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February 29, 1988

88-33

Priesthood Of Believers Includes
Both Freedom And Responsibility

By Linda Lawson

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--The historic Baptist doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is a "two-armed doctrine" including both freedom and responsibility, Walter Shurden told participants in a national doctrine conference.

By emphasizing one to the exclusion of the other, "the doctrine of priesthood of believers can be distorted both by its advocates and its critics," said Shurden, chairman of the department of Christianity at Mercer University, Macon, Ga., and author of the 1988 Baptist doctrine study textbook for adults on priesthood of believers.

The three-day conference was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department in preparation for the annual study conducted in April in many churches.

While Christians are free to speak directly to God and to interpret the Bible for themselves, they are also responsible for ministering in the world in God's name and equipping themselves to be able to interpret the Scriptures responsibly, said Shurden.

"The doctrine of priesthood of believers is not spiritual Lone Rangerism," he said.

Another speaker, Daniel Vestal, pastor of First Baptist Church of Midland, Texas, said: "The sacred right of individual conscience before God does not justify arrogant and self-sufficient pride in which an individual declares, 'I can do whatever I want to do. I'm going to serve God and I don't need anybody else.'

"As important as one member of the body is, no one member is more important than the body as a whole."

"The one with the gift of scholarship cannot say to the one with the gift of evangelism, 'I don't need you,'" said Vestal. "And the one with the gift of evangelism cannot say to the one with the gift of scholarship, 'I don't need you.'"

Vestal cited numerous members of his church who have discovered God-given gifts and who are exercising them in ministry, evangelism, teaching and other tasks.

"We need a new vision as a denomination," he said. "As a part of that vision, we need a conviction of what God can do through the lives of his people dedicated to him."

Bill Stephens, curriculum development coordinator in the board's church training department, said the concept of holiness needs to be communicated in teaching the priesthood of believers doctrine.

"We are not adequately proclaiming priesthood of believers unless we are calling upon our people to live holy lives," said Stephens. "We are holy priests, not just priests," he said.

Richard Jackson, senior pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., said Christians, through their union with Christ, experience the same things he did in his earthly ministry.

"We are tabernacles in whom God has chosen to dwell," said Jackson. "Because God indwells us we now can in the name of Jesus go before God on behalf of men and before men in the representation of God. We have the treasure of his life in these earthen vessels.

"When you are a believer-priest in union with God through Jesus Christ, you have been exalted to be an heir of God, a joint heir with Jesus, and it doesn't get any better than that," he said.

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Seminary Presidents Decry
Samford's Divinity School

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press
2/29/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--Samford University's new divinity school moves Southern Baptists "two steps backward," according to presidents of the convention's six theological seminaries.

Samford, an Alabama Baptist school, announced the creation of the convention's first university-based divinity school Feb. 11.

An anonymous donor has given Samford more than \$3.5 million to launch its divinity school this fall on the Birmingham campus, Samford President Thomas E. Corts said. The divinity school is to offer the Master of Divinity degree, the standard graduate-theological degree in ministry, Corts reported. About 100 students are to be enrolled when the three-year program reaches full strength in the fall of 1990.

Five of the six SBC seminary presidents met in Nashville and released a response Feb. 24:

"Any institution wants to be responsive to the generosity of a major donor, and Samford has taken what it perceives to be an ambitious and positive step in theological education. Unfortunately, we think this action takes Southern Baptists not forward, but two steps backward.

"First, Samford's action is a step backward to the 19th century and to the regionalism which the SBC national seminaries have overcome during a century and a half of theological education.

"Second, it is a step away from Southern Baptists' commitment to a cooperative approach to theological education through our convention's national seminaries and a step toward the fragmentation of our convention through a societal approach to the work of the denomination.

"Samford's model, if followed by other Baptist universities, would return us to the pre-Cooperative Program (unified budget) days of competition for funding and rivalry for support among the denomination's educational institutions.

