnie G. Flippo's, D-Ala., statement that the current law is adequate, Rep. Charles B. Rangel, D-N.Y., said Congress should make changes in the law. Rangel asked, "What in God's name could be wrong with having churches ... tell where they got their money and how they spend it?"

The religious broadcasters who appeared before the panel testified that their organizations meet all federal tax rules and provided documentation to support that testimony. Several of the witnesses voiced concern about the possibility of excessive governmental entanglement in churches if current tax laws are changed.

The subcommittee also heard about efforts by religious broadcasters to police themselves. A proposed plan recently approved by the National Religious Broadcasters board of directors would require all members to have external audits, make public their financial statements, file annual IRS information forms, avoid nepotism in employment, publish the incomes of principal employees, and maintain certain standards and records in fund raising.

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Southern Baptist Testifies
During TV Ministries Hearing

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC
Baptist Press
10/12/87

WASHINGTON (BP)--His name may not have been as well known as the other religious broadcasters who appeared before a House subcommittee, but Larry Jones' testimony gained the praise of even the most skeptical member of that panel.

Jones, a Southern Baptist from Oklahoma City who heads Larry Jones International Ministries and Feed the Children, was among a list of witnesses ranging from IRS Commissioner Lawrence Gibbs to television evangelist Jerry Falwell who testified during a House Oversight Subcommittee hearing on the tax-exempt status of television ministries.

In describing the work of Feed the Children -- an international hunger relief organization that has distributed millions of pounds of food both internationally and domestically and sponsored other assistance projects -- Jones emphasized the important role television can play in reaching people who are able to give and informing them of the needs of people who are less fortunate.

Jones told the panel his organization last year received donations valued at \$22 million, with 89 percent of those funds going to projects and capital expenditures. But, he added, recent public skepticism about television ministries has resulted in a 25 percent decrease in the organization's fund raising.

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"We're here and these hearings are being conducted because some in television ministries failed to regulate adequately their own house," Jones said. "It's unfortunate but true that most times when the government intervenes in problem areas, it's because we citizens did not take care of our own business. We in the community of televangelists must be more publicly accountable."

Jones said he thinks assisting America's needy should be the mission of all television ministries.

"Sure, it's wrong to commit adultery, but it's also wrong to let little babies go to bed hungry and 1.5 million American children suffer from malnutrition that includes one out of two non-white children," he said. "God forgave an adulterer, but he did not forgive the rich man who tore down his barns to build bigger barns."

Along with recent events within television ministries, Jones cited "the government's deaf ear to the cries of the hungry" as his biggest hindrance to accomplishing that mission.

"I have great respect for the institution of the presidency and for President Ronald Reagan," he testified. "However, if the president's aides are not telling him what's going on in the basement of the White House, how can we expect him to know what's going on in Nebraska? There are hungry and homeless people sleeping on the grates right outside the White House. And while presidential candidates make children a political ping-pong ball, those same children are going hungry. Their empty stomachs won't wait until 1988."

"But I firmly believe that we cannot expect the government to provide all the funds, and we sure know the government does not have all the right answers. Again I state, the church and the practice of televangelism should be taking a significant role in reaching and helping the masses."

Jones said his hope for the hearing was not the passage of new tax laws, because he thinks adequate laws exist. Rather, he said, he hopes the hearing might expose the good as well as the bad aspects of television ministries.

"It's providing an opportunity for ministries like ours to stand openly under questioning and examination," he said. "Our work is the work of the Good Samaritan, and in these dark days we need this exposure to get our positive message across."

"And, hopefully, one day politicians and preachers can stop smirking at each other and begin an honorable partnership for the good of our fellow citizens in need. This truly should be our joint mission and our joint responsibility."

Shifting from the harsh questioning he had posed to previous witnesses, Rep. Charles B. Rangel, D-N.Y., called Jones "a breath of fresh air" and added Jones' work was "truly Christ's work." Rangel also told the Oklahoman he would like to talk about the possibility of working together on a project in New York.

Rep. Beryl Anthony Jr., D-Ark., said he had watched Jones' television program occasionally and believed him to be "doing the work of God."

Other subcommittee members praised Jones for his financial openness and responsibility and expressed the hope of working with him in hunger relief efforts.

