



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 6, 1988

88-58

N-HMB

SBC Language Missions
Workers Receive Awards

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Ron Rogers, director of language missions for the Baptist Convention of Maryland, was honored for Maryland's work with the deaf population. He has worked with Maryland Baptists for the past eight years.

Stan Smith, language missions director for the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey, was recognized for his state's work with internationals. Smith began his fourth year with the convention in January.

Abel Becerra, director of language missions for the Baptist Convention of New Mexico, received an award for New Mexico's accomplishments in ethnic leadership development. Becerra has served the New Mexico convention since 1982.

In addition, Romo presented the Mosaic Missions Award to Wilson Matthews, director of employee benefits for the Home Mission Board. Matthews was honored for his advocacy role in providing retirement and medical coverage for workers in the field of language missions.

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Texans 'Reach Out,'
Start Oregon Church

By Clay Renick

F-60

Baptist Press
4/6/88

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Whan has used the method to help start more than 500 congregations in 53 denominations. He measures interest with phone calls and then explains the new church with mail-outs. The process builds on itself, he said.

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The average response rate is 10 requests for more information out of every 100 people who are called. In the Portland area, that number dropped to 6 percent. Oregon and Washington state are two of the most unchurched areas of the country, said Mardock.

Northwest Baptist Convention field-tested the technique in Scapoose, Ore., a small community up the Columbia River gorge. Volunteers made 3,500 calls and added 359 people to the mailing list. Then at the first service, 45 people participated.

"And they kept 100 percent," said David Palmer, church extension director for the Northwest Convention.

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"I'd like to start a church someday," he mused.

Northwest Convention leaders and Southern Baptist Home Mission Board staff members felt the same way. They invited Kramp to return and lead the new congregation. A recent study found 200,000 people near Lake Oswego; only two Southern Baptist churches are in the area.

The Home Mission Board provided \$50,000 for the project this year. Kramp's church in Texas gave \$100,000 to the effort. Then 500 Garland volunteers manned the phones and paid their own bill. Total cost was \$7,500, and calls averaged 30 seconds.

"It put you out of your comfort zone, since you're not used to calling up strangers," said Joyce Lacy of Garland. With her husband, Weldon, she made 100 calls during a five-hour period. The task only added \$30 to their bill.

"When we were asked to make these calls, the leaders didn't know how many would come," she added. "When the training started, the whole bottom floor of the church was full."

Martin Sundarma appreciated their effort. He owns a business in Lake Oswego and received one of those calls.

"I was saved by a Southern Baptist missionary back in 1956 in Indonesia," he said. "My family became Christians because of that."

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Open Hearts And Wallets
Send Bibles To Russia

By Bill Bangham

F-CO
(B'hood)

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The challenge to deliver the Russian-language Bibles will be met, said Goldie, director of the division of the BWA Baptist world aid/men's department. Two shipments already have been delivered, and a third left England for the Soviet Union Easter weekend. All will be delivered by the end of April.

BWA has received more than \$207,000 in donations. Bible production is going ahead as scheduled. "We are going on faith that the rest (of the money) will come in," said Goldie.

While donations have arrived from the worldwide Baptist community, Goldie noted most have come from Southern Baptists. He credited the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission for making that possible, saying, "The majority has come through Brotherhood Commission participation in the project."

Commission President James H. Smith made a motion at the 1987 BWA annual meeting in Amman, Jordan, that Baptist men worldwide adopt this effort as a project. The motion was accepted, and the effort was named for the late Owen Cooper, a former BWA General Council member.

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"This is difficult to understand in the West where many households have five or 10 Bibles lying around," said Smith.

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Smith also commented on the appropriateness of naming the Bibles for Russia project for Owen Cooper. The layman and former Southern Baptist Convention president was involved in a Books-for-the-World project at the time of his death.