"We believe our six seminaries and their external education division are strategically located throughout the Southern Baptist Convention to provide accessible accredited ministry training for our entire Southern Baptist constituency."

"The issue" raised by Samford "is the changing nature of theological education," said Roy Honeycutt, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Southern Baptist educators have followed a concept stressed since the 1850s he said, noting they have "believed a diversity of Southern Baptist mix would produce a broadly based denominational leader, rather than a regional leader."

The seminary presidents do not believe Samford and its possible successors will "develop to be a threat numerically" to their student populations, Honeycutt said: "It's just the wrong way to do theological education. We're currently trying to eliminate the regional emphasis in the convention. A broad faculty and integration of students from all across the nation can minimize the regionalism that is so threatening."

Other presidents who were present to draft the statement are William Crews, Golden Gate; Russell Dilday, Southwestern; Landrum Leavell, New Orleans; and Randall Lolley, Southeastern. Milton Ferguson of Midwestern was unable to attend, but the statement also was presented on his behalf, Dilday said.

The presidents' statement was echoed by Arthur Walker, executive director of the SBC Education Commission: "My great fear is that it (Samford's divinity school) might reinforce theological provincialism. The six Southern Baptist seminaries prepare people for ministry almost everywhere. I hope we do not begin to train people to stay only in a certain area, and there is a tendency to do that."

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Walker, who taught at Samford for 20 years, noted he was "not speaking for or against Samford out of that background." Rather, the principle against "theological provincialism" would apply to any university divinity school.

Samford Provost William Hull defended the divinity school against such charges: "Southern Baptists have long been noted for their decentralized polity that permits a church in a given area to respond to the culture and characteristics of that area. We have gloried in the diversity made possible by our local autonomy. That enables us to respond to ministry in specific situations.

"If our divinity school were to serve the Southeast region, that would give us the opportunity to focus more sharply on the spiritual circumstances and the shape of human needs in the Southeast.

"American culture is understanding that regionalism is a very important factor in human existence. Provincialism is a state of mind, but regionalism is a recognition of regional diversity. We are not ashamed to address the issues of the Deep South and the Southeast region and would encourage others to address the regional challenges before them with the same specificity."

Hull also said the school is not violating any tenets of cooperation. "By starting this school only on the basis of a major gift, we have taken pains not to intervene in the flow of Cooperative Program gifts," he said, noting Samford is not soliciting churches, regional Baptist associations or the state convention.

"We are not seeking to divert Cooperative Program funds to support the divinity school," he said. By going outside the Cooperative Program, Samford is attempting to broaden the base of theological education without cutting into budgeted funds, he added.

Hull pledged continued close relations to the seminaries: "Samford has long been one of the prime contributors of ministerial students to all six seminaries. We have worked closely with them. We intend to work just as closely with them in pioneering this effort. ... We feel we are not competitive with the six seminaries. We are offering a different model -- a university-based divinity school rather than a free-standing seminary."

Leaders from both ends of the Southern Baptist theological/political spectrum expressed similar initial reactions to Samford's announcement.

"I am not surprised they are doing it," said Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas and a leader in the recent SBC conservative resurgence. "I am not surprised at Samford," echoed Mahan Siler, pastor of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., and chairman of the moderate Southern Baptist Alliance's committee to study theological education.

From that point, Patterson and Siler diverted.

Establishing a divinity school is "perfectly within their right" at Samford, Patterson said: "On the one side, I feel that you can't have too many efforts at training ministers. ... Of course, obviously my reservation is I am not sure how Samford means to train them. If they are going to train them in the tradition of our fathers in faithfulness and loyalty to the word of God, fine. I also suspect where trouble can come for them. If the school ... is not faithful to Baptist convictions, they may run into serious problems."

Siler, on the other hand, said of Samford, "There is an emerging need they're addressing." He cited changes at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., which have ensured election of biblical inerrantists to the faculty and resulted in the resignations of Lolley and four top administrators. The changes have created "a need for new forms of theological education that would train young ministers in this area," he said.

