



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee:
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2351
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St. N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041

DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 720-0550

NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300

RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151

WASHINGTON Stan L. Hasteley, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4228

January 6, 1988

88-3

Colorado Suspends News Publication

DENVER (BP)--The Colorado Baptist General Convention has suspended publication of its 7,500-circulation, twice-monthly news publication, the Rocky Mountain Baptist.

In a letter to subscribers, Charles E. Sharp, editor of the paper and CBGC executive director, wrote: "It is with regret that we announce that the Rocky Mountain Baptist will no longer be published by the Colorado Baptist General Convention. The last issue will be Dec. 10, 1987. This is due to economic reverses."

Sharp also noted, "It is hoped that we will be able to resume publication in the future."

It is believed the suspension of publication of the Rocky Mountain Baptist is the first time a state convention newsjournal has ceased publication this century, although several of the state Baptist newspapers did reduce frequency of publication and size of the papers during the depression and war years.

The Colorado convention has been in economic difficulty since 1985, when two corporations of the CBGC -- the Colorado Baptist Foundation and the Colorado Church Loan Corporation -- suffered significant financial losses.

The two organizations were set up to raise money and then loan it to Southern Baptist churches in the state. The foundation began to experience losses as early as 1981 as a result of poor return on "over-the-counter" stock investments. The foundation assets were frozen in February of 1985.

An audit in mid-1986 showed the losses of the foundation totaled \$1.2 million.

Since Sharp became executive in January of 1985, the convention has worked to pay off investors and bondholders. The convention has since eliminated several staff positions -- including the newspaper's editor -- cut back on the frequency of the newspaper, refinanced its office building, obtained a loan from the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board and re consolidated its debts into a single loan.

When Don Turner, RMB editor, was terminated in early 1986, Sharp assumed the responsibilities of editing the newspaper, but cut it from a weekly to a semi-monthly.

Paying off the debt, Sharp said, "is something we had to do. We were committed. The Executive Board had voted and is still very positive we are going to pay those people back. We did not take bankruptcy, but decided to pay the people back. And, if we are paying it back, then we have to come up with the money from somewhere."

He said 1988 marks the last year of the plan worked out to pay off the debt.

"We have been cutting back on a number of things. Our Administrative Committee and Executive Board decided this (suspending the RMB) might be the way to go for a year or so," Sharp told Baptist Press.

He said the convention's business plan "mandates that our 1988 budget cannot be more than we gave during the previous year. We are doing pretty well, but we have lost some income. I have not gotten the final figures for 1987, but it looks like we will be pretty close to making the budget. But, we will not have any extra money for 1988. None of the staff got raises for 1988."

--more--

Sharp said the convention sold a building it had been renting, losing that income, and the final year of the payback plan will cost about \$20,000 more than last year. "The money had to come from somewhere, so something had to go."

In the 1987 annual meeting, messengers adopted a budget of \$2.4 million, of which \$1.2 million is to be contributed by the churches of the state. The remainder primarily will come from the Home Mission Board and the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Sharp said the convention "is holding its own in the midst of economic difficulties in the state. We had a sharp downturn in the second or third quarter of 1987, but it seems to be coming back now."

The Rocky Mountain Baptist, he said, cost about \$32,000 annually.

With the elimination of the publication, Sharp said about 2,500 pastors and church leaders will receive a monthly newsletter, Colorado Baptist Leadership, which includes promotional material as well as some state and national Baptist news.

The leadership publication, he said, is done completely in-house, and will cost about \$18,000 annually.

"We have already been doing the leadership magazine. Rather than each individual department doing mailouts to the churches, they put their promotion pieces in this publication. We will have four to six pages a month and will include some news that is not so far out of date that it will not make sense to the readers," he said.

Sharp said he had heard comments on both sides of the issue from Colorado Baptists. "But," he said, "I think the mood is that the people understand and know where we have been going for the past three years. They know this is the final stage of the payback and know we have to bite the bullet and do the best we can with what we have."

