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88-21

Bivocational Workers Viewed
As Key To Restricted Areas

N-FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Bivocational workers can help unlock the doors to witness in countries that would never admit a missionary, an evangelical missiologist told the new Global Strategy Group of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"We can't afford to delegate the whole work of the church to a paid handful," Ted Ward declared.

Ward, professor of Christian education and missions at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill., spent a full day with the 10-member group that is leading the Foreign Mission Board's efforts in global evangelization.

Modern-day "tentmakers" who have legitimate skills needed in developing countries can gain entry in places where full-time missionaries could not go, Ward said. The term "tentmaker" comes from the Apostle Paul, who made tents to pay his expenses while teaching and preaching the gospel message in other countries.

Such an approach would be one method Southern Baptists and other evangelicals could try as they seek to have a Christian witness in Muslim countries, he said. "How many people from our churches are already (through their vocations) in Islamic countries?" he asked. It's important, he said, to identify and train these people so that as they go they will be prepared to make a positive impact while in the Muslim countries, or in others no longer accessible to missionaries.

Ward acknowledged that the FMB, through its Laity Abroad program, is farther ahead than most in this regard. But he called for a balance between the traditional career missionary approach, which is effective in the 112 countries where Southern Baptist missionaries now work, and the bivocational workers. (The board also uses many skilled volunteers for periods ranging from a few weeks up to more than a year in places where they can strengthen the work of its 3,800-member career missionary force.)

Too many people, he said, think you can only be "called" by God to a monovocational, or full-time, ministry. There is a failure to realize that some of the greatest Christian missionary-work has been done by people who today would be considered bivocational, using a secular vocation or profession at the same time they were doing Christian work.

He cited William Carey of England, considered the father of the modern-day missionary movement, who was a salaried university professor at the same time he was working as a missionary in India. Robert Morrison, the first Protestant sent to China by the London Missionary Society, was a Chinese translator for a trading company the entire time he was in China yet found time to translate the Bible into Chinese, Ward noted.

He urged the mission board to look at the value of setting up an organized corps of Christian educators, especially those trained in teaching English. Ward said he believed "you could find a place for every language teacher you could recruit in the next 20 years."

In planning its strategy, the board should look for the international people movements, he advised. When people are moving, uprooted, they basically are vulnerable to whomever will meet their needs.

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Ward said those in refugee camps should not be considered short-term transients. Many, he noted, will be refugees for many years. Like Jesus, he said, we should relate to these people at their points of greatest need. By helping to meet those needs and then leaving the people free to respond, the Christian worker is following Jesus' example.

He said work with refugee peoples, or countries with long-term needs such as those being gradually covered by the sands of the Sahara desert, requires long-term investment of trained personnel. These workers, he said, must be sensitive to local leadership and not overrun such leaders in their haste to meet immediate needs. Otherwise, the Christian or benevolent organization worker will disrupt local structures and leave the country worse off than it was before.

"You sit as the largest organized missionary effort under one management that the church has ever known," Ward pointed out. He observed that "you are in the middle of some very important transitions" but he warned against being "impressed with our own cleverness. Have we the capacity to accept the surprises (opportunities) that God has for us?" he asked.

He said the key point to remember is: We do the best we can, but we leave a space for God to do what only he can do.

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Political Candidates, Messages
Spotlighted At NRB Convention

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Participants at the National Religious Broadcasters 45th annual convention would have had a difficult time missing the fact that 1988 is a presidential election year. Politicians and discussions of politics filled prominent slots on the convention program.

Leading the lineup of political figures was President Reagan, who addressed a session during which First Lady Nancy Reagan received an NRB award for her work with the Foster Grandparents Program.

Reagan, describing America as being in "the midst of a spiritual revival," said: "How ironic that even as America returns to its spiritual roots, our courts lag behind. They talk of our constitutional guarantee of religious liberty as if it meant freedom from religion -- freedom from, actually a prohibition on, all values rooted in religion."