However, the Alliance is attempting to work with existing schools rather than start its own seminary, he said. "We are attempting to clarify what concepts in theological education are congruent with our own concepts," he added. Noting Mercer University in Georgia and Wake Forest University in North Carolina are conducting feasibility studies concerning theological education, he said, "We're looking to coordinate and support and help influence what does arise."

Meanwhile, one relationship remains unclear. An extension of New Orleans Seminary has been held on the Samford campus, and the status of that center has not been determined.

"We feel it will be New Orleans Seminary's initiative to determine the course of that center," Hull said. Leavell noted: "We have absolutely no official notification" concerning the status of the center. "We have made a commitment to the students there to offer this degree, and we will live up to that agreement. We have no intention of dumping those students."

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BJC Argues Church Groups Fight
Teen Pregnancy With Own Funds

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press
2/29/88

WASHINGTON (BP)--Religious organizations that fight teen pregnancy should do so with their own funds, not federal tax dollars, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has told the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a legal brief filed with the high court in February, Baptist Joint Committee General Counsel Oliver S. Thomas argued the 1981 Adolescent Family Life Act violates the Constitution by providing federal funding of religious groups in their battles against sexual promiscuity and abortion. Such aid amounts to an unconstitutional violation of the First Amendment ban on an establishment of religion, Thomas wrote.

According to a provision in the law -- also called the Teen Chastity Act -- Congress provided the funding "to promote self discipline and other prudent approaches to the problem of adolescent premarital sexual relations, including adolescent pregnancy" and to encourage adoption rather than abortion. The disputed law also requires all recipients of the funds to seek participation by religious groups, including churches, in administering their programs. Grants to participating groups are made by the federal Department of Health and Human Services.

Last year the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia struck down the statute, declaring it violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment. But later, the same panel held the section of the law funding religious groups could be severed from its other provisions, thereby salvaging the remainder of the law. Funding for all groups covered by the law, including religious organizations, has continued uninterrupted under a stay issued last August by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist.

In the Baptist Joint Committee brief asking the high court to uphold the lower panel's decision, Thomas wrote: "The record in this case is dramatic evidence of the insurmountable constitutional problems created by a grant program that pays religious organizations to teach sexual morality. While we commend these and other religious organizations for aggressively combating sexual promiscuity and teen pregnancy, their efforts necessarily involve the promotion of religion."

That is so, Thomas said, because "it is impossible for religious organizations to teach sexual morality without consciously or unconsciously promoting religion." Any grant program that subsidizes such teaching "is constitutionally impermissible," he added. "While we commend Congress for combating teen pregnancy, this daring attempt to use religious education to accomplish the secular goals of government must not be allowed."

Elaborating on his primary argument, Thomas told the court the award of grants under the challenged law violates two portions of a three-part test used by the justices since 1971 to decide the constitutionality of such statutes. The grants have both the primary effect of advancing religion and the potential for excessively entangling governmental authorities with religious groups, he said.

Noting "a fundamental tenet" of separation of church and state "is that no person should be taxed to support the propagation of religion," Thomas argued, "only religious institutions that are not pervasively sectarian may receive direct federal financial assistance and then only for activities that are wholly secular and segregated from the organizations' religious activities." Those standards "are flagrantly violated" by the Adolescent Family Life Act, he charged, in that "a religious organization's teachings on sexual morality are so intertwined with its religious tenets that it is impossible for the organization to teach the former without directly promoting the latter."

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Thomas further urged the court to uphold a legal standard banning a "symbolic union" between church and state, a union he said was created by the disputed grants. "The overall effect of such a program," he wrote, "is to convey an unmistakable message of government endorsement of religion."

He also confronted a primary argument by Justice Department lawyers -- who have urged the high court to overturn the district court decision and uphold the Teen Chastity Act -- that other federally funded programs administered by churches and other religious groups will be jeopardized if the lower panel's reasoning is endorsed. Among these are programs to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless.