--30--

San Antonio Baptists
Prepare For Children

Baptist Press
1/6/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--San Antonio Baptists have begun preparing for children whose parents will participate in the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in the Texas city June 14-16.

Preschool child care will be provided at First Baptist Church, located downtown and within walking distance of San Antonio Convention Center, site of the annual meeting, and most downtown hotels. A missions day camp for grade-school children will be held at the Ruble Community Center of Trinity Baptist Church.

Preschool care will be available to convention messengers' children who are five years old and younger. Parents may register their children by sending \$15 per child to SBC Preschool Care First Baptist Church, 515 McCullough, San Antonio, Texas 78205.

Cost of the care will be \$7.50 for each four-hour session of the convention. The meeting will include three sessions Tuesday, June 14; two sessions Wednesday, June 15; and two sessions Thursday, June 16.

When their registration fees are received, the children's parents will receive information packets containing maps, health forms, and policies and procedures. The packets also will provide information about special parking for parents of children who participate in the program.

A new feature of the preschool program will be a noon meal for parents, which will be served at First Baptist's fellowship hall, said Convention Manager Tim A. Hedquist. The meal will be available for a nominal charge, he said, noting parents, not childcare workers, will be responsible for feeding the children.

--more--

The missions day camp will accommodate school-age children through the sixth grade. "Jesus Calls for Change" will be the theme of the camp, and children will study the 1988 Backyard Bible Club material prepared by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. Other activities will include sports and crafts, recreation and a visit to San Antonio's zoo.

Day camp registration will be conducted in the convention center at a booth in the area where parents will register as convention messengers.

Sponsors of the day camp are the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, Texas Baptist Men and San Antonio Baptist Association. Childhood education and activities/recreation staff member from Trinity Baptist will staff the camp.

Camp fees will be \$7 per day. Supplemented by the Brotherhood Commission, the fees will cover all camp expenses, including meals and snacks.

Preschoolers will be allowed into the convention center at all times when accompanied by their parents, Hedquist said. Daycampers will be allowed into the center during the annual meeting's evening sessions.

--30--

New Youth Musical Vignettes
Seek Attention For Witnessing

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
1/6/88

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--What does it take to grab the attention of people -- at a mall, on a street corner or at a beach -- for the few minutes needed to plant the seed of the gospel?

Two Southern Baptist agencies are hoping one answer is a group of young people singing an upbeat, contemporary tune from "The New Connection," a series of one-act vignettes. It will "grab people long enough for the young people to reach out to them," said Ken Medema, a San Francisco Christian concert artist and composer who wrote the vignettes.

The concept was developed by the church music and church training departments of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and the specialized evangelism department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. The musical and a companion resource for training youth, "The New Connection: A Resource for Street Evangelism," were premiered the week after Christmas at a Winter Youth Celebration at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, sponsored by the youth section of the church training department.

"The vignettes are short segments, about the length of a TV commercial," Medema explained. "We realize that when people walk through a mall, they can be captured for two, three, maybe four minutes. They'll stand around and listen to something for that long. But give them a half-hour, to 45-minute musical, and they'll walk away."

Catching and keeping audience attention is a means of obtaining a more important objective -- telling others about Jesus -- said Clyde Hall, youth section manager.

Two groups are involved in this contemporary means of street evangelism, Hall said: "Those who are giving the vignettes, or attracting attention, are one group. The other group is the youth who are trained in street witnessing. They will be in the crowd, moving about and establishing conversation."

The training resource will teach youth "how to make a presentation of their own personal experience of Christ in a setting that is non-traditional," he said. "The resource doesn't make professional counselors out of these young people, but it gives them an opportunity to talk to people with different sorts of problems."

A third tool is a tract, "Have a Good Life," designed to accompany the musical.

Youth are encouraged to hand out the tract to those people whom they were unable to reach in conversation.