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F - Texas

Oldest CWT Award Recipient
Wins Souls, Builds Churches

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press
4/6/88

CENTERVILLE, Texas (BP)--At 81, Mary Karrer of Centerville, Texas, can't find enough hours in the day to share the good news of Jesus, and most people half her age can't keep up with her.

Her latest milestone in Christian ministry was celebrated last year when she became the oldest person ever to receive the Continuing Witness Training certificate from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

CWT, which is designed to train Christians who will make a deep and long-term commitment to telling people about Christ, requires extensive memorization and application of Scripture.

Achieving the award took a special commitment on the part of Mrs. Karrer, because when she isn't helping lead First Baptist Church of Centerville and other churches of Leon Baptist Association to greater missions and soul-winning efforts, she and her husband of 55 years, Percy, are out building churches.

Last year, the couple, serving with Texas Baptist Men Retiree Builders, gave their time and labor to help construct new facilities for nine churches. Since joining Retiree Builders, the Karrers have helped provide new buildings for 23 churches, usually at about half the normal contract cost.

"If we're ever going to win Texas and the world, we've got to get out and serve Christ," Mrs. Karrer said. "Sometimes the problem is that we don't know how."

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Putting faith and knowledge into action, the Karrers helped their new pastor begin a visitation program. Meanwhile they are helping lead the church of 278 resident members to reach a goal of \$1,450 for the 1988 Southern Baptist Annie Armstrong Offering for home missions.

First Baptist of Centerville also demonstrates its concern for worldwide missions by giving 20 percent of its undesignated offerings for missions through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget.

In 1985 when Mrs. Karrer was its Woman's Missionary Union president, the church quadrupled its giving to Texas Baptists' state missions offering.

For four years, from 1983 to 1987, Mrs. Karrer was WMU president of her church and WMU director of Leon Association. Visiting in the churches of the association, she helped to get WMU organizations started in all of the churches. Now the Karrers are helping encourage their church and others to do more through Texas Baptist Men and Royal Ambassadors, the missions organizations for men and boys.

As Mrs. Karrer worked to help her church and others begin missions organizations, she could see the hand of God through answered prayer, she said.

"When I would pray, the Lord would provide the leaders for the work," she said.

Looking back, the Karrers see the leadership of God when they decided to become Texans in 1952 after the Prudential Life Insurance Company, with whom Mr. Karrer worked for 42 years, decentralized and gave him a choice of regional offices in several states.

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"Otherwise," she said, "we would never have met Bud and Dorothy Robeson." The Robesons, who were members of First Baptist of Centerville and pioneer members of Retiree Builders, encouraged the Karrers to join them and more than 100 other retirees in "Building Churches for the Glory of God," the group's theme.

Retiree Builders, begun in 1978 by former Texas Baptist Men President Olen Miles and his wife, Morene, helps churches which couldn't otherwise afford to build. They ask only that the church provide them one meal a day and permit them to hold a revival before they move on to another construction site.

While the men build, the women hold Bible school and visit in the neighborhood to prepare for revival.

Mrs. Karrer recalled their first project at North Oaks Baptist Church in Houston: "I just couldn't believe it when they put the steeple on the church five days after construction began. I'm still amazed at what they can do."

The Karrers recalled some wonderful revivals in the newly completed buildings, but they agree, "The greatest results usually take place after we leave."

For example, Latexo Baptist Church, one of several churches helped by the retirees near Centerville, had given sacrificially to raise \$95,000, but members were discouraged because it would take more than twice that amount to build.

"We had prayed that we would be able to build debt free," said the church's pastor, Bill Jones.

The prayers were answered when the retirees came and gave their time and labor to build a 220-seat sanctuary, plus education space, for the \$95,000 the church had raised.

With the new facilities, attendance and membership soon grew, and Latexo Church has been able to add a fellowship hall and additional education space.

Mrs. Karrer said she believes CWT training came at a strategic time because she and her husband are eager to be a vital part of "Share Jesus Now," an effort by Texas Baptists to have trained people sharing the gospel with at least 1 million Texans in February and March of 1989.