After reaffirming his support for school prayer and anti-abortion legislation, Reagan devoted the majority of his speech to seeking the help of NRB members in securing congressional approval of his aid to Nicaraguan Contras package. (The House of Representatives rejected the proposal two days later.)

The president spoke about the need for democracy and peace in Nicaragua. "But there's something more than security at stake -- freedom," he said. "Religious persecution under the communist Sandinistas has been persistent and often brutal -- Jews, Catholics, evangelical Christians and others -- all have suffered."

The convention-opening speech of Republican presidential hopeful Marion G. (Pat) Robertson contained many of the same themes.

Claiming that America is at a crossroads, Robertson said, "The time has come to say we will go no further. We must be prepared to reaffirm the only true foundation of our liberty -- God and the Bible."

Robertson was not the lone campaigner making an appearance at the convention. Other GOP presidential candidates addressing NRB members during convention sessions or related programs were Vice President George Bush, Sen. Robert J. Dole and Rep. Jack Kemp.

An entire panel discussion was devoted to the impact of religion in the 1988 elections.

Jerry Nims, president of the Moral Majority, said the evangelical religious community has the potential to be the key factor in the upcoming elections, even exceeding its role in 1980. "There are signals that the sleeping giant is beginning to stir," he said.

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A sociologist from the University of Virginia called the involvement of the Christian Right the "third great political movement of the 20th century." Professor Jeffrey Hadden, who wrote the book "Primetime Preachers," predicted that involvement is just beginning.

"I don't agree with reports of the demise of the Christian Right," Hadden said. "I think it is wishful thinking rather than careful political analysis."

Robert Dugan, director of the Office of Public Affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals, said the Republican Party has recognized the religion factor could be determinative. He said the national Republican organization has sought NAE's input and every Republican presidential candidate "has wooed us."

"The Republican lock on the White House has been coming for quite some time," said Dugan.

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Supporters Hope Prayer
Leads To SBC Unity

By Terri Lackey

N-SSB

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Creating a spirit of unity during the Southern Baptist Convention meeting June 14-16 in San Antonio, Texas, is the purpose behind five Southern Baptist agencies joining forces to staff a prayer room during the sessions.

Representatives from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board, Sunday School Board, Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union have all pledged to staff the prayer room at the Henry Gonzales Convention Center.

"We hope people respond to the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention by coming to pray," said Avery Willis, manager of the leadership development section in the church training department at the Sunday School Board.

Darrel King, associate to the special assistant in spiritual awakening in the Home Mission Board's evangelism section, said, "We expect this prayer room to be a spiritual entity of support for the convention in seeking God's will and direction for our future and our unity with each other. Instead of talking about prayer, we are going to do it."

Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union, hopes participation in prayer at the convention will help focus messengers' attention on Bold Mission Thrust priorities.

"We are concerned about being distracted from missions opportunities," Weatherford said. "The continued controversy will further diminish our efforts in evangelism and missions. We see this (prayer room) as a tangible way to pray for the convention and continuing ministry."

--Willis said talk of a prayer room at the convention center began with a conversation between Minnette Drumwright, special assistant on intercessory prayer to the president of the Foreign Mission Board, and T.W. Hunt, Lay Institute for Equipping prayer consultant in the Sunday School Board's church training department.

After gaining the support of the SBC Committee on Order of Business chaired by Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., the committee agreed to designate a room in the convention center for prayer.

Joint staffing by the five agencies means the prayer room will be available during hours the convention is in session.

"The prayer room will be open whenever the convention center is open," Willis said. "Each agency will take so many hours each day, and will be responsible for having someone there during those times. We hope there will always be people there. We hope at times it will be overflowing," he added.

Willis said the groups have not planned an organized prayer agenda.

"We just want people to go there to pray," he said.

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AIDS Victim Achieves
Triumph Over Tragedy

By Orville Scott

F-Texas

MARSHALL, Texas (BP)--The dread pronouncement of AIDS probably would have led him to suicide had he not recently become a Christian, said Don Matthys of Marshall, Texas, a former student at East Texas Baptist University there.