Thomas insisted that while such activities by religious organizations "may be constitutionally permissible ... it would not be permissible to subsidize their efforts to preach to the homeless while feeding and sheltering them."

On the question of potential excessive entanglement between governmental authorities and the religious grantees benefiting from the Teen Chastity Act, the Baptist attorney noted the "sensitive" subjects of family life, marriage, sexuality and abortion "cannot be taught by religious organizations without the type of monitoring that would lead to impermissible levels of entanglement."

Thomas also rejected the government's argument that the district court ruling invalidating the grants to religious groups betrayed "a systematic hostility" toward religion and thus denied free exercise of religion, also guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Joining the Baptist Joint Committee in filing the brief were the American Jewish Committee and Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Although the case, *Bowen v. Kendrick*, has yet to be scheduled for oral argument, it is expected to be heard and decided during the high court's current term. Some observers of the court have speculated the justices may be seriously divided over the dispute and have waited for Justice Anthony M. Kennedy to be sworn in before scheduling arguments.

Kennedy brings the court to full strength for the first time since last June, when former Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr. unexpectedly retired.

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Retired SBC Executive
J. Marvin Crowe Dies

Baptist Press
2/29/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--John Marvin Crowe, 78, retired executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, died Feb. 25 following a long illness.

Widely known in the Southern Baptist Convention for his organizational and business skills, Crowe was responsible for internal operation of the multi-million dollar denominational publishing house from 1953 until his retirement in 1975.

Prior to coming to Nashville, Crowe was education director at First Baptist Church of Abilene, Texas, and at First Baptist Church of Charlotte, N. C.

Earlier, he was associate Sunday school and training union secretary in Illinois and Missouri. Later, he was training union secretary for the Missouri Baptist Convention. He had been pastor of Elkville (Ill.) Baptist Church, Third Baptist Church of Marion, Ill., and First Baptist Church of California, Mo.

At his retirement from the Sunday School Board, the meeting and conference room in the newly completed West Wing was named the Crowe Room.

Retired Sunday School Board President James L. Sullivan, with whom Crowe worked both at the board and in Abilene described his colleague of a quarter century as "capable and devoted. I never knew a better man."

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Another long-time associate, James W. Clark, senior vice president for publishing and distribution at the board, said Crowe's contributions to the board included a job evaluation and salary administration plan, a goal-oriented management style and leadership which helped employees and managers develop toward their full potential.

He described Crowe as "one of the finest Christian gentlemen I've ever known, more tender-hearted toward others' hurts than the casual observer would ever have guessed."

Crowe was a graduate of William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo., and did graduate study at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He was awarded an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene.

His wife, Edna Earl Elliott, died in 1976.

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

Thomas Cites Progress
In IRS-Church Dialogue

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press
2/29/88

WASHINGTON (BP)-- Recent discussions between church representatives and Internal Revenue Service officials on legal problems that have strained relations between the two groups are beginning to pay off, Baptist church-state specialist told a special IRS panel.

Although the first meeting of the Commissioner's Exempt Organization Advisory Group last September excluded any formal involvement by church representatives, the panel's second meeting featured a presentation by Oliver S. Thomas, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs general counsel.

Thomas summarized discussions on several tax-related issues that took place during recent meetings between church and synagogue representatives and IRS and Treasury Department officials. The purpose of the meetings was "to promote better relations between the religious community and the IRS and to engage in constructive dialogue about issues of mutual concern," he said.

On the issue of churches and political activity, Thomas said he has been a "renewed commitment on the part of the religious representatives to educate better our constituents about the current provisions in the tax code concerning churches and political activity." He added a number of church organizations either have sent guidelines or are drafting guidelines to send to their members concerning recent tax code changes affecting political activity.

A major concern is the absence of a clear, concise statutory definition of "political activity," he told the panel. "The vagueness of the current standard has, in the eyes of many religious organizations, chilled constitutionally protected speech," he added.