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Lewis Claims Deceased Trustee
Member Not A Champion For Women

By Leisa Hammett-Goad

N-HMB
Baptist Press
10/12/87

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptist Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis told employees in an chapel service two days following the death of Beth McGhee -- a board director who died during the agency's October meeting after speaking against a motion explaining why they voted last year to deny ordained women pastoral aid -- was not championing women pastors.

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The Board's motion, on which Mrs. McGhee had commented before dying of a heart attack, included a portion of a 1984 convention resolution encouraging "the service of women in all aspects of church life and work other than pastoral functions and leadership roles entailing ordination."

The motion's final paragraph read, "We feel this action of our Board is commensurate with the faith and practice of the majority of Baptist churches affiliated with our Southern Baptist Convention."

Mrs. McGhee, of Tucson, Ariz., addressed the motion and after pleading for peace, her last words were, "That last paragraph (of the Board's motion) is a divisive statement. I think it would be offensive to those of our constituency who do not interpret the Scriptures as the majority of the messengers and the Home Mission Board interprets the Scripture. In the interest of peace and bringing our people together in oneness, may we delete that last paragraph?" McGhee questioned.

Moments later, she collapsed in her seat. She was attended to by three physicians -- all board directors -- and taken to a nearby hospital where she was pronounced dead.

In chapel, Lewis said that instead of advocating women pastors and women's ordination, Mrs. McGhee was concerned that the board motion might be offensive. "She was for peace. She did not want us to do something that would cause further division and strife," Lewis explained.

HMB Marketing Director Kitty Robertson, who knew Mrs. McGhee, told chapel attendees that Mrs. McGhee -- having read the proposed motion -- came to the board meeting concerned about peace. Mrs. Robertson said that although Mrs. McGhee is concerned about women in ministry, peace was the concern which moved her to speak.

Board member Dorothy Kilpatrick of Salinas, Calif., who roomed with Mrs. McGhee the night before her death, told Mrs. Robertson she and Mrs. McGhee had read Psalms and other scriptures and prayed about the issue until early morning.

Mrs. Robertson said Mrs. Kilpatrick told her that Mrs. McGhee said God was leading her to speak on the motion, "not to argue with it, but to suggest for that board meeting to be the beginning of peaceful coexistence with people who differ."

Mrs. Kilpatrick told Mrs. Robertson that Mrs. McGhee went to bed, "feeling at peace, knowing that God wanted her to say something about peace."

Mrs. Robertson said addressing the board may have been the most difficult thing Mrs. McGhee had done in her life. "She had spoken in board meetings rarely, always speaking to fairness and accuracy, never as an emotional champion."

Mrs. Robertson added that those who knew Mrs. McGhee, in her church and state WMU leadership agreed that she "lived her life by the principle of love -- even when she differed with you, it was always with love."

Lewis said that he talked with Mrs. McGhee's husband, Harold McGhee, who noted a history of heart problems in Mrs. McGhee's family. "He was not totally surprised that this might occur, although she had not had any particular problems previously," Lewis reported.

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Three Churches Damaged
In California Quake

By Cameron Crabtree

N-10
(Calk)

Baptist Press
10/12/87

WHITTIER, Calif. (BP)--Three Southern Baptist churches sustained extensive damage following an earthquake and a series of aftershocks that rocked the central Los Angeles area in early October.

One building at El Monte Calvary Church complex will be "condemned as unsafe" according to L.G. Chaddick, associate director of Christian social ministries for the Southern Baptist General Convnetion of California.

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Two other Los Angeles churches, El Camino Truth and Life and Primera Iglesia Bautista del Sur also received "extensive damage," Chaddick said.

Most of the damage occurred in sub-standard housing areas occupied by many Mexican and Latin American immigrants and refugees, Chaddick said. Many of them are too fearful to go back into their homes but because they are residing in the country illegally, won't talk to city or relief officials, he added. As a result, "tent cities" are rising up all over east and central Los Angeles in parks and other open areas, Chaddick said.

Chaddick, also a Red Cross official, has worked to coordinate a bilingual volunteer team to go in and talk with the immigrants in order to assess their needs and help them back into their homes. That has been complicated, however, as city inspectors have condemned many of their apartment buildings and homes, Chaddick said.

Severe aftershocks have not allayed any fears either, Chaddick said. Following the initial earthquake which registered 6.1 on the Richter Scale, an aftershock jolted the city again with 5.5 force.

