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March 25, 1988

88-51

Gaza Baptist Personnel:
'White Knuckles Time'

F-FMB
By Mike Creswell

GAZA (BP)--Southern Baptist personnel in Gaza have been unharmed during three months of violence, but say it has been a "white knuckles time" of tension.

The Palestinian uprising has ranged from rock-throwing mobs and strikes to armed combat, leaving more than 100 dead, hundreds injured and thousands imprisoned. Curfews and tight security measures have been in effect for weeks. Conflict has centered in the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank, but also has affected Jerusalem and other parts of Israel.

Southern Baptist personnel in Gaza have avoided life-threatening situations so far, but must restrict their movements in public during curfews and more trouble-prone days, reports Dona Fitzgerald of Waco, Texas, chairman for the organization of Southern Baptist personnel in Gaza. Conditions are safer than one would infer from news reports, she said.

Workers assigned to Gaza include 19 career workers with 19 children, plus a journeyman and four volunteers. Forty-three career workers, two journeymen and seven volunteers serve in Israel, where overall conditions have been more peaceful.

Ray Register of Charlotte, N.C., Southern Baptist representative serving in the Nazareth area to the north in Israel, reported conditions there are normal. But workers have had to curtail activities and use caution in West Bank area contacts.

In Gaza, "We're still having some days of total strike when the workers do not get out of their houses. We just kind of watch the situation and go out when it's safe. When it's not safe or when they're having a total strike, we stay in," Fitzgerald said.

Classes continue most days at the School of Allied Health Sciences for nurses' training in Gaza, where several Southern Baptist representatives work. During more unsettled times, many of the 60 students have been staying on campus. That has meant more time for Southern Baptist workers to talk with the students, which has been very positive, Fitzgerald said.

"We probably have the best opportunity and the best relationship that we have had with them in some time, because they realize that we really do care for them. The fact that we stay there even when there are problems makes them realize that we do have a concern for them," she said. Student contacts these days, she said, "are more profitable now than they've ever been."

Such results have encouraged Southern Baptist workers in Gaza despite tension over general conditions. "We feel very fortunate to still be in Gaza. We have plans made in case conditions should change, but we don't have any immediate plans of leaving at all," Fitzgerald said.

"We've been trying to tell our friends and our families that the (Foreign Mission) Board has given us full backing to leave if it's necessary, but that the initiative to leave is ours. If things get too bad, we can leave. But with the current situation, there is no need to."

Worship services and Bible studies several times a week have continued most days at the single Baptist church in Gaza, attended by 60-70 members. The Center of Culture and Light, a library and reading room in Gaza, has been closed for several months because stores and other businesses in the area are closed.

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Overseas phone service to and from Gaza has been eliminated, but calls between Gaza and Israel still are possible. A message relay system has been devised for relatives and others needing to contact the Gaza personnel. Though many stores in the territory have been closed, food and fuel remain available.

"The overall mood is still very positive" among the Southern Baptist workers, said representative Harriet Lawrence, of Birmingham, Ala., who serves in Gaza. "There's a 'hang in there' attitude and a real commitment to staying."

Workers have been leaving Gaza and visiting Baptist Village to get away from the stressful conditions for short periods. The village is a Southern Baptist-operated farm and conference center at Petah Tiqva, about 60 miles north of Gaza.

Dennis and Nita Murray, Southern Baptist representatives from El Dorado, Ark., based at Ashkelon, have been driving to Gaza once a week during March for a Bible study with the Gaza personnel. Mrs. Murray reported having no problems entering or leaving the territory through a border checkpoint. Still, she said, "It's a tense situation. You can feel the tension in the city and with the people."

Lawrence said several workers who were in Lebanon earlier had shared suggestions on coping with the high-stress times, based on their experiences. Lawrence, mother of two children ages 6 and 8, said the children seem to fare well as long as they sense their parents are coping well. It has been difficult for some children to maintain normal school schedules, she said.

Volunteer Martha Holeman of Minden, La., has been leading four children in school studies; her husband, Joe, is a maintenance worker at the nursing school.

