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October 13, 1988

88-164

HMB directors approve
staff reorganization

By Mark Wingfield

ATLANTA (BP)--Church starting, church growth, evangelism and ministry will be given priority in a new staff structure approved by directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board during their October meeting.

Directors approved organizational changes suggested by Home Mission Board President Larry L. Lewis in the first major reorganization of the board's Atlanta-based staff since 1972.

Lewis solicited input from the Strategy Planning Task Force, current staff, Baptist state convention executive directors, key state convention staff members, associational directors of missions and the board of directors.

The new structure will be in place by Jan. 1, 1989, Lewis said. The reorganization does not call for any layoffs or firings but adds three additional elected staff positions. Funding had been budgeted previously for two of the new positions, and two other positions will be deleted in 1989 on the retirement of existing staff members.

"The changes in organizational structure are not as extensive as some might have expected," Lewis told directors. "We've simply done some fine-tuning to reflect our priorities, goals and objectives.

"We have sought to conserve all that is good and change only that which is necessary to be more effective."

Missionaries on the field will continue to function as before, although seven of the 3,760 missionaries will report to units in different sections as a result of reorganization.

The new structure has five major sections -- evangelism, extension, ministry, planning and services -- compared to four sections in the previous structure.

What previously was called the missions section will be divided into two sections: ministry and extension.

Directors elected two new vice presidents to lead the new sections. Paul Adkins, director of the mission ministries division, was named vice president for ministry. Charles Chaney, special assistant to the president, was named vice president for extension.

Gerald Palmer, current vice president of the missions section, will become a special assistant to the president. Lewis asked Palmer to postpone his retirement one year to assist with implementing reorganization.

Bob Banks will continue his role as executive vice president. Wally Buckner, current director of the multiethnic ministries department, will become assistant to Banks, with responsibilities for inter-agency relations.

Four offices will be attached to the executive office: prayer and spiritual awakening, public relations, controller and Woman's Missionary Union field worker.

Of these four, only the public relations office is a new unit. It combines the existing news and information department with part of the existing promotion department.

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Ken Day, current director of the communications division, will become director of this office. He will be assisted by Jim Newton, director of news and information, and Dan Euliss, director of promotion.

Lewis had proposed that a development office also be attached to the executive office. However, this new office was eliminated by directors, who expressed misgivings about raising funds outside the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget.

In the new extension section, David Bunch, current director of the church extension division, will become assistant vice president for strategy development. J.B. Graham will continue his role as assistant vice president for missions development under the extension section.

The extension section will include five divisions: associational missions, new church extension, language church extension, black church extension and church loans.

All but the black church extension division are existing divisions in the missions section and have been reassigned to the new extension section. Black church extension has been elevated to division status and moved from the missions ministries division.

Names of the new church extension, language church extension and black church extension divisions were changed to reflect the board's emphasis on starting new churches.

Of these five divisions, leadership will change in only the new church extension division, because of Bunch's reassignment. A new director for this division will be named later.

The evangelism section will undergo minor changes but will face new leadership in the future. Bob Hamblin, current vice president of the evangelism section, has announced his retirement for the end of this year. A new vice president will be named later.

Three divisions will be assigned to the evangelism section: direct evangelism, evangelism development and church growth. The church growth division, previously an un-staffed department, currently has vacancies for a director and associate director.

The interfaith witness department will move from the missions ministries division to the direct evangelism division. The change is in keeping with the primary function and purpose of the department -- training and equipping Baptist people to witness to people of other faiths, Lewis said. Interfaith witness staff will remain the same.

The new ministry section, headed by Adkins, will have three divisions: missions ministries, volunteer and chaplaincy.

Beverly Hammack, current director of the church and community ministries department, will replace Adkins as director of the missions ministries division. Harold Wilcox, current associate director of the Christian social ministries centers department, will replace Hammack as department director. Functions of the two departments will be merged.

Don Hammonds, current director of the special mission ministries department, will become director of the new volunteer division. Bill Lee, current assistant director of the special mission ministries department, will become director of the new special missions department.

