



BAPTIST PRESS

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May 6, 1988

88-77

Brotherhood Commission
Vice president found dead

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Norman Godfrey, 52, Brotherhood Commission first vice president, and his wife, Nancy, 53, were found dead at their home in Memphis, Tenn., May 5.

Lt. Don Hollie, a Memphis police investigating officer, said: "Both were found in bed apparently dead of gunshot wounds. Each was shot one time with a rifle found on the floor by the bed. There was no apparent forced entry."

Preliminary investigations indicate Mrs. Godfrey, who had psychiatric problems, shot her husband while he slept, then took her own life, said police. A final medical examiner's report is pending.

The Godfreys were discovered by Commission President James H. Smith, and their son Richard when Godfrey failed to report to work.

Godfrey, a 27-year employee of the Brotherhood Commission, liked to say he was a product of Southern Baptist missions. He made a profession of faith in Christ and was baptized in First Baptist Church of Ajo, Ariz., while it was still a mission congregation.

He was educated at Grand Canyon College in Phoenix, Ariz., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, in Fort Worth, Texas. His entire career was spent in Brotherhood work. Last year Grand Canyon recognized his career with an honorary doctorate.

"This is an incalculable loss for the Brotherhood Commission," said Smith. "There was no one as committed to the involvement of men and boys in missions as Norman. He was the embodiment of it. We can fill the position, but we cannot replace him."

Mrs. Godfrey, the former Nancy Pennington, was born in Holbrook, Ariz. She and Godfrey met while students at Grand Canyon. They celebrated their 32nd wedding anniversary May 4. Both were active in First Baptist Church of Memphis.

The Godfreys are survived by three children: daughter Cynthia Ann Epley of Chattanooga, Tenn., sons William Timothy and Richard Norman of Memphis; and two grandchildren.

The funeral will be held Monday, May 9, at 1:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Memphis.

A luncheon for out-of-town visitors will be held at 11:30 a.m. at the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave. in Memphis.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Brotherhood Commission and to others on request

Moore mass mailing
Says SBC 'at stake'

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
5/6/88

AMARILLO, Texas (BP)--A mailing to more than 34,000 churches in the Southern Baptist Convention was sent out in early May by W. Winfred Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, and former SBC first vice president.

The packet includes a 10-minute tape-recorded message from Moore, a brochure produced by Baptists Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention and a return card.

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In his cover letter, Moore notes the upcoming annual meeting of the SBC, June 14-16 in Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas: "For me, this meeting may be the most important for missions and evangelism in our history. So much is at stake."

In an interview with Baptist Press, Moore said: "The bottom-line purpose of this (the mailing) is to try to convince Southern Baptist people that it is important that we turn this convention around and come back to historic Baptist principles and practices. That includes accepting one another in diversity and getting away from this power struggle that says, 'If you don't agree with me, you have no place in the power structure.'"

The mailing went to names that were on a list obtained from The MacFaraland Company, a professional mail house, he said.

He told Baptist Press: "The cost for the whole deal was better than \$30,000, which came from grassroots people all over this convention. ... There were no big contributions in this whole thing."

In the tape, Moore says: "There are a couple of things I want to ask you to join me in doing. First, as the Apostle Paul said in Thessalonians, pray without ceasing that this will be the year that we begin mending our broken fellowship."

"I have been deeply grieved over the embarrassment our denomination has suffered in these last several years. ... The other thing I hope you will do is go to the Southern Baptist Convention. ... Encourage your church to send its allotted messengers. Attend the meetings. Listen to the issues. Make up your own mind about what is going on within our convention."

Moore adds "a few personal words about some of the divisive elements that have caused all of us pain." He says: "I truly believe that our worldwide mission efforts are at stake. This matter weighs heavy on my heart. The idea that Southern Baptist missions are in jeopardy causes me both anger and grief."

He cites a "disturbing decline in baptisms" and asks: "Has our fighting caused this? You know a church that fights cannot be effective in its community. My guess is this could be true for the Southern Baptist Convention."