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Evangelism, Stewardship
Join Forces At Seminar

By Marv Knox

N-10
Baptist Press
3/25/88

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Evangelism and stewardship stand together as twin mandates for Christians, speakers at Southern Baptists' first national Witnessing-Giving Life seminar proclaimed.

Committed Christians must dedicate themselves to telling others about Jesus Christ and dedicate their resources to Christ's causes, seminar leaders stressed. About 500 ministers attended the meeting at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center March 21-24.

Witnessing-Giving Life, a Southern Baptist Convention emphasis for 1991-1995, will be the middle phase of Planned Growth in Giving, a 15-year SBC stewardship/spiritual growth campaign targeted to climax at the dawn of the next century.

The Ridgecrest seminar and a similar meeting to be held at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center in mid-April, were designed "to examine biblical truths bearing on the Christian role in the witnessing-giving life; to discover practical applications of the witnessing-giving life in today's world," said Cecil Ray, national coordinator of Planned Growth in Giving.

Witnessing-Giving Life's unique role in Southern Baptist life is its dual emphasis, Ray said. Witnessing speaks to the evangelistic mandate, that every Christian should work to lead others to faith in Christ. Giving addresses the stewardship imperative, that Christians are managers of God's resources and should utilize their possessions to further his work.

The Ridgecrest seminar highlighted that theme, Ray noted: "We learned that what we departmentalize through our Southern Baptist programs can be two sides of the same commitment. Witnessing and giving both come out of the kingdom cause.

"We really have a deep conviction that when a person makes a commitment to Christ's rule, it's not an option to either be a witness and not a steward or to be a steward and not a witness. You cannot be a Christ-like person and not want to give the resources in your hands and share his story that's in your heart. Both are essentials."

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That theme echoed throughout the seminar. Eleven Bible studies sounded variations:

-- "By combining witnessing and giving, we would have the resources to carry an effective presentation of the gospel to everyone everywhere in our world," said William M. Pinson, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, who interpreted the seminar theme.

"No longer would we be hampered by inadequate and ineffective witnesses and by lack of resources," Pinson said. "We could combine witness-by-doing with witness-by-speaking for the most effective kind of evangelism. In short, we could be obedient to the Great Commission and change our world."

-- The Bible's perspective of witnessing or evangelism "involves being, doing and telling the good news of God's government," said Delos Miles, professor of evangelism at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

"We dare not in our kind of context major on telling the gospel, minor on doing it or make an elective out of being good news. Nor should we reverse the order," he said. "Our witnessing context requires a proper balance among holy living, good works and words fitly spoken."

-- Christians "manifest that we are the people of God when we give ourselves to him. The act of faith is the response of giving our wayward selves back to God who created us," said Morris Ashcraft, dean of the faculty and professor of theology at Southeastern Seminary.

Ashcraft noted the characteristics of Christian giving, stressing Christians' gifts can further God's kingdom, meet many of the world's needs, provide and reverse "the ravages of greed."

-- God's loving nature provides the source of love from which Christians give and witness, explained James Leo Garrett Jr., professor of historical theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"The initiative in loving comes from God, for God himself is indeed love," he said. "God, whose loving and giving nature has been found to be basic to the biblical revelation, also evokes, expects and sustains a loving and giving response from those who believe in, worship and serve him."

-- Jesus, who is Lord of all Christians, provides the model for how those Christians should act, said Malcolm Tolbert, professor of New Testament at Southeastern Seminary.

"One of the most radical notions of the New Testament is the paradox that Jesus, the Lord of all, is servant of all," he said. "The service of God is expressed, therefore, solely in service to others."

-- The Holy Spirit gives Christians the power necessary for witnessing and giving in today's world, added John P. Newport, provost at Southwestern Seminary. "When you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit lives within you. ... We are to live by the spirit's guidance and strength."

The Holy Spirit also encourages Christians to be the givers they should be and strengthens and teaches them to witness for Christ as they ought, he said.