Relief assistance in ministry strategies were discussed during a meeting of about 20 ministers Monday at Pico Rivera First Bilingual Baptist Church. Such meetings are necessary, Chaddick said, because unknown and isolated pockets of affected areas have made damage estimates difficult.

The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has allocated \$5,000 to Chaddick for relief assistance. The funds will be used at his discretion. A presidential declaration of disaster has been made, Chaddick said, opening the way for numerous financial resources and services.

California Baptist volunteers will be called for later to help repair structures, counsel with earthquake victims or provide general assistance to relief workers.

At least six men from the Texas Spanish Brotherhood Department were scheduled to arrive in Los Angeles Oct. 10 to serve as interpreters in the disaster assistance centers opened by the federal government. They were to have been briefed upon arrival by the federal emergency management association and to begin work Sunday, Oct. 11.

Following work at the federal centers they will supplement work at the Red Cross shelters which have been overflowing since the initial quake.

Whittier area ministers met Wednesday to coordinate long-term crisis ministries and will be conducting crisis intervention seminars next week.

The Los Angeles area continues to be plagued by strong aftershocks. At least six people have been killed by the disaster.

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Church Supports Worker
Charged With Child Abuse

By Cameron Crabtree

N-CD
(Calif.)
Baptist Press
10/12/87

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--Surrounded by church friends who maintain his innocence, a former Southern Baptist minister was charged with molesting 10 children during the time he worked at an Army base day-care center in San Francisco.

Gary W. Hambright, 34, was indicted for federal grand jury following a Federal Bureau of Investigation probe into allegations of child abuse while he was a civilian employee of the Presidio Child Development Center from May 1985 to November 1986.

At his arraignment Oct. 3, Hambright pleaded not guilty to 10 counts of performing lewd acts on children, ages two to five, and two counts of oral copulation. Instructed not to be with any child under 10 without an adult present, he remained free without having to post bail and was released from the court on his own recognizance.

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Following arraignment proceedings, Hambright told reporters he was innocent of all charges against him and described the situation as a "painful experience." He added he was "bewildered" by it.

The case drew media attention two months ago when parents of children who attended the day-care center while Hambright was employed there began publicly circulating accusations of widespread abuse.

Hambright was released from the day-care center last November after similar charges involving a three-year-old boy were alleged. Formal charges were then brought against him in January but dismissed in March after the judge ruled the evidence hearsay. The judge did tell prosecutors, however, they could refile the case with new stronger evidence.

A former staff member of a church in Washington and a student at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., in 1981, Hambright has received widespread support from the church where he is a member, San Francisco's Dolores Street Baptist Church.

"All we know, all we're going on is we know Gary, and Gary said it didn't happen," said Cecil White, a church member. "Frankly we wouldn't be afraid of him working with the children in our church."

White said the Dolores Street church received some criticism for supporting Hambright but responded, "In any case where a church member is charged with anything, the congregation must support the person. This is a community. This is a relationship. ... You don't sever ties."

"We realize we are taking a chance by supporting Gary, but we really can't do anything else," said White. "We won't stop loving him anyway, not if there is some validity to the relationship. ... You support your brothers and sisters."

When Hambright was released from his Presidio post, mounting legal fees and loss of income forced him to give up his apartment. Members of the Dolores Street congregation then took Hambright into their homes and helped finance his legal costs, White said. Hambright's private attorney, Rommel Bondoc, told the California Southern Baptist, newsjournal of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, he was "amazed" at the support he has received from the church.

White said that has been the reaction of a number of people, some who admire the church for its stand and others who are put off by it. Hambright's statement at the press conference "solidified the church even more" in support of him, White said.

Two other church members, Tom Butler and Jane Medema, told news reporters following the post arraignment press conference they supported Hambright. Butler told the San Francisco Chronicle that Hambright lived in his home for six months after the initial investigation and that he had no hesitation about letting him stay with his children.

"If we had just written him off, I don't know what he'd do," said White. "He's a part of us. We care for him. We won't separate ourselves from him no matter what happens."

Hambright will be represented by a public defender but no date has been set for his trial. If convicted he faces up to 96 years in prison and \$3 million in fines.

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Southwestern Professor
Robert Douglass Dies

N-10
(SWBTS)

Baptist Press
10/12/87

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Robert Douglass, professor of music history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, for 32 years, died Oct. 12 of cancer.