"What is causing such a stir? First, there are some of our brethren who want to make all of us believe the same way they do. They want to make doctrinal agreement a prerequisite for cooperative missions and evangelism. Traditionally, we may have disagreed about some fine points of theology, but we have never doubted the trustworthiness of the Bible and the priority call of our Lord to do missions and evangelism. Our diversity has always been our greatest strength; now they are telling us we cannot be different anymore."

"These same brothers" are saying many Southern Baptist leaders "don't believe the Bible," Moore says. "I've talked to a whole host of them, even those accused. Let me tell you, my friend, they do believe the Bible, and they hold it as God's sacred word. What they don't always agree on is how to interpret it."

"Just because we disagree doesn't make you wrong or me wrong. All of us are important; all of our ideas are important, and your interpretation of the Bible is just as important as mine."

Moore also notes, "The second issue at stake is religious liberty." Of the opposition, he says: "These same brethren want to alter the priesthood of the believer, want to violate the sacred wall of separation of church and state. One of them has gone on national television saying that the notion of separation of church and state is a 'figment of some infidel's imagination.'"

"There are elected Southern Baptist officers who want to speak for the convention and endorse folks for political office. Not only is it wrong for us to start meddling in politics, but it distracts us away from devoting our full attention to missions and evangelism."

He also says: "I am deeply saddened when I hear some in this convention publicly say that they are plotting to take over or capture the Southern Baptist Convention. To even talk like this sends cold chills down my spine."

"Why do they need to capture anything? We were seeing more people saved every year. Our mission offerings were on the increase. God was calling more and more of our fine young men and women to the mission fields. Now, ... baptisms are down. Loyal lifetime Southern Baptists are talking about leaving the denominations. Others are talking about giving their mission offerings elsewhere. All of this because of the politics."

Moore asked: "Please pray that God will heal our crippled convention, then go to San Antonio and help us turn toward reconciliation. Everything we as Baptists stand for is at stake this June."

The brochure proclaims missions and evangelism are "at risk" and refers to Paul Pressler, a Texas appeals court judge; Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College; and W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, and president of the SBC, 1968-70.

It claims Pressler is behind the SBC takeover and "seems to care less about missions than he does about getting his people elected at the Southern Baptist Convention." It says Patterson's school "stands to gain a great deal from the controversy because Patterson has billed the Criswell school as the 'conservative alternative' to our Southern Baptist seminaries."

"The P-P strategy is to divide Southern Baptists. They have created suspicion and hatred among Southern Baptist brothers and sisters," the brochure alleges.

It also accuses Pressler and Patterson with "ties to a scary cult," the reconstructionist movement, and with "political connections with Coors beer President Joseph Coors.

The brochure says, "The fundamentalists want to destroy the wall of separation of church and state and substitute their own political and social agendas for religious freedom." It quotes Criswell as saying, "I believe this notion of the separation of church and state was the figment of some infidel's imagination."

Of SBC politics, it adds: "Already we have seen the attempt to fire an agency head, the resignations of an editor and seminary president. Dozens of others have been threatened, had their reputations damaged and their names slandered."

The pamphlet also says: "Last year an elaborate scheme to infiltrate Southern Baptist churches with fundamentalists was discovered when they erroneously mailed a letter to a loyal Southern Baptist pastor. The letter exposed a sophisticated, computerized plot to move their fundamentalist pastors into Virginia Baptist churches." It names T.C. Pinckney of Alexandria, Va., as author of the letter.

The brochure tells readers: "Pray about this matter every day. Our witness as the largest missions organization in the world is suffering. ... Go to the Southern Baptist Convention and let your voice be heard before it is too late."

Moore described Baptist Committed ... as "a whole lot of laypeople who have come into the movement in the last six or eight months," but declined to specifically name participants.

John Baugh, a Houston layman who has been a leader in "Laity for the Baptist Faith and Message," said he was aware of the mailing and that Baptists Committed "is a group of people representative of laity organizations in many states who are deeply concerned about the affairs of our convention and are praying and working toward it being returned to the Baptist way of doing things."