-- Commitment is vital for a successful witnessing-giving lifestyle, insisted Ray P. Rust, executive secretary-treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention: "Jesus solemnly reminds his followers that, in the final analysis, protestations of righteousness are worthless, even iniquitous, apart from a commitment which is reflected in the fact that the individual does the will of God the Father.

"Ultimately, making one's will submissive to the Father's will is going to be of supreme importance."

-- Christians also need to grow in their commitment, said J.W. MacGorman, professor of New Testament at Southwestern Seminary. Keys to growth are Bible study and prayer, congregational worship and ministry or service, he said, urging faithfulness to the Christian disciplines.

But he cautioned against pride in growth, noting, "No one must regard spiritual growth as a personal achievement, nor must any carnalize the gifts of the Spirit by regarding them as merit badges for the spiritually elite."

-- Collectively as the church, Christians also have responsibilities, said Earl Kelly, executive secretary-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. And in the church, as in the life of the individual Christian, witnessing and stewardship are vital, he said: "Evangelism and giving are inseparable if the church is to succeed in producing mutual disciples. The church has the responsibility to teach believers that their giving is a form of witnessing."

-- Individually, each Christian is a priest before God, said Bob R. Agee, president of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee: "The fact of the matter is that as Christians, we are priests. Our priesthood involves who and what we are in Christ, not just what we are obligated to do."

"What we do as believers flows out of who and what we have become through God's amazing grace and through his redemptive activity in our lives."

-- Prayer is the element that focuses the attention and energizes the strength of Christians, said Minette Drumwright, director of intercessory prayer strategy for the SBC Foreign Mission Board. "Biblical prayer changes our perspective so that we begin to think God's thoughts after him," she said. "Prayer is basically and foremost a relationship that exists at all times between a person and God."

Drumwright called prayer on behalf of others "the most crucial and powerful work we can do in the witnessing-giving life." She noted: "Indeed, it is prayer that releases his (God's) power into lives, situations and nations. He has no other plan."

Reflecting on the Bible studies, Ray said Scripture spoke to seminar participants: "We enjoyed a refreshed discovery of the power of the study of the Word of God. Not only did we study how the Scripture mandates the witnessing-giving way of life, we experienced it. The power of the Scripture came through."

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N-10

SBC Can Change World,
Pinson Tells Ministers

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press
3/25/88

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptists can change the world if they consolidate their efforts behind telling people about Christ and dedicating their resources to him, William M. Pinson told participants in the convention's first Witnessing-Giving Life seminar.

Pinson, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, presented the theme interpretation for the seminar, held March 21-24 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center. Witnessing-Giving Life, a Southern Baptist Convention emphasis for 1991-1995, will be the middle phase of Planned Growth in Giving, a 15-year stewardship/spiritual growth campaign that will climax in the year 2000.

Southern Baptists desperately need to combine witnessing with giving, Pinson stressed. Evangelism -- the practice of "witnessing" or telling people about Jesus Christ -- must be wed to stewardship -- the way Baptists manage the resources God has given them.

"By combining witnessing and giving, we would have the resources to carry an effective presentation of the gospel to everyone everywhere in our world," he predicted. "No longer would we be hampered by inadequate and ineffective witnesses and by lack of resources."

"We could combine witness-by-doing with witness-by-speaking for the most effective kind of evangelism. In short, we could be obedient to the Great Commission and change our world."

Pinson sketched the meaning and basis for a Christian lifestyle characterized by witnessing and giving. He also predicted the effects of such a lifestyle if it were adopted by Southern Baptists.

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"It is clear that the Bible does not have a definition as such for the witnessing-giving life," he admitted but noted Scriptures do provide "meaning for the concept both by example and command."

Examples first flow from the "nature and actions of the triune God -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit," Pinson said. God the Father is the "great giver" who provided creation, life and other gifts; Jesus gave "the ultimate gift of all, his life" and also spent his life witnessing; the Holy Spirit "is God's gift to us to guide us to truth, to comfort us and to empower us" and also enables Christians to live the witnessing-giving life.