Under federal tax law, religious, charitable and educational organizations, which are tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are eligible to receive deductible charitable contributions, are prohibited from engaging in political activities. Late last year, Congress approved a measure that tightened the guidelines governing such activity.

A majority of the religious organizations represented in the meetings favor an "express advocacy" standard similar to that used by the Federal Election Commission, Thomas said. That standard defines political activity as any unambiguous call for action in support of or opposition to a clearly identified candidate for public office.

Moving to the issue of television ministries, Thomas said since no evidence exists of widespread abuse by religious broadcasters or of the inadequacy of current law to protect the public against fraud, private gain and other illegal conduct, any proposed change in tax laws affecting television ministries is premature.

He cited two major reasons, apart from constitutional questions, for restraint. First, he said, the current PTL investigation may demonstrate that identification of wrongdoers by the government is not as great a problem as some people have suggested. Second, he said, the National Religious Broadcasters' new code of ethics may demonstrate that self-policing efforts by religious broadcasters will be effective.

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On another matter, the Church Audit Procedures Act, Thomas told the group the 1984 law should be retained to protect the First Amendment rights of religious bodies. He said the measure contains a "modest statutory constraint that preserves the government's interest in investigating bona fide complaints while guarding against the possibility that 'routine audits' might be used to harass or intimidate religious bodies because of their stands on controversial issues."

Following Thomas' presentation, members of the advisory group made comments and asked a number of questions.

Asked if the refusal by some religious broadcasters to file federal tax information forms contradicts NRB's new self-policing efforts, Thomas said he does not see it as a contradiction. He said a major difference exists between religious broadcasters' policing themselves and the government's policing them. He did mention the problem of accountability, emphasizing the electronic church does not have the same amount of accountability to its viewers and supporters as do local churches to their members.

A panel member said the IRS is placed in a difficult position when leading television ministries do not file information forms since the public assumes the IRS is monitoring abuse in such activities.

Another member called Thomas' claim that changes in laws relating to television ministries would be premature "baffling." She said the public is not satisfied with voluntary self-regulation because there is the assumption that "all the good guys abide by the code and all the bad guys hide behind the fact that there are not federal regulations."

Howard Schoenfeld, special assistant to the assistant commissioner for employee plans and exempt organizations, told the panel he had learned a great deal about various types of church polity during his meetings with the church and synagogue representatives. "The role of ministers in various churches is quite different," he said.

Thomas concluded by describing both the religious community and the IRS as suffering from "image problems." He said he hopes continuing dialogue between the two bodies will lead to improved relations.

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CORRECTION: Please change the last sentence of the fourth-to-last paragraph of the 2/26/88 BP story titled "PAC, BJC Told: 'Work It Out'" to read:

The average increase for the first-phase basic operating budget of the Cooperative Program is 4.25 percent.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

NOTE TO EDITORS: In the BP story "Team-Building Administrator Sharpened Board's World View" released 2/16/88, please replace graphs 17 and 18 with the following:

His wife, Martha, died Feb. 26, less than a month after he began a new job leading the Baptist General Association of Virginia's partnerships with Baptists in Tanzania and New England. She had undergone surgery for colon cancer last November but went with Bryan in January to visit with Baptist leaders in the Caribbean.

A native of East Point, Ga., she had made special effort, like her husband, to maintain contact with missionaries. Several years ago, shortly after she learned she had cancer, she was able to accompany her husband on a trip by scheduling chemotherapy treatments at Baptist hospitals in Bangkok, Thailand, and Bangalore, India, and blood tests at various local clinics. She went with him to China in 1986 three weeks after a fall that required surgery for a ruptured spleen. She also broke an arm in the fall.

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Involvement In Church Business
Not An Option For Christians

By Linda Lawson

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Involvement in their church, their denomination and the affairs of government is not an option for Christians who believe they have direct access to God in union with Jesus Christ.

This theme was sounded by several speakers at a national conference on the doctrine of priesthood of believers in Birmingham, Ala., sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department.