--more--

The vignettes are designed to attract all types of people, not just youth, Medema said, noting, "The piece looks at contemporary life as it is being lived and tries to suggest that God is interested in real people, now."

The problems the vignettes address are drug and alcohol abuse, hunger, worldly temptations, abortion, the breakup of families and others, Medema said.

Not only should the musical have an effect on the listeners, he added, but it should also speak to the performers.

"Many of these kids who sing these vignettes are saying, 'We're singing about where we live,'" Medema said. "They are so intrigued that they can be themselves in this musical that it has a rather powerful effect on their lives."

For the musical to work, youth and music leaders must be committed to taking it outside the sanctuaries and into the street, Hall said. "There could be the tendency to make a traditional youth musical out of this where it is performed in the church. If they (youth leaders) do that, they will have misused it."

--30--

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

Girl, 11, Sends Savings
Overseas For Missions

By Eric Miller

Baptist Press
1/6/88

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (BP)--She could have bought something nice with the \$100 she'd saved, but instead, 11-year-old Jennifer Owen sent it to Africa to help build a church.

Jennifer was among a group of Girls In Action who saw a slide presentation about Southern Baptist missionary work in the West African nation of Burkina Faso.

During the slide show at Immanuel Baptist Church in Hattiesburg, Miss., Gail Benedict, a volunteer who had worked in Burkina Faso, explained the plight of a Baptist church in Ouagadougou that had saved \$12,000 to construct a church building but needed that much more to build a structure that would comply with government regulations.

Jennifer "came with tears in her eyes to me after the program," Benedict said. She told her, "I want to give my baby-sitting money to send to West Africa to help those children know about Jesus."

The slides showed the rural Africans' modest buildings and sometimes unclothed children, said Benedict, a secretary for Lamar County Baptist Association in Hattiesburg.

"It burned my heart to see all of these poor kids out there (in Burkina Faso)," said Jennifer, a Christian since age 7. "I hope by giving \$100, it can start other people to thinking about giving money. If a lot of people gave, it could also help some of the kids down in the other parts of the country that need clothes or shelter."

Jennifer was in the habit of saving her money, said her mother, Cheryl Owen. A few years ago, she used her savings to buy a baby doll that talks. She had earned the latest \$100 during the last six or seven months through baby-sitting, running errands and doing odd jobs for her parents and neighbors. Part of the amount was money she had received for her birthday in August.

Owen said she and her husband, Fred, talked with Jennifer about the \$100 donation and told her "she could back out of it, but she said, no, she didn't want to buy anything for herself. She wanted to do it for missions."

Having told several friends about her \$100 gift, "I have influenced one of them," Jennifer said. "They thought that was real great." One friend said she may try to raise money to contribute to missions.

--30--

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

Agreement Between Baylor And Southwestern
Broadens Bivocational Ministry Options

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--An unprecedented agreement between Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Baylor University now allows seminary students planning bivocational ministries to earn certification as school teachers while at seminary.

Officials from Southwestern and Baylor signed the agreement Dec. 16 creating a three-fold link between Southwestern's school of religious education and Baylor's school of education. The agreement provides for seminary students to take teacher certification courses taught by Baylor professors on Southwestern's campus, for seminary students to work toward Baylor's master of science degree with speciality in Christian education and for Baylor education students to take some courses at Southwestern.

Southwestern's primary objective is to help graduates support themselves while ministering in areas where few Southern Baptist churches exist, said Jack Terry, dean of Southwestern's school of religious education.

"Southwestern is the only seminary I know of that offers this particular program designed to help ministerial students prepare for bivocational ministry," he said.

The certification program will be taught by Baylor professors on Southwestern's campus, and the teacher certificates will carry Baylor's insignia. Seminary students in the program will do their student teaching in Dallas/Fort Worth area schools under Baylor's supervision.

These Southwestern students will receive certification in addition to their seminary master's degrees. Having the master's degree means Southwestern graduates immediately will fall into a higher pay scale for first-year public school teachers, which will assist them in their bivocational ministries, Terry said.