The new volunteer division includes departments for Mission Service Corps and short-term volunteers. Michael Robertson, current associate director of the special mission ministries department, was named director of the new short-term volunteer department.

Adkins also will supervise the office of alternatives to abortion, which was approved by directors earlier this year.

Ernest Kelley will be vice president of the planning section, which remains unchanged. Kelley previously was elected to succeed Leonard Irwin, who is retiring at the end of this year.

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Bob Bingham remains vice president of the services section, which also received only minor changes. It includes four divisions: human resources, communications, business services and information services.

Wayne Grinstead, current associate director of the communications division, will become division director to replace Day, who will direct the new public relations office. Bill Junker, current director of the editorial department, will direct a new materials production department that combines the existing editorial department and part of the existing promotion department.

The new marketing department, which currently is in the communications division, was expanded and will move to the business services division. Jerry Wolverton, current associate department director, will become director of the expanded department.

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Home Mission Board set goals,
objectives in reorganization

By Joe Westbury

Baptist Press
10/13/88

ATLANTA (BP)--New goals and objectives centering on evangelism, church planting and growth, and ministry to guide the agency into the 21st century were adopted by directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board during their Oct. 11-12 meeting.

The revised objectives and purpose statement, which reflects the first such change in a decade, stresses evangelism as the primary purpose of the Atlanta-based agency and mirrors that emphasis through 11 specific goals.

The plans are the focus of an agencywide reorganization by board President Larry L. Lewis, who assumed the top administrative post 17 months ago.

Leading the list is the goal of 500,000 baptisms annually by the year 2000, a 50 percent reduction from the 1 million baptisms per year set by Southern Baptist Bold Mission Thrust guidelines in 1977.

Although Lewis applauded the framers of Bold Mission Thrust for their vision of reaching the nation for Christ, he stressed the need for a goal that is challenging yet attainable: "A goal should be large enough to be challenging but reasonable enough to be reached. I am not in favor of setting unrealistic goals that discourage more than they inspire."

Other turn-of-the-century goals approved by the board include:

- 17 million members of the denomination, compared to 14,727,770 members in 1988.
- 75 percent of Southern Baptist churches showing growth, versus a current situation where two-thirds of the congregations have plateaued or are declining in membership.
- 50,000 congregations, an increase from the 1988 total of 41,629, which includes 37,286 churches and 4,343 church-type missions.
- 1,500 church starts annually, allowing for attrition, to reach the 50,000 goal.
- 75 percent of SBC churches involved in church and/or community ministry, versus about 50 percent now.
- 5,000 home missionaries, compared with 3,760 currently on the field.
- 3,000 endorsed chaplains, versus slightly more than 2,000 today.
- 1,000 church planters within five years, double the current number.
- 75,000 short-term volunteer missionaries, compared to 42,000 last year.
- 2,000 long-term volunteer missionaries, versus 1,100 today.

Home Mission Board elects
two VPs, adopts 1989 budget

By Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP)--Directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board elected two new vice presidents, adopted a 1989 budget totaling \$83.2 million and approved a reorganization of the board during their Oct. 12 meeting.

The 1989 budget is an increase of \$4.6 million, or 5.6 percent, over the 1988 budget of \$78.5 million. Income to finance the increase primarily will come from earnings on investments and other income, rather than from the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget or the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions.

Most of the meeting was devoted to a presentation and discussion on new objectives, goals, strategies and organization structure for the agency.

Adopted with only one dissenting vote, the staff reorganization plan and the board's new objectives, goals and strategies drew little debate and discussion.

Discussion centered on a proposal to restructure the committees on which board members serve and on a suggested revised schedule which would cut full board meetings from three to two days during March, July and October.

One director, Olan K. Wills of Plant City, Fla., wanted to delay a decision on the entire 74-page report presented by President Larry L. Lewis but later withdrew his motion after an appeal from other board members and Lewis.