Another example is of the lives of the first Christian disciples, he said, citing "the close relationship between the Holy Spirit, generous sharing of material possessions and effective witnessing."

The command to live a life of witnessing and giving is taken from the Old Testament's sacrificial system, Jesus' teachings and the preaching and teaching of Jesus' apostles, he said.

In addition, Pinson said: "The Bible clearly indicates that salvation is the primary basis for the witnessing-giving life. The Bible links both faith and works with salvation. We are saved by grace through faith to works."

"Apart from being saved, it is impossible for a person effectively to participate in the witnessing-giving life. ... Witnessing and giving are both the products of and the contributors to a dynamic Christian life."

The effects of such a life will have effects for individuals, churches, the Southern Baptist Convention and the world, he said.

"The witnessing-giving life will certainly enhance individuals," he said. "The more consistent the witnessing and the more generous the giving, the more mature the Christian life and the greater the joy."

Churches also fall under the witnessing-giving mandate, he said: "The principles of the witnessing-giving life apply to churches as well as to individuals. Churches which are true to the Bible are faithful, consistent witnesses to the Lord in both word and deed and are generous givers to meet needs beyond themselves. Instead of spending most on themselves, they endeavor to give much to others in need."

The SBC needs to focus on witnessing and giving as well, he added: "By focusing on witnessing, we can establish the priority of evangelism. The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing, and the main thing is to lovingly share the good news of Christ with lost people everywhere."

"The emphasis on giving should enable us to have available more resources for evangelism, missions, education and benevolence. The gospel is free, but the delivery system is expensive. Nevertheless, if every Christian would give of self and resources according to God's plan, we would have all that we need to carry out his (Christ's) mission."

And the world needs the impact of Christians who apply a witnessing-giving lifestyle, he said: "One result of increased witnesses will be increased numbers of persons coming to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. ... We are literally helping to choose what kind of world we and our children will live in by how effectively we implement the witnessing life."

"The giving life will also ... affect the world in which we live. Persons who give liberally serve notice that material possessions are not of ultimate importance. ... The added resources for ministry would enable Christians, churches and denominational entities to affect our world for good."

Christians Of China
Seek Place In Society

By Erich Bridges

F- FMB

BEIJING, China (BP)--Beijing Christian Church offers two forms of baptism and serves communion five different ways.

Pastor Kan Xueqing smiles when asked if the differing traditions clash.

"During the Cultural Revolution, when the Gang of Four was in control, we had a very, very difficult time," Kan reflects. "In those days we did not know what the next day would bring. We didn't even know what the next 10 minutes would bring. The only thing a Christian could do was turn to God in prayer. So when the first church reopened after this, nobody asked what denomination it was. All we thought was, 'My church has reopened. I'm going to worship God.'"

Allowed to worship publicly since 1979, the Christian church, like Chinese society, is in transition. Transition from the guidance of the aging faithful, converted during the missionary era, to the believers of a new generation. Transition from denominationalism to union. Transition from the severe repression of the past to increasing religious freedom.

Inside the more than 4,000 Protestant churches (and tens of thousands of home worship meetings) now functioning in China, former Baptists worship beside former Methodists, Presbyterians and Anglicans.

Many Chinese Christians don't like to talk about the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76. The memories bring pain. But the subject inevitably comes up in any serious discussion of the church's recent history. The greatest national tragedy of the postwar generation, the period saw radical leftists seize virtual control of the state. A reign of terror and near-anarchy followed during which the so-called Red Guards almost destroyed Chinese society.

Millions suffered. Many died. Intellectuals, artists, whole classes of people were abused. Among them were religious believers. The Red Guards saw the final eradication of religious "superstition" as one of their missions. They closed and ransacked churches, humiliated believers, burned Bibles.

But the church of Jesus Christ was not destroyed. Instead it took root in Chinese soil. Millions of new believers -- no one knows just how many -- embraced Christianity even at the height of persecution.