"Our sovereign right, our scriptural responsibilities are lost by apathy and non-participation," said Billie Friel, pastor of First Baptist Church of Mount Juliet, Tenn., in a presentation on Baptist polity and priesthood of believers.

He noted that business meetings in many churches are often poorly attended.

As a pastor, Friel said in recent years he has come, in a practical sense, to believe "a Baptist church is activated through democratic processes under the leadership of Christ. If we inform our people and give them time to think and pray, they will vote the mind of God."

Eugene Cotey, pastor of First Baptist Church of Murfreesboro, Tenn., said: "The Southern Baptist Convention is an assembly of individual Baptist-Christians striving in freedom to formulate policies within the will of the Lord. His will must transcend the will of the churches and their leaders."

He said in the 20th century Baptists have used the term messenger rather than delegate to describe participants in the annual convention meeting, in part, because they do not represent their churches and are not instructed how to vote.

"The term 'instructed messenger' destroys the meaning of the term messenger," said Cotey. "If a messenger is instructed, the freedom of the priesthood of believer is constricted. A messenger does not represent his church but his Lord."

Altus Newell, pastor of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Birmingham, said religious liberty and separation of church and state, like all freedom, "can be taken for granted. It can be compromised and it can be lost."

Christians are to give their allegiance to their government and to God, recognizing that their first allegiance is to God, he said.

Even as Christians exercise their responsibilities as citizens, we must not live under the illusion that if we elect the right candidates, the nation will experience spiritual renewal," said Newell. "That would be to expect the state to do the work of the church.

"We ought to keep holding high the light of a free church in a free state. A just state needs a free church. A free church needs a just state."

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Materials Planned In 15
Languages For 'Here's Hope'

Baptist Press
2/29/88

HONOLULU (BP)--Production of Southern Baptists simultaneous revival materials for ethnics is on schedule and will assure a greater number of America's language groups will hear the gospel in their own languages.

Material for the nationwide "Here's Hope" revivals are being translated into 15 languages, including the deaf, Richard Harris, director of the mass evangelism department for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, reported to state language missions directors. The revivals are scheduled for March 18 - April 29, 1990.

Harris announced the plans during the Home Mission Board's annual language missions leadership conference in Honolulu. The conference studied the impact of "Pacific Rim" immigrants on the country and the need to evangelize the growing number of language groups from the 27 nations bordering the Pacific Ocean.

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The translation and distribution of revival materials is a joint effort between the Home Mission Board's language missions and direct evangelism divisions. The venture marks the first time national revival materials have been produced in a variety of languages, Harris noted.

During 1988, three major pieces -- an evangelistic "people search" guide, pastor's awareness brochure and a church preparation packet -- will be translated into Spanish, French-Haitian, Korean and basic English.

Although all materials will not be available in all 15 languages, the materials will include personal commitment guides, gospels of John, church revival preparation packets, film/videos and evangelistic people search/Scripture distribution guides.

"We want to do a better job in 'Here's Hope' to involve ethnic churches than we did in 'Good News America' revivals in 1986," Harris said. "Some of the greatest potential to impact our nation evangelistically rests with our ethnic pastors, language missions leaders and state language directors.

"We want to be sure this important group is not neglected in these simultaneous revivals."

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Church Extension Leaders Project
20,000 New Congregations By A.D. 2000 By Joe Westbury

Baptist Press
2/29/88

HONOLULU (BP)--Southern Baptists goals to have 50,000 churches and church-type missions by A.D. 2000 moved a step closer to reality when state leaders announced projections for starting nearly 20,000 new congregations during the next 12 years.

If the projections remain on target, Southern Baptists could have 59,741 churches and church-type missions by the turn of the century, said David Bunch, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's church extension division.

Allowing for 20 percent attrition for new church-type missions and the loss of about 220 churches each year, the net total would be slightly more than the 50,000 goal, Bunch said.

Baptist state directors of missions, language missions and church extension announced the projections during a church extension leadership conference in Honolulu.