Board members agreed to try the new committee structure and schedule, but requested study of its effectiveness in July 1989.

The plan will reduce the number of board committees from 15 to 10 but increase the amount of time in each committee session. Lewis estimated the new schedule will save the agency \$60,000 a year in expenses.

As a step toward implementation of reorganizing the agency's staff, the board promoted two staff members as vice presidents, effective Jan. 1, 1989.

Charles L. Chaney, special assistant to the president since March 1988, will become vice president of the newly created extension section that will include the associational missions, new-church extension, language church extension, black church extension and church loans divisions.

Chaney, a native of Texas, is former president, dean, vice president and assistant to the chancellor at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo. Previously, he was director of the church extension division for the Illinois Baptist State Association.

Paul R. Adkins, director of the mission ministries division since 1986 and a member of the board's staff for 19 years, will become vice president of the newly created ministry section that will include the chaplaincy, volunteers and mission ministries divisions.

Adkins, a native of Kentucky, is a former professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, director of the Florida Baptist Retirement Centers in Vero Beach and former director of the department of aging at Buckner Baptist Benevolences in Dallas.

Directors adopted resolutions expressing appreciation for the work of two retiring vice presidents and two other retiring staff members. The resolutions honored Leonard Irwin, vice president for planning and HMB staff member for 28 years; Pat Davis, director of military chaplaincy with 14 years service at the board; Betty Wilson, secretary at the board for 17 years; and Robert L. Hamblin, vice president for evangelism for six years.

Hamblin, 60, announced plans to take early retirement effective Jan. 1, 1989, and move to Tupelo, Miss., where he will be involved in full-time evangelism and will direct a charitable foundation.

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In other action, the directors elected Lewis E. Dawson as associate director of military chaplaincy, effective March 1, 1989. Dawson, an Air Force chaplain for 21 years currently stationed at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska, is a former pastor of Baptist churches in Great Falls, Mont., and Fincastle, Va.

Directors also appointed eight missionaries and 35 other mission personnel for service in 17 states.

In a report to the board, personnel committee Chairman Robert L. Latham of Indianapolis said a survey had revealed the majority of personnel committee members felt board members should not be involved in the interview and screening process of missionary candidates.

The personnel committee voted to affirm the current process, in which candidates for missionary appointment are interviewed and screened by the staff and confidential files are evaluated by board members.

The study, summarizing results of telephone interviews among the 21-member personnel committee, revealed that a majority of committee members felt their involvement in the screening process would not yield substantive new information, would not be cost-effective, would create difficult logistical problems with scheduling and travel and would not be perceived as desirable involvement by the committee.

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Thomas warns churches to use
care in conducting business

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press
10/13/88

WASHINGTON (BP)--Two recent court decisions should serve as a warning to churches to conduct their business with care, said a Baptist church-state attorney.

Oliver S. Thomas, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, said while courts traditionally have refrained from ruling on questions pertaining to church doctrine, governance or internal business, a new trend may be emerging.

"A significant number of states appear willing to intervene in the business of the church if it is conducted in an improper manner," Thomas said. "If, for example, the procedure for a particular activity -- such as firing the pastor -- is set forth in the church bylaws, it must be followed. If the bylaws are silent, the state's non-profit corporation act may be controlling."

Thomas cited two recent state court cases as illustrations. The first case involved proxy voting and the second inadequate notice of a special business meeting.

The proxy voting issue arose after Harold Herning, a member of the First Baptist Church of Fairbanks, Alaska, moved to fire the congregation's pastor. Herning's attempt to submit 57 proxy votes in favor of the motion was rejected by the moderator, and the motion failed 32-42. The moderator's ruling was based on a church bylaws provision that referred to voting by members "present" at the meeting.

Herning filed suit and pursued the case to the Alaska Supreme Court, which reversed lower court decisions and ordered the pastor to be fired. The state's high court held the church's bylaws did not "clearly prohibit" proxy voting and thus the state non-profit corporation act, which permitted proxy voting, applied. The court said a member may be present in person or by proxy.