Purged by suffering, Christians have bloomed since churches were reopened. They also have won the grudging respect of their enemies and the admiration of much of Chinese society. Example: the China Christian Council reports at least 7,700 Christians have been honored as model workers by their work units.

But during the Cultural Revolution Christians lost the chance to prepare a whole generation of potential leaders. Churches, especially in the countryside, lack trained pastors. Even in the cities, most seminary-educated pastors are past retirement age.

At Beijing Christian Church, Kan Xueqing says his greatest need is someone to "take part of my burden, take up the task." At 65, he is the youngest member of a pastoral staff toiling to meet the needs of more than 1,000 believers.

Widespread biblical ignorance in the churches is another result of the dark years. With few teachers and more than 600 students, the 11 Protestant seminaries now functioning in China struggle to fill the leadership vacuum. "We don't have time to do graduate work or research," says Qi Tingduo, the 75-year-old vice president of the seminary in Beijing. "We're trying to train workers and get them into the field as soon as possible."

Meanwhile, the China Christian Council works at national and local levels to encourage churches through pastoral work, Christian literature and Bible publication. Since 1980, the council has printed more than 3.2 million Bibles in China.

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An additional national initiative involving Christians is the 3-year-old Amity Foundation, designed to join Christians with other Chinese -- and people or organizations from abroad -- in service to China. The foundation has sponsored more than 50 foreign language teachers at 36 universities and institutions. The teachers have come from nine countries and 14 different church-related agencies, including Southern Baptists' Cooperative Services International.

Another major Amity project: the new Amity Printing Press, which opened in December near Nanjing. It is printing Bibles, Christian literature and other materials of service to Chinese society. Amity also operates a nutrition training project and has contributed to a children's hospital and a children's mental health center.

The Three-Self Patriotic Movement (indicating the Chinese church's ideals of self-control, self-support, self-propagation) represents Christians in dealings with the government at all levels. Because of its drive to organize, unify and register churches, the organization often is accused by some critics of doing the opposite -- of representing government interests.

Shanghai pastor Shi Qigui, who was persecuted during the Cultural Revolution, strongly denies the charge. "We are not a department of the government," says Shi. "We are not a department of the Communist Party. We are Christians! We are the church!"

Still, many Christians do not attend the more than 4,000 "open" churches. Some suffered so much in the past they continue to fear public identification as Christians. Some distrust government motives in allowing churches to reopen, or remain suspicious of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement.

Others simply prefer the fellowship and atmosphere of home worship. Many believers became Christians when there was no "open" church to attend. Others still do not live near a church. Home meetings far outnumber available churches, especially in rural areas, where 80 percent of China's people live.

Reports persisted last year of arrests of "house church" believers in some areas, as well as official pressure on home meetings to register with church authorities or conform to strict guidelines for church operation.

From a national perspective, however, observers of religious freedom generally agree on several things.

First, public respect for the rights of religious believers has come a long way since the end of the Cultural Revolution.

Second, the government and Communist Party, while remaining adamantly atheist, have legally reaffirmed Chinese citizens' freedom of religion and apparently have acknowledged the futility of attempting to eradicate religion by repression.

Finally, they have decided to enlist Christians, who are widely known for their honesty and hard work, and other religious groups in the vast task of modernizing China.

But Chinese society is still defined by the group, not the individual. Despite laws and guarantees, religious freedom in a particular work unit, town or county depends largely upon local officials in charge.

As the fragile religious freedoms continue to grow, the eager new believers who have appeared in recent years struggle to overcome a childhood of spiritual vacuum. Both young and old Christians agree their greatest task is to produce a new generation of leaders. Slowly, steadily, they are emerging from cities and villages, from churches and seminaries to guide their growing flocks into the future.

That makes their elders, who held onto faith in the darkest days, very happy.

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

Invitation Opens Door To
TV Broadcast In China

By Dick McCartney

F-10
(RTVC)

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--When Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission President Jimmy R. Allen accepted an invitation last summer to attend dedication ceremonies for a new national television center in China, little did he realize a return trip with 100 other men would result.