He added: "I do not know who put it (the mailing) together. I was not consulted about writing it; I was not consulted about mailing it. I have no idea what the cost is."

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Pressler, Patterson
'Grieved' by mailing

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
5/6/88

DALLAS (BP)--Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson say they are grieved by the mass mailing distributed in early May by W. Winfred Moore, a moderate Southern Baptist leader.

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The mailing, which went to 34,000 addresses -- churches, pastors, news media -- contained a cassette message from Moore and a pamphlet that included charges against Pressler, a Texas appeals court judge, and Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas.

Baptist Press contacted both Pressler and Patterson for their response to the mailing.

The pamphlet also included charges against W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, and T.C. Pinckney, a retired U.S. Air Force brigadier general, who now lives in Alexandria, Va. Baptist Press was unable to reach either Criswell or Pinckney.

Patterson told Baptist Press: "I was personally deeply hurt and experienced a measure of sorrow that anyone would put out false information like this. I would characterize it as an unfortunate, hurtful misrepresentation, apparently born out of a willingness to do almost anything to reverse the conservative resurgence."

Pressler said: "The issue in the Southern Baptist Convention is whether we are going to have the Bible taught in our institutions from a context that it is without error. Individuals who support the teaching of 'errancy' in our schools have tried for a long time to divert attention from this real issue.

"In this most unfortunate mailing, we have seen an effort to divert attention from the basic issue and to defame individuals. Such is not honoring to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Pressler and Patterson took exception to being linked to the reconstructionist movement.

Patterson said: "Anyone who knows anything about reconstructionism knows it is post millennial. Both Judge Pressler and I are pre-millennial, and there is no way we could be involved with reconstructionists in any sense of the word."

Pressler said: "Anyone who knows me knows that my theology and beliefs are completely opposite from reconstruction or dominion theology. I have never supported it, do not support it, and I differ with it fundamentally."

The two Texans also objected to the brochure linking them to Joseph Coors, president of Coors Brewery.

Pressler said: "The attempt to connect me with Joe Coors is incomprehensible. I have never served or drunk alcohol as a beverage in my life, and anyone who knows me knows my opposition to drinking. I have met Joe Coors, but so have I met many people with whom I differ on many issues.

"A person would have to live in almost complete isolation if they did not come into contact with individuals with whom they have real differences. I count as friends many people with whom I have many differing ideas."

Patterson said: "Neither Judge Pressler nor I have anything to do with Coors beer or Coors Brewery. The only contact that either of us have had with Joseph Coors is that we happen to belong to the same organization that he does, or did, the Council on National Policy. That organization is populated by Roman Catholics, Jews, Protestants and people who have no religious background.

"Under no circumstances would I ever condone the selling of alcoholic beverages or the drinking of alcoholic beverages."

Patterson said the "first and most important function" of the Council on National Policy "is to provide a forum for those of us who are not in Washington on a day-to-day basis and need to be brought up to date on what is happening in government and statesmanship. The second function is to share together with people in learning how our government can be impacted for a more conservative position."

Membership is by recommendation, and "quite a few Southern Baptists are members" although they "don't tend to be preachers," he said.

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Patterson reacted to charges he was in the Southern Baptist controversy to help Criswell College by noting he spoke as "a man who has just seen one of my best professors hired by Southern (Baptist Theological) Seminary and who has given an enormous amount of time to the convention that I could have given to my school. That accusation strikes me as rather strange."

He said Criswell College had about 300 students when the conservative resurgence began in 1979 and now has about 390. "Enrollment has not zoomed that much," he said.

Pressler responded to charges he is more interested in politics than missions and evangelism: "Liberal theology has destroyed every denomination in which it has gained control of the seminaries. My concern about Southern Baptists is that we not lose our vision for missions and evangelism. Statistics prove that those who do not believe the Bible is inerrant became non-evangelical and non-missionary and dead as a denomination.