Southern Baptists reported 37,286 churches during 1987. The state directors added another 3,091 church-type missions to that figure for a total of 40,377 churches and missions.

The projections fuel momentum for the denomination's goals for new churches, which has gained emphasis during Larry Lewis' presidency of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. The goal shares top priority with evangelism for the board, which sponsored the conference.

Bunch said he is confident the denomination's goals can be reached. Research indicates about 80 percent of the new church-type missions survive and become churches. The 59,741 figure does not include increases from a few state conventions which have not compiled projections.

"You're not talking abstract projections here; these figures have been very thoroughly analyzed and, in many cases, locations have already been targeted where new churches and missions can begin," he noted.

"I'm very surprised these projections are so high, and am pleased the states have worked as thoroughly toward their goal-setting as this indicates. To further validate their projections, most of the states have submitted a list of communities where they plan to begin new churches and missions this year."

The Home Mission Board defines a church as "an organized, constituted congregation" while a church-type mission is viewed as "a congregation of believers that meets regularly for worship, Bible study, evangelism and fellowship in a location separate from the sponsoring church, or in sponsoring-church facilities but has a distinct identity."

During the three-day conference, nearly 100 participants heard from church starters and pastors from across the nation who shared experiences in beginning new congregations.

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Ralph Smith, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, noted "New Testament churches" were begun through evangelism and the power of the Holy Spirit. "If we want to become serious about starting new churches, we must become serious about evangelism," he told the group.

Smith's church currently sponsors seven missions -- Chinese, Hispanic, Korean and Cambodian fellowships that meet in the church and three Anglo missions that meet elsewhere. He has been pastor of the 10,000-member church for 27 years.

"There are so many places in our country where there is still no evangelical witness," Smith said. "Even in the heart of Texas, cities like Dallas and Austin are becoming more pagan each month."

Smith urged Southern Baptists to enlist more bivocational pastors to help start the new churches and missions.

Huey Perry, director of chaplaincy for the Home Mission Board, urged the church extension leaders to consider chaplaincy as a means of starting new congregations.

"Many times, any person attempting to establish a new church is immediately viewed with suspicion. Chaplaincy -- whether through service at hospitals, police or fire departments or a variety of other community institutions -- can become the means for obtaining credibility with the people you are wanting to reach, Perry said.

"When we give of ourselves through volunteer service, those recipients of our service view us differently. The stock of our credibility rises tremendously. Rather than being viewed as pastor of 'that strange group' meeting in the store-front building, people begin to see the new work starter as a chaplain who, for example, visited their mother in the hospital."

Since chaplains are viewed as individuals who have earned their way into the community, they can be valuable assets in helping Southern Baptists begin new churches across the country, Perry added.

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Foreign Board Sends
More Brazil Flood Aid

Baptist Press
2/29/88

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP)--When buildings crumbled in a second wave of flooding in Brazil in February, Southern Baptist missionaries and Brazilian Baptists again responded with food, shelter and blankets.

More than 70 Brazilians died and 11,000 were left homeless by flooding that occurred in mid-February in Rio de Janeiro, according to news reports. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board provided \$62,700 for flood relief after the second round of flooding.

A similar flood killed at least 85 people, injured 200 and left 4,800 homeless in early February. The mission board sent \$60,000 for relief then.

Missionaries and Brazilian Baptists are trained to respond quickly to disasters, said John Cheyne, director of the board's human needs department. Before a disaster occurs, they already have identified sources of relief materials and churches and gymnasiums where people can live during a crisis, he reported.

In addition, "missionaries are geared toward a holistic response," Cheyne said. "There is always a very direct Christian witnessing," including the distribution of Christian tracts.

Baptists have distributed blankets, mattresses, medical kits and cleaning supplies during both floods. About \$25,000 worth of food is being provided for 1,000 families for one month in relation to the most recent flood.

A mudslide crushed part of a nursing home, and 30 people were missing after the latest floods, wire reports said. Cars floated in waist-deep water in the streets.

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