Allen attended the dedication in Beijing, China, in August, 1987. At that time, Guo Bao Xiang, general manager of the International TV Service Co. of China Central Television, recalled with favor a visit to China of the Centurymen and asked about the possibility of their making a return visit to his country. The Centurymen, a male chorus of 100 Southern Baptist ministers of music was organized by the Radio and Television Commission a number of years ago to provide music for The Baptist Hour broadcasts.

Allen told Xiang a return engagement could be arranged if the chorus could be invited to perform the kind of music they usually sing on national television. When Xiang agreed, wheels were set in motion for the Centurymen to return. It resulted in an unprecedented opportunity, and a whole series of firsts.

The Christian message will be sung on national television in what is believed to be the first time since establishment of the People's Republic of China. Allen said the Centurymen, under Buryl Red's direction, will sing a concert of American and European hymns and anthems, Chinese traditional songs and hymns as well as American folk songs and spirituals.

The Centurymen's trip also makes possible another first time event. After the national TV appearance, a concert is planned in the Hall of the People at Nanjing. This will mark the first time since World War II that a sacred choral concert has been held outside a church or seminary under the sponsorship of the Chinese Christian Council, according to Lewis Myers, director of Cooperative Services International, a Southern Baptist agency established to enlist Christians for work in nations where missionaries do not work.

Shanghai will be the site for another first, Myers said. The Centurymen will divide into small groups to participate in church worship services throughout the area at the invitation of individual churches. It will mark the first time a large number of western Christians has had opportunity to participate in worship with Chinese Christians in such a concentrated area. The Centurymen also will perform at the Shanghai Music Conservatory where they performed on a previous visit to China in 1984.

According to Allen, the Broadcast Orchestra of Central China Television will appear with the Centurymen in their TV concert. Mike Thomas of the Logos Language Institute at the University of Mary Hardin Baylor will coach members of the chorus in Chinese phonetics to enable them to sing in Mandarin, Allen said.

As part of the trip, a documentary television special is scheduled to be produced showing progress of the Christian movement in China. It will incorporate scenes from the Centurymen's visit as well as interviews with national Christians. The ABC Television Network has scheduled the documentary for broadcast in early 1989, Allen said.

Allen saw at least four results from the concert.

The televised concert will offer an opportunity for a Christian message of friendship to be shared with the estimated 500 million Chinese who watch the only television channel available to them, he said.

It also will highlight the Christian presence in China for the first time to a national audience, he added. "It will be a dramatic demonstration of the religious freedom promised in their new constitution," Allen said.

Already, Allen said, discussions have opened with Chinese officials for an international exchange of programs which could allow gospel messages to be carried on a regular basis over national television. Although the message would need to be somewhat indirect, Allen said it could be a great encouragement to national Christians.

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Allen also sees this breakthrough as a possible beginning of a continuing relationship between CSI and Chinese television. He said communications volunteers sent under the aegis of CSI may be able to develop future relationships that could enable local Chinese churches to have higher visibility through radio and television.

The contract signed with Central China Television calls for the Centurymen to tape a 90-minute concert in Beijing in November 1988. The program is to be aired during the ten days the Centurymen are in the country. The Radio and Television Commission will transmit the program over the ACTS network following its broadcast in China, Allen said.

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Dentist Turned-Preacher
Urges Ministerial Morality

By Breena Kent Paine

F - (O
(NOBIS) Baptist Press
3/25/88

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"The news media is bringing to life the sins of many great preachers of the gospel. But they're not limited to the TV stars," Russell Bush told students at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Immorality in the ministry hurts us," said the pastor of Main Street Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, Miss. Although God forgives the sin, "When a preacher yields to immorality, he gives great occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme."

Bush addressed "The Preacher and Morality from the Layman's Point of View" during the 1988 James H. Tharp Lectures, a series of lectures delivered each year at the seminary on the general subject "The Preacher from the Layman's Viewpoint."