"My concern has always been that Southern Baptists not lose their passion for winning souls to Christ. This has been my motivation, and I deeply regret the unfortunate and inaccurate impugning of my motives."

Pressler also renewed his objections to the Bill Moyers series on the Southern Baptist Convention shown on the Public Broadcasting Service, which was mentioned in the brochure.

"Bill Moyers tried to pass himself off as a Baptist," Pressler said. "For many years he has been a member of the United Church of Christ, which everyone recognizes as one of the most liberal churches in America. He should have been more forthright.

"A number of questions he was shown asking were asked after I left and were then inserted before my answer. I deeply regret that he sought to misrepresent the faith of his childhood from which he has departed and not be fair to conservative Southern Baptists."

Patterson, also associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, said he wanted "to say a word for the pastor (Criswell): "They quote him concerning church and state as though he did not believe in the separation of church and state, but they did that by conveniently leaving out the thing to which he was referring. He was referring to a previous comment about the notion of church and state that prohibits religion from speaking to the government.

"It had nothing to do with separation of church and state per se," Patterson said. "It is difficult for me to believe that whoever published this piece and Winfred Moore, who sent it out, were unaware that our positions were not truthfully represented."

Pressler concluded: "Randall Lolley (former president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.) has declared Richard Jackson in Jackson's presence to be the one who would reverse the direction of the SBC and declared him 'the turnaround candidate' in his presence.

"I wonder if this is the type of thing that they are seeking to turn the convention around to. I am grieved at the tactics being used by those who support Richard Jackson."

Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church, has agreed to allow himself to be nominated for president of the Southern Baptist Convention when it meets June 14-16 in San Antonio, Texas.

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RTVC, Executive Committee
Discuss proposed ACTS sale

Baptist Press
5/6/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--The executive committee of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission trustees and the business and finance subcommittee of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee met May 4 to share information concerning the proposed sale of the ACTS network.

RTVC trustees voted April 12 to approve in principle a memorandum of agreement to transfer operation of ACTS to Friends of ACTS, a newly formed Texas-based for-profit corporation.

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As a part of the approving motion, RTVC trustees requested "that full communication to the Southern Baptist Executive Committee and all interested publics within the Southern Baptist Convention be conducted with candor and sensitivity."

In response to that action and other concerns, Charles W. Sullivan, SBC Executive Committee chairman, and Frank C. Ingraham, chairman of the business and finance subcommittee, invited the RTVC executive committee and officers to a called meeting of the subcommittee.

The two groups discussed all aspects of the ACTS sale in a day-long session.

The RTVC representatives reported the primary reason for the sale was to ensure continuation and expansion of the financially plagued SBC television network. Under the proposed sale, Friends of ACTS will form a multi-denominational network but will provide five hours each day for RTVC productions for 30 years without cost.

In addition, Friends of ACTS will honor RTVC contracts with local ACTS boards, which allow these boards to use the network to air up to 25 hours of local programming per week. This will not be counted against the 35 hours allotted to the RTVC.

Friends of ACTS has agreed to follow the same programming standards currently used by ACTS.

According to the memorandum of agreement, at the closing on or before Sept. 15, RTVC will receive \$10 million for equipment, program films and videotapes, licenses, satellite contract and property on which the satellite uplink is located and \$1 million for production of programs for ACTS; a \$23 million note, payable at \$2 million annually plus interest, for program production for ACTS; and a 3 percent override of Friends of ACTS gross receipts for 30 years.

Jimmy R. Allen, president of the commission since 1980, has announced publicly he will resign his position and will manage ACTS for the new corporation if the transfer is accomplished.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Please add three graphs to the 5/5/88 Baptist Press story titled "Missionaries to Rogers: Who's holding the ropes?" The graphs should be added following the eighth graph, which begins, "I sensed a sense of cohesion ..." The new graphs are:

(A report from Kenya said missionaries asked Rogers what he thought the result would be if Richard Jackson, a moderate who is pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church, is elected SBC president in San Antonio. Rogers said he respects Jackson theologically but that his election might signal to some conservatives that their concerns about a liberal drift in the convention would not be completely resolved. He predicted Jackson's election would likely mean "10 more years of warfare in the convention.")