But the light of God's redemptive love has triumphed over tragedy. And as a result, said Matthys, dozens of drug addicts and homosexuals, many with AIDS, have come to know Christ as their Savior through his witness.

Matthys, 21, contracted AIDS as a practicing bisexual. He also was a drug dealer, was in jail three times and attempted suicide twice before seeking help in a church.

At Clearview Baptist Church in Marshall, "I realized that I'd never accepted Jesus, and he was the love and security I'd been looking for on the street," he said.

Matthys was released from the bondage of homosexuality, drugs and other sins, but within a few months he was diagnosed with AIDS, he said. When learned he had the disease, their reaction drove him to seek Christian counseling at the Minirth-Meier Clinic of Longview, Texas.

"He came to me, not because of his fear of dying but because of the reaction of the Christian community toward him and his illness," said Richard Fowler, director of the clinic, who is a licensed Southern Baptist minister.

Fowler told Matthys, "What you need to do is live the rest of your life for the glory of God, hold your head high and use your illness as a witness for the Lord to help people who will be affected only by your testimony."

Fowler invited Matthys to speak during a session on AIDS he was conducting at LeTourneau College in Longview. Also, he has sent young homosexuals to Matthys to hear his Christian testimony.

Since giving his life to Christ in August of 1986, Matthys said, he has shared his faith and counseled with numerous homosexuals, drug addicts and others with rough backgrounds whom churches might never be able to reach. More than 75 of them have accepted Christ as their Savior during the past year, he said.

"Most are facing death and at the point of desperation and are ready to accept the gospel," he said, "but you have to show Christ's redemptive love in a practical way and not just preach to them."

Most AIDS patients and homosexuals have heard only judgment from churches and only seen hypocrisy, Matthys reported: "Few have reached out to them in love as Christ did to the lepers in his day. I think the body of Christ should reach out in love to AIDS patients as well as any other person."

Matthys' story received national coverage recently when he said in an interview on the Christian Broadcasting Network that he had been asked to leave East Texas Baptist University, one of nine schools owned and operated by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The school's president, Robert E. Craig, said: "He was advised that for his own well-being and for the well-being of other students that he ought not to enroll for the fall semester. He didn't attempt to register and was never stopped from registering."

Guidelines of the East Texas Baptist student affairs office specify that a student's enrollment may be interrupted when there is evidence of an infectious dread disease or if a student's continued attendance presents a clear and present danger to him or herself.

"ETBU personnel have been good to Don," said Craig. "Even though he wasn't a student, we contributed funds, housing and counseling when we heard that he was sick. But we have to be concerned about the welfare of hundreds of other students also. We're an educational institution and can't take care of his health and financial needs. We wish him well in his ministry."

But Matthys said the question is whether East Texas Baptist as a Christian ministry is going to have a policy of ministering to AIDS patients.

"If no other good comes out of it, it may help Christian colleges face the AIDS issue," Fowler said.

Despite his difference of opinion with school, Matthys said, "I think ETBU and the student body as a whole do represent a Christian environment, and Christ is lifted up."

He was evangelism chairman of the Baptist Student Union when he was asked to not re-enroll, and he continues to meet for Bible study with about 20 East Texas Baptist students every other Saturday night.

The stigma of AIDS has isolated Matthys from his family. He doesn't visit his mother because of her concern over community response, he said.

The fear of AIDS led to his resignation at the plant in Marshall where he worked. After a friend confided that fellow workers had threatened to walk off the job and resort to violence, Matthys talked with the plant manager, and they agreed it was best that he leave.

"He did not fire me. I quit," he said.

Matthys has become a member of Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Marshall, whose members, Matthys said, help support his ministry. He also lives with a family from the church.

"We prayed about it, and without any hesitancy, the Spirit of God led us to ask Don to stay with us," the couple said. "We've had people here before who needed help. The thought of contracting AIDS never occurs to us."

Matthys has seen people healed through God's Holy Spirit, and although he doesn't know what God intends for him, "I have gone from being bed-ridden with the flu for eight weeks to not being sick for six months. God has given me the strength and health to take his message in a Christ-like way to a world confused over AIDS.