The Louisiana Court of Appeal also invoked its state's non-profit corporation act in a case involving the Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church in DeSoto Parish, La.

In addition to its annual business meeting, the congregation held a business session each December to elect deacons and other church officers. Although the church's articles of incorporation -- it had no bylaws -- did not mention a December meeting, the congregation traditionally received notice from the pulpit on the three Sundays before the meeting.

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During the December 1986 meeting, a motion was made from the floor to fire the pastor. Despite objections from the pastor and other members that they were unaware such a matter would be considered at the meeting, the motion passed.

After the losing side filed suit, the state appeals court ruled the December session a "special" business meeting because it was not mentioned in the church's articles of incorporation. Since that document made no provision for special meetings, the court applied Louisiana's non-profit corporation act, which required written notice of the time, place and purpose of any special meeting. The court, therefore, held the meeting was void and the pastor must be reinstated.

Thomas offered four precautions to help churches avoid such legal challenges:

-- Review and update church bylaws on a periodic basis, making sure the procedures for conducting business are both clear and specific and paying particular attention to seemingly insignificant details such as proxy voting, notice and amendments. "Any ambiguities in the bylaws will be resolved by the particular state's non-profit corporation act," Thomas said.

-- Elect a competent moderator who is familiar with the church bylaws, as well as "Robert's Rules of Order." Thomas explained, "More than one lawsuit has been filed because of improper parliamentary procedure."

-- Play fair. "Even when the stakes and emotions are high, follow the rules," he advised. "The end rarely justifies the means, even in church business meetings."

-- Be a good loser. "The Apostle Paul instructed Christians to refrain from taking their disputes before civil magistrates," Thomas said. "Jesus said as much in the Sermon on the Mount, 'If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well.' The church member who sues his own congregation stands to lose much more than he gains."

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(Note to editors: This article is based on a column in the October 1988 issue of Report from the Capital magazine.)

FMB trustees accept Parks'
call to respond to crisis

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
10/13/88

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees applauded a challenge from R. Keith Parks for them to lead Southern Baptists from discord that jeopardizes the denomination to "an unswerving progress toward world evangelization."

The Foreign Mission Board president told his audience they have a duty to call Southern Baptists to spiritual renewal and clear up widely held misperceptions that undercut the believability of FMB missionaries, staff and trustees.

Trustees rose in applause as Parks concluded his report to trustees, which Frank Norman, trustee from West Point, Ga., characterized as "a Magna Carta" for the board.

Suspicion and mistrust endanger the future of missions, around which Southern Baptists formed in 1845, and consequently threaten the survival "of the Southern Baptist Convention as we have known it," Parks said.

"I'm fully convinced that our role in playing a significant part in reaching this world for Christ is in jeopardy," he said. "I'm also convinced that we stand on the threshold of the greatest opportunity and could be a significant part in reaching this world for Christ if we're willing to do so."

Trustee Chairman Mark Corts of Winston-Salem, N.C., named a six-member committee to implement Parks' concerns. He charged the committee with bringing a resolution to the board's December meeting that affirms "to all the Baptist family our personal and corporate commitment to biblical missions, based upon sound theology, cooperative spirit and sacrificial stewardship."

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Information from widespread sources indicates trustees are not trusted by many Baptists, who perceive them to be motivated by a political agenda in the SBC's theological strife, rather than by a missions agenda, Parks said.

"Truth and trust and time" are needed to correct Southern Baptists' widespread misperceptions that undercut support of missions, he added.

Trustees need to correct "a general misperception" that many FMB missionaries and staff are theologically unsound and not fully committed to evangelism and sound biblical doctrine, Parks urged: "That distortion is about as far from the truth as you can get. You as a board are in the best position to correct that misperception."

Trustees also need to "affirm missionaries and staff as being theologically and evangelistically sound" and to "assure Southern Baptists that we will continue to channel all qualified Southern Baptist candidates to the field and that no basic change has occurred in that process," he asked.