(Rogers said that if Jerry Vines, a conservative who is co-pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., wins, then he believes the fighting will be almost over and Southern Baptists can get back to concentrating on missions.)

(Another missionary asked if there is room for people with varying biblical interpretations to work together as long as they accept the lordship of Jesus Christ. Rogers said Baptists traditionally have had a narrow theology and a narrow program emphasizing missions above other concerns. Southern Baptists can accommodate a wider theology but to do so would "slow the train down," he said.)

The story then picks up with the ninth graph, which begins, Southern Baptist church contributions ...

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Hobbs says SBC like 'wild
Animals devouring one another'

By Dan Martin

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--On the eve of its 1988 annual meeting, the Southern Baptist Convention is like "wild animals devouring one another," the oldest living former SBC president said.

Herschel H. Hobbs, 80, who was president 1962-63, in a statement given to Baptist Press titled "Whither, Southern Baptists," noted the 1988 annual meeting, scheduled June 14-16, in San Antonio, Texas, "is the 10th since we became embroiled in controversy."

"Oh, beloved Southern Baptists," Hobbs wrote, "in this controversy we are our own worst enemies. What all outside forces of evil could not do, we are doing to ourselves. As Paul said in Galatians 5:15, we are like wild animals devouring one another.

"We deny the very oneness and peace for which Jesus prayed. Our differences can be resolved, not in strife, but in Christian love. Not in mass votes, but in individual hearts."

Hobbs, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, added: "God has never changed his purpose. But he has often changed his people. Already the words of the 'handwriting on the wall' are being written.

"If we do not end this controversy and get on with the work God has entrusted to us, he will turn to another people. God forbid.

"It is possible, but not probable, that by continuing this infighting we might hone down our faith to a razor's edge of agreement. But what a tragedy should we do so and go forth to proclaim it -- only to find that no longer is anyone listening to us."

The former president said he issued the statement "for myself alone," and had "wrestled in prayerful thought over the burden as to whether or not I should write this article."

He said Southern Baptists should note the statement of purpose in the constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention, which says the SBC was created "for the purpose of carrying into effect the benevolent intention of our constituents by organizing a plan for eliciting, combining and directing the energies of the denomination for the propagation of the gospel."

Hobbs wrote: "It says nothing about absolute uniformity of doctrine. I am not suggesting that competency of the soul before God and the priesthood of believers mean that a person can believe just anything and be a Southern Baptist. Both the preamble and the 17 articles of the Baptist Faith and Message (statement) clearly deny this.

"But we should never forget that the preamble is as much a part of the statement as the specific doctrines set forth. It protects the individual conscience and guards us from a creedal faith, ... which means that no Southern Baptist or group of such has the right to try to apply the statement's articles and at the same time ignore the preamble."

Hobbs, who chaired the committee that wrote the Baptist Faith and Message statement that was adopted in 1963, said through the 25 years since the statement was adopted, "attempts to change even one word of the statement have been defeated." He added every agency of the convention voluntarily has adopted it.

"If there is any one thing today upon which we all agree, it is that statement," Hobbs wrote.

Hobbs noted that in 1985 the convention elected a Peace Committee to attempt to resolve the controversy in the 14.7-million-member denomination. Hobbs was one of 22 members elected to the Peace Committee.

"The convention instructed the Peace Committee to work within the framework of the Baptist Faith and Message. It did. Its assigned task was to determine the causes of the controversy and to recommend solutions. It did," Hobbs said, adding in the 1987 annual meeting, in which the Peace Committee made its report, there were "two significant votes."

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"One (vote)," he said, "was 60-40, the election of a president. It was 'us' against 'them.' The other was an estimated 96-4, the adoption of the Peace Committee's report. It was 'we' saying that we are tired of the controversy and wanted it over so we could get on with the stated purpose and work of the convention.