"We're here for a reason, and that's to get out and serve the Lord," she said.

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Memphis Church's Death Gives
New Life To Associational Missions

By Jim Burton

F-60
(B'hood)

Baptist Press
4/6/88

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--During an Easter service of celebration and rededication, a 35-year-old church died in order that other churches might have life.

Hickory Hills Baptist Church, a white congregation located in Whitehaven in southwestern Memphis, Tenn., deeded its property valued at \$1.2 million to Shelby Baptist Association. About 50 remaining members of the once-thriving congregation will merge with Graceland Baptist Church, located a mile away.

While Hickory Hills is not the first Southern Baptist church to give its property to an association, few churches with property of significant value relinquish their assets, said Bob Wiley, director of the associational missions division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta.

But the move may signal a promising trend, Wiley said, noting, "It's better than seeing these churches become restaurants."

The property will be integrated into the mainstream of missions strategy for the association, said John McBride, executive director of Shelby Baptist Association.

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The church facility, which includes six buildings, will house the associational offices and two or three congregations. In what has been tagged a pilot project, black and ethnic groups will use the facilities as new churches are formed.

Black church growth has been given the priority in Hickory Hills location, according to the agreement between the church and association. Once a viable black Southern Baptist church is established, the facility will be deeded to it, said James Kellum, director of Shelby Association's missions programs.

"This has been a dream," said Kellum. "This is something we have worked toward for a long time."

About six white churches have immediate potential to follow Hickory Hill's example, he said.

McBride called the Easter service one of celebration for the life of Hickory Hills Baptist Church and one of rededication for the glory of God.

With 10 charter members present, Jeff Dickson, chairman of Hickory Hills' deacons, gave a history of the church that once had a membership of more than 1,000 people.

The church grew at a steady pace until Whitehaven faced transition in the mid-1970s, from a predominantly white to predominantly black community.

"We lost the pitter pat of little feet running up and down the hall," said Dickson. "We became an elderly church."

The church suffered guilt as its numbers declined and was unable to minister to blacks, he said. "I don't know if it was prejudice, not being able to have the right approach to ministry, but we continued to diminish.

"God had something for Hickory Hills but we didn't know at that time what it was. There is not a member here today that would tell you that this is a sad thing. The community has changed but the numbers (of non-Christians) are still there."

Memphis' population is more than 50 percent black, but only two black churches are among 118 churches in the association. From 1956 to 1986, Shelby County's population grew by more than 400,000 people, while the association maintained 120 churches and recorded a total net growth of 182 resident members.

A black church relations council has projected the possibility of over 30 black churches for Memphis, said Kellum, who coordinates associational black and ethnic work.

And Hickory Hills' action is a \$1.2 million investment in black church growth, he said.

The black church relations council chose Westhaven Baptist Church, whose pastor is Allen Britton, as the congregation to meet in the Hickory Hills building.

"God is not only changing the community, but he is changing hearts," Britton told about 400 people who attended the afternoon service. "We love you. What would I have done if I was in your place? It's not easy to just give it away. It takes the love of God."

Britton said he does not like the term "dead" church because he believes in the resurrection.

"What do you say to a church that gives you a \$1.2 million gift?" he asked. "You just say thanks, roll up your sleeves and go to work."

Sidney Waits was Hickory Hills' last full-time pastor, serving from 1968 until 1986. As he preached the church's final sermon, Waits said a grain of wheat must die in order to multiply.

In a charge to Britton and Westhaven Baptist, Waits said: "You are living for two. ... You are the pastor of two churches (including) one that died to let you live."



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LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC**

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By Clay Renick
Nashville, Tennessee

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For example, Latexo Baptist Church, one of several churches helped by the retirees near Centerville, had given sacrificially to raise \$95,000, but members were discouraged because it would take more than twice that amount to build.

"We had prayed that we would be able to build debt free," said the church's pastor, Bill Jones.