Douglass had retired from Southwestern as distinguished professor of musicology in July 1986. He and his wife, Elaine, had planned to devote their retirement years as short-term volunteer foreign missionaries.

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Mrs. Douglass is a retired public school music teacher. The couple had learned Spanish and already had made several trips to Spanish-speaking countries to do mission work.

Douglass' interest in missions began in the 1960s when he wrote a radio program on great oratorios for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. The program was translated into Spanish for use by 450 radio stations in Spanish-speaking countries. Douglass later said that project showed him the potential for music in missions.

Just before retirement, Douglass applied his Spanish-speaking skills by teaching for eight weeks at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Trujillo, Peru. Douglass provided areas of expertise that the small faculty of the Peruvian seminary didn't have. He also was able to minister in the nearby churches on weekends.

Douglass also was music critic for the the Fort Worth Star-Telegram for 20 years.

Douglass earned the bachelor of music, master of music and doctor of philosophy degrees from North Texas State University.

He is survived by his wife, Elaine; a son, Robert, of Fort Worth; a daughter, Melanie Douglass Brooks, of Burleson; one grandson, Cody Brooks; and a sister, Mary Douglass, of Fort Worth.

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Senate OKs Non-Profit
Postal Rates Subsidy

N-BJO

Baptist Press
10/12/87

WASHINGTON (BP)--The first appropriations bill for fiscal year 1988 to pass both houses of Congress contains enough federal funds to subsidize current postal rates for non-profit publications, including state Baptist newspapers and some church newsletters.

Both the Senate and House versions of the Treasury-Postal Service appropriations bill, which has gone to a conference committee to work out differences between the two, contain enough funding for revenue foregone, which subsidizes reduced postal rates for non-profit mailers, to maintain current rate levels through September 1988. A Postal Service spokesman said non-profit rates could go up before then if a general rate increase is instituted, a development considered likely.

In introducing the spending package, Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., said the measure's \$51 million for revenue foregone provides the "bare minimum" level necessary to maintain current rates. But Sen. Pete V. Domenici, R-N.M., reminded his colleagues the appropriation for revenue foregone is "a very long-standing objection of the White House and our president."

Despite administration opposition, the Senate bill passed 84-7.

The conference committee is not expected to alter the amount of revenue foregone funding.

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Mayor Declares Hispanic
Seminary Day On Anniversary

By Mark Wingfield

N-(D)
(SUBS)

Baptist Press
10/12/87

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--To the sounds of maracas and Spanish guitars, friends of Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary celebrated the school's 40th anniversary Oct. 5-6.

More than 500 people gathered under a blue-and-white circus tent on the seminary grounds Oct. 6 for a barbeque luncheon hosted by President Daniel Rivera. Another 120 attended an anniversary banquet the night before.

At the barbeque, San Antonio Mayor Pro Tem Frank Wing read a proclamation from Mayor Henry Cisneros declaring "Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary Anniversary Day." Wing, city council member for the seminary area, said the school has "stood as a spiritual witness to the city of San Antonio" and is "an integral part" of the city's educational system.

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Other officials of city, county and state government brought greetings, along with representatives of the San Antonio Baptist Association, Texas Baptist Woman's Missionary Union and Baptist General Convention of Texas.

County Commissioner John Longoria said, "Only God could tell us how many thousands of souls have been reached through this institution."

Mauriece Johnston, representing Texas WMU, said the women of Texas and Hispanic Seminary have been "laborers together with God." Texas WMU provided the 12-acre tract where the school now stands in addition to scholarships and other building funds through the years.

Manuel Rodriguez, president of the Mexican Baptist Convention and a graduate of the seminary, recalled how he came to the school unable to read or write either Spanish or English. He couldn't even complete the application forms, he said.

But because the faculty and staff saw potential in him and trained him, today he is pastor of a prominent Hispanic congregation, First Hispanic Baptist Church in San Antonio.

From the beginning, Hispanic Seminary has had an open-door admissions policy. After the school's merger with Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1982, other accredited degree programs were added that require at least a high school diploma.

This flexibility to meet each student's need was emphasized by former seminary president H.B. Ramsour in a chapel service before the barbeque. Ramsour spoke to a standing-room-only crowd of students, former students and seminary supporters.

"God can make a preacher out of anybody who is willing to commit himself to God and the Word of God," Ramsour said.