"With one exception, the agencies (trustees, administrators and personnel) have accepted the convention's action and are abiding by its recommendations. They are to be congratulated.

"But despite the overwhelming approval of the convention, I have never seen an action of the Southern Baptist Convention so ignored, misinterpreted and misapplied by factions and individuals as this one."

Hobbs said findings have been interpreted as recommendations, while they are "simply what the committee found. Recommendations, he added, "dealing with labels and political activity, for the most part have been ignored as if they did not exist."

Some people, he said, have labeled part of the report "creedalism. The Peace Committee did not add one centiller of doctrine requirement to documents already in existence: the BFM, the Glorieta Statement (written voluntarily by the six seminary presidents) and the statements of faith signed by those involved in the seminaries.

"When anyone signs ... he/she voluntarily limits academic freedom to the stated faith and purpose of existence of the institution involved. Any agency should be sensitive as to the faith generally held by Southern Baptists who own and support it.

"We only recommended that we live up to what we already have."

The report, he said, "does not even hint at a 'blood bath' in our seminaries. Where problems of faith exist for any present faculty member, it is to be dealt with through counsel by the administration and trustees of that school. Other than that, the report refers to the securing of future faculty members."

Hobbs wrote that some Southern Baptists "have criticized the Peace Committee's report. It (the committee) was not instructed to draw up terms of surrender, but to mediate a problem. In mediation there must be give and take on both sides. This happened in the committee; now it must happen in the convention.

"Admittedly, the report is not letter perfect, for it was drawn up by imperfect people, people conversant with the problem and with Southern Baptists. The convention accepted it. According to Baptist polity, it behooves cooperating Southern Baptists to accept it -- not fully satisfied, but willing to do so.

"Some suggest that the Peace Committee failed. No, it did not fail. It did what it was appointed to do. Once the convention adopted its report, it became the property of the convention. The failure is on the part of those who have not abided by the action of the convention. There is nothing in the report with which Southern Baptists cannot abide, if we want peace.

"If not, then the angels in heaven could not present a report which would bring peace."

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Associations achieve
New role in convention

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press
5/6/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--Baptists must begin at home if they are going to achieve their worldwide goals, the outgoing president of the Southern Baptist Directors of Missions Conference insists.

That's why associations -- local organizations of Southern Baptist churches -- are the key to global evangelization, says Carl J. Duck, director of missions for Nashville Baptist Association.

"I have heard denominational leaders say forthrightly, 'If Bold Mission Thrust -- our plan to reach the whole world for Christ -- is to be a reality, it will be because associations help it to happen," he notes.

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Southern Baptists will focus their attention on associations May 16-22, Associational Emphasis Week. Theme for the week is "Missions at Heart."

The convention already is developing a new awareness of the role of associations in Southern Baptists' missions effort, Duck reports: "This is coming from two directions. I see our leadership recognizing the place of associations in ways they haven't before. Also, I see the association's place increasing in the minds of the masses."

That awareness is emerging because more Southern Baptists are recognizing what some of them have known all along, he adds: "The best level of denominational life that we have outside the local church is the Baptist association. It is here that fellowship is at its best. And on the local level, more help and assistance can be given to churches, simply because of proximity."

Historically, fellowship -- opportunities for comradeship among Baptists in a city or region -- was a prime ingredient of associations. Now that component, while still important, is being eclipsed by cooperative missions.

"The association today, by virtue of its existence and its reason for being, is changing," Duck says. "It's no longer just fellowship. Associations now must recognize they have a responsibility to do missions in the local setting."

The motivation for this change is most evident in America's cities, he adds, citing the opportunities and needs.

For example, one piece of land needed for a new church in metropolitan Nashville costs \$500,000. The area is booming, so the opportunity to reach people for Christ is astounding. However, the cost of starting a new church is beyond the means of an individual church.

But because they work together through their local association, churches can start that new congregation, and similar churches all across America, Duck notes.