The prayers were answered when the retirees came and gave their time and labor to build a 220-seat sanctuary, plus education space, for the \$95,000 the church had raised.

With the new facilities, attendance and membership soon grew, and Latexo Church has been able to add a fellowship hall and additional education space.

Mrs. Karrer said she believes CWT training came at a strategic time because she and her husband are eager to be a vital part of "Share Jesus Now," an effort by Texas Baptists to have trained people sharing the gospel with at least 1 million Texans in February and March of 1989.

"We're here for a reason, and that's to get out and serve the Lord," she said.

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Memphis Church's Death Gives
New Life To Associational Missions

By Jim Burton

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MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--During an Easter service of celebration and rededication, a 35-year-old church died in order that other churches might have life.

Hickory Hills Baptist Church, a white congregation located in Whitehaven in southwestern Memphis, Tenn., deeded its property valued at \$1.2 million to Shelby Baptist Association. About 50 remaining members of the once-thriving congregation will merge with Graceland Baptist Church, located a mile away.

While Hickory Hills is not the first Southern Baptist church to give its property to an association, few churches with property of significant value relinquish their assets, said Bob Wiley, director of the associational missions division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta.

But the move may signal a promising trend, Wiley said, noting, "It's better than seeing these churches become restaurants."

The property will be integrated into the mainstream of missions strategy for the association, said John McBride, executive director of Shelby Baptist Association.

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The church facility, which includes six buildings, will house the associational offices and two or three congregations. In what has been tagged a pilot project, black and ethnic groups will use the facilities as new churches are formed.

Black church growth has been given the priority in Hickory Hills location, according to the agreement between the church and association. Once a viable black Southern Baptist church is established, the facility will be deeded to it, said James Kellum, director of Shelby Association's missions programs.

"This has been a dream," said Kellum. "This is something we have worked toward for a long time."

About six white churches have immediate potential to follow Hickory Hill's example, he said.

McBride called the Easter service one of celebration for the life of Hickory Hills Baptist Church and one of rededication for the glory of God.

With 10 charter members present, Jeff Dickson, chairman of Hickory Hills' deacons, gave a history of the church that once had a membership of more than 1,000 people.

The church grew at a steady pace until Whitehaven faced transition in the mid-1970s, from a predominantly white to predominantly black community.

"We lost the pitter pat of little feet running up and down the hall," said Dickson. "We became an elderly church."

The church suffered guilt as its numbers declined and was unable to minister to blacks, he said. "I don't know if it was prejudice, not being able to have the right approach to ministry, but we continued to diminish.

"God had something for Hickory Hills but we didn't know at that time what it was. There is not a member here today that would tell you that this is a sad thing. The community has changed but the numbers (of non-Christians) are still there."

Memphis' population is more than 50 percent black, but only two black churches are among 118 churches in the association. From 1966 to 1986, Shelby County's population grew by more than 400,000 people, while the association maintained 120 churches and recorded a total net growth of 182 resident members.

A black church relations council has projected the possibility of over 30 black churches for Memphis, said Kellum, who coordinates associational black and ethnic work.

And Hickory Hills' action is a \$1.2 million investment in black church growth, he said.

The black church relations council chose Westhaven Baptist Church, whose pastor is Allen Britton, as the congregation to meet in the Hickory Hills building.

"God is not only changing the community, but he is changing hearts," Britton told about 400 people who attended the afternoon service. "We love you. What would I have done if I was in your place? It's not easy to just give it away. It takes the love of God."

Britton said he does not like the term "dead" church because he believes in the resurrection.

"What do you say to a church that gives you a \$1.2 million gift?" he asked. "You just say thanks, roll up your sleeves and go to work."

Sidney Waits was Hickory Hills' last full-time pastor, serving from 1968 until 1986. As he preached the church's final sermon, Waits said a grain of wheat must die in order to multiply.

In a charge to Britton and Westhaven Baptist, Waits said: "You are living for two. ... You are the pastor of two churches (including) one that died to let you live."

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