"Whether he completes the healing process in me is up to his sovereign will.

"I live one day at a time with Christ's love and the hope he brings. I know not what tomorrow brings, but I know who brings tomorrow."

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Florida Evangelists
Set Up Ethics Panel

By Greg Warner

N- CO
(Fla.)

Baptist Press
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ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Evangelists in Florida have established a council of accountability to handle complaints about unethical conduct in their ranks.

The council is believed to be the first ethics panel for evangelists in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Conference of Florida Baptist Evangelists, composed of 33 of the estimated 62 full-time Baptist evangelists in the state, voted unanimously to set up the council during the organization's annual meeting Jan. 11 in Orlando. A committee will meet Feb. 25 in Jacksonville to develop principles and guidelines.

"This will not be a regulatory body," said Jerry Drace of Jacksonville, president of the conference. "The most we could do is censure another evangelist. And we hope we never have to do this."

Drace said the council will consider several matters affecting the integrity of evangelists, including financial openness and family life. The group will handle complaints from churches concerning evangelists and evangelists' complaints against churches, he said.

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Although the PTL scandal has brought intense scrutiny to evangelists' lifestyles, Drace said, the idea for a council on accountability developed in 1982 from discussions with evangelist Billy Graham.

Evangelists are no more susceptible to ethical failures than other ministers, but they are more vulnerable to exposure because "they are out there in front of the public," he said. The most common temptations for evangelists are sexual immorality and financial misconduct, he added.

"The vast majority of Southern Baptist evangelists are men of integrity," Drace said, noting, all suffer a loss of credibility when another evangelist slips up.

The accountability council will provide both a measure of credibility for ethical evangelists and a way of dealing with unethical ones, Drace said.

Although no crisis has yet disrupted the ranks of Florida Baptist evangelists, he said, "We need this before something happens."

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Congress Kills Appropriation
For Jewish Schools In France

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Congress has rescinded an \$8 million appropriation for construction of schools for North African Jews in France.

The action came at the request of the project's sponsor, Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawaii, who said he had made an "error in judgment" in backing the appropriation.

The \$8 million appropriation, part of last year's \$600 billion omnibus spending bill, would have gone to a New York-based organization, Ozar Hatora, to help build schools for North African Jews living in France. Although the original earmark classified the 400,000 North African Sephardic Jews living in France as refugees, the U.S. and French governments and the United Nations do not recognize the group as refugees.

Inouye, who came under criticism for backing the project, asked Congress to rescind the appropriation.

"I have concluded that, if this avalanche of criticism is allowed to continue, this institution -- this Senate, which I honor and respect -- could suffer," he explained. "I continue to believe that what I have done is appropriate, but to fight the criticism and to prolong the controversy in order that I might win vindication would risk a further loss of public confidence in the Senate."

One aspect of the appropriation that attracted fire was its alleged violation of church-state separation. American Jewish leaders -- as well as religious and church-state organizations, including the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs -- voiced opposition to the project on those grounds.

"Frankly, I did not consider questions of church and state," Inouye said. "Persecution is persecution, whether it be against Baptists in the Soviet Union, Protestants in North Korea or Catholics in Poland. My country believes in the separation of the church and the state, that is true. But it also believes in religious freedom. Persecution of anyone anywhere because of his religious belief was abhorrent to those who raised me, and it is abhorrent to me today."

Inouye said North African Jews who fled persecution in their home countries now face discrimination and prejudice in France because of race, religion, culture and national origin. He said he believes the building of schools would help ease the group's plight.

The day after Inouye made his request, the House of Representatives voted 384-1 to rescind the appropriation. The Senate approved the House measure by voice vote later the same day.

"We applaud Sen. Inouye for his sensitivity and his willingness to acknowledge this mistake," said James M. Dunn, Baptist Joint Committee executive director. "We worked closely with Sen. Inouye's staff, and they have been aware of our concerns about the church-state dimension."

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