"Associations are churches 'on mission' together in their setting," he says. "That means carrying out the Great Commission (Christ's command to spread the gospel everywhere) and doing it together. That's the genius of the Baptist association. It's churches doing together what they could not do alone."

Consequently, associations are developing and strengthening their missions endeavors, he says.

The key is missions strategy, he explains: "We're doing missions locally like we would do missions anywhere in the world. We're starting new work, offering Christian social ministries, training for evangelism and strengthening churches for their work."

Two keys to the effectiveness of associations are the people who dedicate their lives to the work of associations and volunteers who make that work possible, he says, noting both are on the upswing.

"One of the most encouraging things now is the large number of capable, experienced people who are feeling a definite call from God to associational missions work," he relates. "And the association operates on volunteerism; we're dependent on volunteers for all our work. With sufficient numbers of volunteers, we can strengthen churches and offer to them the challenges of local missions."

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Woman pastor joins
United Methodists

By Bob Allen

Baptist Press
5/6/88

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (BP)--The first woman to be granted pastoral salary assistance from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has announced her intention to join the United Methodist Church.

Deborah Griffis-Woodberry, pastor of Broadneck Baptist Church near Annapolis, Md., has resigned to become pastor of Asbury Chapel, a United Methodist church in Hartsville, S.C., effective the end of May.

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Griffis-Woodberry is the only female to receive Home Mission Board pastoral assistance since HMB directors voted in March 1987 to change guidelines to prohibit future funding of ordained women as local church pastors.

In a prepared statement written in reponse to a question by the Baptist True Union, Maryland/Delaware Baptists' newsjournal, Griffis-Woodberry cited disenfranchisement by recent events in the Southern Baptist Convention as leading to culmination of a long process that resulted in her decision to leave the denomination.

"My decision to leave the Southern Baptist Convention has the unfortunate consequence of also leaving Broadneck Baptist Church," she told the True Union. "It is with deep regret that I do so. They are thoroughly committed to Christ and provide spiritual nurture for many who otherwise would not have a church family. They have been extremely supportive of me.

"The death of the Southern Baptist Convention as a network in which I can serve with integrity and clear conscience came slowly. There are a number of nails that sealed the coffin for me. Two of the strongest were the Home Mission Board's decision not to fund women pastors and the resignation of Randall Lolley at Southeastern Seminary."

Lolley completed his 14-year presidency of the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary March 31 after submitting his resignation to trustees last November. Lolley, now pastor of First Baptist Church of Raleigh, N.C., cited differences with a newly-established majority of conservative trustees about the future of the school as his reason for leaving the leadership of his 37-year-old alma mater.

"Over the years, I have watched freedom and inclusion become bondage and exclusion," Griffis-Woodberry said. "My desire to begin the process of affiliation with the United Methodist Church comes from comfort with liturgical worship, commitment to open membership and desire to serve Christ through a denominational system that more fully embraces my understanding of Scripture and its application.

"Besides theological issues, we are motivated to move because of a personal desire to live closer to our families, all of whom live in South Carolina."

"I leave with regret and pain but also with full assurance of God's guidance. Our many Baptist friends will remain in our prayers."

Griffis-Woodberry came as the first full-time pastor of Broadneck Mission in 1985. The mission, a joint project of College Parkway Baptist Church in Arnold, Md., and Heritage Baptist Church in Annapolis, Md., held its first worship service in 1982 and had a membership of 18 when Griffis-Woodberry assumed her pastorate.

She led the mission to constitute as a church last November. Currently, about 20 families are active in the church's membership, she said.

During her first year in the process of ordination as a Methodist, Griffis-Woodberry will be recognized as a minister of another denomination working in a United Methodist church. Her denominational affiliation will officially remain Southern Baptist, and she will still be a member at Broadneck, she said.

She added, however, she plans to complete the process as soon as possible and does not anticipate she will return to the SBC.