Throughout the anniversary celebration, Hispanic Seminary's choral groups performed Gospel music in Spanish and English. At the barbeque, a small group of musicians strolled from table to table singing and playing guitars.

The banquet focused on Hispanic Seminary's "glorious past and brilliant future."

Missionary Paul Siebenmann began the school in the Baptist Good Will Center in San Antonio in 1947 with the help of San Antonio Baptist Association. In 1962, the Baptist General Convention of Texas assumed responsibility for the seminary because it had grown too large for one association to support.

Then, in 1982, the school merged with Southwestern Seminary to further increase its resources. At that time, the school's name was changed from Mexican Baptist Bible Institute to Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary.

In just 40 years, Hispanic Seminary has grown from 15 night school students to more than 400 students in San Antonio and satellite locations around the state. Classes are taught primarily in the Spanish language.

Vernon Elmore, retired pastor of First Baptist Church in Corpus Christi, Texas, was pastor of Baptist Temple in San Antonio when Siebenmann began the seminary. Elmore recalled that a turning point in the school's history came when the Texas WMU became involved. "The idea finally struck us that if we could ever get the women of Texas interested in the school we would have it made," he said.

With proper care, Hispanic Seminary's glorious past can become a brilliant future, Russell Dilday and Davis Cooper said. Dilday is president of Southwestern Seminary. Cooper is a past chairman of Southwestern's board of trustees and a current member of Hispanic Seminary's executive committee.

Dilday brought a message based on Hebrews 13, reading Scripture in both English and Spanish. "We have an unforgettable heritage to remember," Dilday said. But in honoring those leaders who made the school possible, Baptists must not forget the example of Jesus, "the one leader who does not change, who does not die."

Cooper said the "true task" of Hispanic Seminary is "to penetrate the barrios where Hispanic men and women who need to hear the way of the cross live." Unless Baptists reach out to these people, "we're going to find ourselves engulfed in a Hispanic population that has become totally secularized."

Although enrollment of Hispanic students in theological schools across the United States is declining, enrollment at Hispanic Seminary is at an all-time high, through the use of satellite centers and extension courses.

Hispanics are the most rapidly growing minority group in the United States. Many of these people do not know Jesus Christ, Cooper said. Because of this urgent need, Hispanic Seminary is "the most strategic theological institution in the world."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southwestern Seminary

Venezuelan Police Stop
Baptist 'Banditos'

By Charlie Warren

N-CO
(TENN.)

Baptist Press
10/12/87

CIUDAD GUAYANA, Venezuela (BP)--When the Tennessee volunteers doing evangelistic work in Venezuela were suddenly surrounded by police and ordered to stand against the wall, they were shocked and frightened.

But after the incident was over and the facts surfaced, the group was able to laugh about it and chalk it up as a great story to tell the folks back home.

The three volunteers, along with a career missionary, were suspected of being bank robbers.

The evangelistic team included James Adkins, until recently a member of Northview Baptist Church in Memphis; Walt Micksch, a member of First Baptist Church, Franklin; Wayne Jackson, a member of Blooming Grove Baptist Church, Woodlawn; and Southern Baptist missionary Jim McDonald, who was interpreting for the Tennesseans.

Adkins, an evangelist who served as the team leader, and Micksch, a businessman, both have cerebral palsy, a fact that proved to be significant to the incident.

It all started the previous day when the four men were driving down the street in San Felix, a community near Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela. Adkins asked McDonald to pull over so he could take a picture. He got out of the car, took a picture of the bank, returned to the car, and they drove on.

The next day, they returned to the bank to exchange some U.S. dollars for bolivares. Micksch asked McDonald to stop so he could take a picture of the bank. After the picture, they pulled up to the drive-in window to exchange the currency.

Within minutes they were surrounded by yellow Venezuelan police cars. The police, described by Adkins as "very professional," emerged with their hands on their pistols and ordered the Americans against the wall.

After a few minutes of questioning and a search of the car, the police apologized for stopping them. McDonald had convinced them they were there only to share the good news of Jesus Christ with Venezuelans, and showed them a trunk full of Bibles and Christian literature to help validate his testimony.

The police explained that in Venezuela, bank robbers often act handicapped so they have adequate time to case the bank prior to robbing it. They also take pictures.