"A man who is born of God does not habitually practice sin. If you are habitually practicing sin, one of two things exist in your life," said the dentist who became a pastor at age 66. "Either you have never been born again, or you're in trouble."

Bush said Christians who practice sin habitually will be disciplined by God. "He's not going to let (you) get away with it," he said. "He will get your attention. If he's not getting your attention, you don't belong to him."

"He can expose the greatest of us. He doesn't need any of us. He will expose any man that tries to cover up his sin," Bush said. "But, you can confess that sin right now and claim the promise of forgiveness."

Bush said in his opinion, a minister who sins habitually has "forfeited" his right to be a leader in God's kingdom.

"It is possible for Christians to act like Christians. We have been given the Spirit of God; we have been given the ability to do it."

He advised, "Commit yourselves to marital faithfulness and love your wife supremely. ... Love is a matter of choice; it's not an emotion."

"The Bible says as hell is never full neither are the eyes of a man satisfied. And there's an awful lot of truth in that because the eyes are the windows of the soul and the eyes ... determine what we think about. You don't need to be looking at things that destroy your soul."

Bush also warned ministers against yielding to racism, accepting a gift that might "compromise your message," and lying.

He said ministers should "tell the truth," and "tell the same thing to everybody." Ministers who do not, not only get into "a lot of trouble, but you'll cause the people in the church who support you to back away," he said.

"I really think that the laypeople in the church want to support their pastors."

"I'm amused when I go to preachers' meetings and hear them talking about how they can work around the deacons. If any of you are teaching anybody else to do that, you need to stop. The greatest supporters any preacher ever had would be deacons who have confidence in their pastors," he said.

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"The most important thing for a deacon to think about his pastor is that he's a man of integrity; that he tells the truth."

Bush said, "You need to be the same person in the hallway, or in your office, or in your study, ... that you are when you're standing up here proclaiming the Word of God."

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(BP) photo available upon request from New Orleans Seminary

Sex Education Integral Part
Of Child's Learning Process

By Terri Lackey

F-SSB

Baptist Press
3/25/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--The word "sex" rarely fails to grab attention.

But let a question about it meekly escape the mouth of a wondering child, and adults suddenly become hard-of-hearing or too busy to answer until the child "gets a little older," according to John Howell, professor of Christian ethics at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

Parents and parental role models have an obligation to answer a quizzical child's question about sex in a healthy way, Howell told participants in an advanced training seminar for preschool/children's workers sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department.

"Don't assume you can tell your child a lie, and come back and tell him or her the truth when they are older," Howell said. "They are going to find out some way, and they will assume you don't know or aren't going to tell them."

Most adults share a confusion about how to educate children about sex, Howell said.

"Most parents or teachers think sex education is meant to prevent premarital sex, prevent premarital pregnancy, prevent the spread of venereal diseases or just frighten the young person into chastity," Howell said.

"But in fact sex education is just that -- the challenge of parents to overcome the sexual ignorance of their children," he said.

Church leaders, as well as parents, have a challenge to deal with sex education, Howell said, "and it can be done in a healthy way."

Parents can begin dealing with sex education at birth, Howell said.

"The interaction of parents with offspring shapes the nature of a child's later sex life," he said. "Parents who are comfortable with their own sexuality shape healthy sex lives."

"Even ministers to children and youth must be comfortable with their sexuality," Howell said.

"It's not wrong to feel uncomfortable sometimes, but it is wrong to block out communications because of your fear," Howell said.

Also, a child must be nurtured both maternally and paternally.

"It's a challenge to be able to express nurture, but it is necessary to help a child feel secure about his existence and to overcome the conflict of trust and mistrust," he said.

As a child grows older, he needs to feel comfortable about his physical appearance. "Body image becomes more important to children as they grow up," Howell said. "The better they feel about their appearance, the more comfortable and confident they will be."

"Mothers and fathers and teachers should be very affirming with a child in this area," he said.

"Christians should learn to accept sexuality as a creative force to use for the glory of God."

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