A native of South Carolina, she is a graduate of Winthrop College in Rock Hill, S.C., and of Southeastern Seminary, with both the master of divinity and master of theology degrees.

Prior to moving to Maryland, she was associate pastor and minister of youth and education at Ridge Road Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., for four years. She also has been a teacher in Edgefield County, S.C., and a Home Mission Board church extension intern in Sparta, N.J.

She and her husband, Joseph, have a 10-month-old daughter, Courtney.

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(Allen is editor of the Baptist True Union.)

New homes lift peasants
Above cycle of poverty

By Marty Croll

FENI, Bangladesh (BP)--New homes paid for by Southern Baptists could help the families of Bangladeshi fishermen and laborers pull themselves out of poverty.

Flooding during the rainy season is commonplace in Bangladesh. But last year's floods were the worst the South Asian nation has known for 40 years. Forty-six of 64 low-lying districts and more than 60 million people felt the wrath of high water.

Officials estimate about 1,200 Bangladeshis were killed. Others lost houses, crops, livestock -- including fish farms in small ponds -- and household items. Three-fourths of the country's standing rice crop was destroyed.

But for at least 1,000 Bangladeshi families, the floods have brought new hope for the future. With Southern Baptist relief money, these families will help build themselves new houses with tin roofs. And the houses will be maintenance-free for the first 12 to 15 years, said missionary R T Buckley of Mississippi, who directs the project in the Comilla district, where 500 of the houses will be built.

Normally, a Comilla man spends more than two months of his income every year to repair the rice-straw roof and bamboo walls of his family's home. With the new houses, families will be able to take the money normally spent for repairs and buy a cow, rent some farm land, educate their children or take part in some other enterprise to establish themselves, Buckley said.

Bangladeshis in the area work as day laborers, fishermen or peasant farmers. In the average family, five children live with their parents and possibly grandparents. Depending on how many days he is able to find work, a father could make from \$22 to \$42 every month. Of that, nearly \$10 goes to rice, about \$8 to wheat and nearly \$3 to beans. What is left buys cooking oil, mustard, vegetables, fish, soap, clothing, schooling, medicine and house repairs.

Abdul Latif, 38, is one Bangladeshi who will receive a new house built with Southern Baptist funds. A day laborer, Latif owned chickens and a goat before the floods washed them away with his house. If he is able to work every day, Latif earns the equivalent of \$22, sometimes less, every month. He uses this to support himself, his wife and his five children.

"Because of the work situation in our area, most of these people have to borrow \$50 to \$60 a year to repair their houses," Buckley said. "Generally it is borrowed from a wealthier man in the village. If that amount cannot be paid the next year, the interest will increase. After a year or two if it can't be paid, the man stands a chance of losing his property."

Missionaries plan to see 500 houses built in the Gopalganj area, too. As in Comilla, each home will cost about \$500 to build, including carpenters' pay, materials and transport fees. Government workers select families who will receive a new house. Missionaries will approve only those who lived in the area before construction and who actually own a piece of land at the time of construction. They will not approve construction for a family on someone else's land, because the landowner might appear and claim the house for himself.

Recipients of new houses must agree to be responsible for transporting materials from a drop-off point to the house site, working with the construction crew and building a dirt floor. This means someone from the family must stay with the carpenters while they are working.

"If we just give them the relief (with no expectations), it would be detrimental to the self-image of the individual," Buckley said. At first Buckley and other missionaries hoped they could pay day laborers rice for building their own houses, but they found that building the house requires expertise beyond that of a day laborer.

Each house measures 17 feet long and 11 feet wide and has two windows and two doors. Most housing in the area stays damp through the rainy season and breeds disease. The new houses, however, will provide protection from the weather and will not be easily damaged by the flooding.

"The kind of houses we're building could never be built by these people," Buckley said. The project offers missionaries a chance to show Christian love. In the area of Comilla in which Buckley is working, the people are Muslims and Hindus. There are no Christians.

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(NOTE TO EDITORS: R T Buckley does NOT use periods in his name)

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