The guard had noticed the foursome the previous day. When they returned, taking more pictures and walking with a limp, he called the police.

"I was able to thank God for the experience once it was over and I knew I wouldn't have to spend the rest of my life in a remote Venezuelan jail," quipped Adkins, who recently moved to Jacksonville, Fla.

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The frightening incident didn't hamper the team's effectiveness. During the week of door-to-door witnessing and evangelistic services at Iglesia Bautista Central (Central Baptist Church), San Felix, the team reported 87 professions of faith and four rededications.

The church also decided to extend the revival for another week after the Americans left.

"God's love crossed two barriers," Adkins explained, "the language barrier and the handicap barrier."

He noted that once the people got over the surprise that two team members were handicapped, they were well received by the Venezuelans. "Even the children accepted us," Adkins noted.

The team was one of many such teams doing evangelistic work in Venezuela during August and September. A total of 356 volunteers worked with churches all over Venezuela.

The effort resulted in 6,331 professions of faith, 1,466 rededications, and 225 decisions for special service. It was a part of the partnership relationship between Tennessee Baptists and Venezuela Baptists.

Since the partnership began in November 1985, there have been 8,521 professions of faith reported and more than 10,000 total spiritual decisions.

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Baker Challenges Pastors
To Minister Amidst Crises

By Tim Fields

N-10
(LLC)

Baptist Press
10/12/87

HOUSTON (BP)--A Christian minister can move ahead with positive, constructive actions even when the news is bad and the tides are flowing against him, N. Larry Baker told pastors of the Union Baptist Association.

Baker, who last month survived an attempt by a group of commissioners to dismiss him as executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, challenged the pastors to be effective ministers of the gospel in the midst of personal and community crises.

"How does one build a thing of beauty in a combat zone? How does one build a home or a cathedral when bombs are dropping and mortar shells are flying?" he asked.

"Perhaps you haven't asked these questions in precisely these terms, but you may have asked, 'How in the world can I build the kingdom (of God) in a place like this?'" he declared.

Baker cited the severe economic reversals in Texas which have taken a drastic toll on Houston, which comprises the largest association of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. He said this crisis, which has also affected many other communities across this country, is an example of serious challenges to effective Christian ministry.

"The boom in this city belongs to yesterday, hunger stalks young and old alike by the thousands and crime against persons and property is rampant," he said. "Your people are stretched to their limits in family life.

"A few of your churches are flourishing, but the vast majority of them are becoming smaller as people lose their jobs and move," he added.

Baker challenged the pastors to call their people to faith in the midst of trial and trouble and suggested ways all ministers can "preach and proclaim with urgency the great affirmations of the Christian faith."

He asked the pastors to present the potentials and possibilities of the Christian way and to challenge the axioms of our age.

"When you compare axioms such as 'might makes right' or 'look out for number one' with the scriptures, they are at odds with the general structure of biblical thought and ideas."

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He also called on pastors to pursue a balanced agenda of moral issues which includes speaking to and acting on high-profile concerns such as abortion, pornography and premarital sex, as well as less popular moral issues as affluence, ecology, racial justice and war and peace.

"We need to address all these issues with a sense of urgency and with a blend of indignation and compassion," he urged. "When Jesus was confronted by the evils of disease and death he was indignant, but he responded to the sufferer with compassion."

Baker also asked pastors to work for a continuity between their profession and their practice.

"As ministers, there should be a matching of our living with our doing so that when we read and preach and teach it sounds like we are talking about each other," he said.

He decried ministers who proclaim sacrifice and service while manipulating people to achieve their own selfish advantages or "the preacher whose spirit is mean, whose tongue is vicious or whose methods are divisive."

He rebuked the minister "who fervently delivers evangelistic sermons and weeps great tears in the pulpit, but goes through life untouched by the pain and hurt of multitudes around him, often within the shadow of his own nose."

Baker concluded by calling pastors to celebrate Christianity as the way of nonadjustment.

"God's people need to remain ill at ease in this world and to be sojourners, pilgrims and temporary residents," he said.

He pointed to the prophet Jeremiah who struggled with his call to be a prophet, but saw beyond the ups and downs of his own life to a God who is equal to every emergency.

"We must be like Jeremiah who put his money where his hope was. He bought a piece of land which others thought would never be his," Baker reminded.

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Missouri Baptists Harvest
Groceries For The Hungry

By Shari Schubert

F-10
(MO)

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COLUMBIA, Mo. (BP)--Wall-to-wall food -- that's the way one observer described the harvest of groceries collected during a recent county-wide food drive in Boone County, Mo. An estimated 20,000 to 30,000 grocery items were gathered by volunteers from 15 participating churches in Little Bonne Femme Baptist Association.

About 6,000 empty sacks were distributed to homes across the county, said Peggy Kirkpatrick, a member of Midway Heights Baptist Church in Columbia. About 40 to 50 percent of the families that received sacks responded with a donation of food, she added.

Attached to each sack was a note explaining that Baptist churches in the area were collecting food for various shelters and food ministries in the county. People were asked to fill the sacks with food items and leave them on their porches to be collected the following week. Food would then be distributed through Prathersville and Southgate Baptist missions, as well as community organizations such as Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen, St. Francis House, Koinonia House, Food Bank and the Salvation Army.

Home missionary Kay Hardage, who serves as director of Christian social ministries for mid-Missouri, said none of the organizations that received food from the drive are recipients of any government funds or commodities.

As people in the community responded generously, the volunteers' reaction was not, "Look what we've done," but rather, "Praise the Lord." Allen Lusby, a volunteer youth worker at Parkade Baptist Church in Columbia, said he felt the quantity of food received was evidence of answered prayer, not just human effort.

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Jack Rowley, pastor of New Salem Baptist Church near Ashland, particularly was touched by the gift of one family. Noting that many of the houses on the route he covered obviously belonged to wealthy people, he said he stopped at another house where appearances indicated the family did not have much. Nevertheless, they had a sack of groceries waiting to be picked up. "It was the fullest sack of all," Rowley recalled.

Donated food was taken from participating churches to the Baptist Student Union at the University of Missouri in Columbia, where it was sorted and then delivered to the recipient organizations.

"People came through with the good protein stuff like tuna fish, macaroni and cheese, and peanut butter," Hardage reported. Large quantities of canned vegetables, pork and beans, and soup also were given, along with a wide variety of other items.

Kirkpatrick said many people who gave food wrote notes on the papers attached to the sacks, commending the churches for what they were doing and thanking them for the opportunity to give.

The Sept. 26 food drive was the first to be conducted on a county-wide scale by the association. A similar drive had been successfully carried out by members of Midway Heights Church in their immediate neighborhood last spring. Because the Midway Heights drive was so well received, Kirkpatrick recommended it be tried as an associational project.

Kirkpatrick and Hardage originally got the idea for the project while visiting St. Louis Metro Baptist Association to study the social ministries being done there. They learned that Boy Scouts in St. Louis had done a similar project with good results and thought it would be worth trying in Columbia.

"I had no idea what to expect," Kirkpatrick confessed. From the very start, she regarded it as "the Lord's project" and depended on him to bring about the desired results.

She added she was pleased with the outcome and felt the effort had made a favorable impression on the community. Although the volunteers did not do the project to gain publicity, the event attracted attention and was covered on local television news.

"It was good for the association, it was good for the community and it is going to be good for the recipients," said Archie Warren, director of missions for Little Bonne Femme Association.

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Former New Mexico
Executive Director Dies

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (BP)--R.Y. Bradford, 80, former Baptist Convention of New Mexico executive director died Oct. 9 in Albuquerque.

Bradford was executive secretary-treasurer of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico from October 1967 to December 1974. During his tenure, the title was changed to executive director.

He first came to New Mexico in 1941 and was the first chaplain at Albuquerque Air Base, later Kirtland Air Force Base. During the Second World War, he served 35 months overseas as commanding chaplain of the Ninth Air Force Service Command.

After leaving the chaplaincy, Bradford was pastor of First Baptist Church in Colorado City, Texas, for seven years, and pastor of First Baptist Church of Santa Fe, N.M., for 15 years. During his service in Santa Fe, he led the church to move out of its crowded downtown location to a location on the edge of town where new facilities were built.

Since his retirement as executive director of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico, Bradford had been chaplain of Strong-Thorne Mortuary in Albuquerque.

Survivors include his wife, Ila A. Bradford, Albuquerque; two daughters, Willa McCurdy of Albuquerque and Eulyne Fulton of California; one son, John, also of California; two brothers and 11 grandchildren.

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