Many Baptists have the misperception that the board "will no longer appoint qualified representatives from the total spectrum of Southern Baptist life and will begin to reject those who accept the truth of Scripture but do not regularly use the word 'inerrant,' or those who have a certain Baptist political position," he said.

Trustees, he said, are the only ones who can clear up that and other misperceptions about themselves, which he said he has tried to correct.

Other misperceptions Parks identified included widespread feeling:

-- That trustees are entirely composed of extreme ultraconservatives determined "to purge staff, starting with the president; to purge missionaries and to drastically alter our basic program of foreign missions."

-- That trustees will reject ministries to physical needs in favor of only evangelism, and that they will reject the principle of indigenous missions and seek to control all the conventions and institutions abroad.

-- That trustees are not fully committed to leading Southern Baptists toward increased giving from individuals, churches and state conventions. An eroding pattern of giving to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering already has begun to undercut foreign missions, he said.

-- That trustees "have coerced staff into making decisions or developing strategy that staff would not have otherwise done."

-- That they have engineered "back-room deals ... in which board members, either through intimidation or promise of reward, have gained concessions contrary to the conviction and best missiological judgment of the president or other staff members."

Elaborating on rumors of such deals and threats, Parks said, "No single board member or any group of board members has ever sought to make a deal with me or any staff that I know."

Such conduct "not only is beneath the dignity of this board, but it is totally beyond the range of what I consider to be consistent with Christian integrity and should never even be discussed, he said. "I have not, I will not be a party to such a discussion, much less to such an agreement."

Parks identified himself as one whose vocation and avocation is missions: "I believe the Bible, and it's from this base I've given myself to missions in trying to reach this world for Christ. Missions is my only agenda."

Assuming trusteeship at the Foreign Mission Board means taking on a "responsibility for a cause more precious to more Southern Baptists than any other cause," he said. "You have been entrusted with a missions agenda. ... That agenda cannot be reduced to any single element, but the total agenda must consume your attention and your commitment."

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Southern Baptists' "growth, strength and vibrancy" have been "driven by the twin thrusts of evangelism and missions," Parks said. "For that reason, if the mission enterprise ever falters or loses credibility among Southern Baptists, the future of the Southern Baptist Convention is in as much jeopardy as a body with a damaged heart."

Trustees "need to corporately and individually commit (themselves) in an unmistakable way, in an understandable way, to all Southern Baptists to our cooperative missions effort as (their) highest agenda," he said.

The board could create trust by taking several actions, in addition to affirming the soundness of missionaries and staff and making assurances the FMB will accept all qualified missionary candidates, he added.

These include "a wholehearted, unreserved commitment to the continued implementation of our basic principles of mission work"; emphasizing that a biblical approach to ministry to physical as well as spiritual needs will continue on the mission field; communicating to overseas Baptists that the board will not exert control over institutions abroad and will continue to work with them as equal partners; and assuring other Great Commission Christians "that we see ourselves as one member of the body of Christ ... and want to enhance what they are doing and be enhanced by what they are doing."

"Someone needs to call us above the controversy, with its misconceptions and its suspicions and distrust," Parks said. "The members of this board hold in your hearts and hands the destiny of the cause of missions from a human standpoint" because of Southern Baptists' history, commitment to missions, understanding of Scripture and the opportunities in the world today.

Trustees named to the committee to respond at the FMB meeting Dec. 12-14 are John Thomas, chairman, Daphne, Ala.; Kenny Lewis, Brownsville, Texas; Noralee Stephenson, Falls Church, Va.; Carolyn Fitch, Paducah, Ky.; Rod Masteller, Oklahoma City; and John Jackson, Anaheim, Calif.

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'The Lord never failed us,'
retiring missionaries say

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
10/13/88

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--God never failed them, said many of the 71 retiring Southern Baptist foreign missionaries honored in a service Oct. 10 at Monument Heights Baptist Church in Richmond, Va.

"I didn't want to be a missionary, and I argued as hard as I could," said Betty Morris of Bay City, Texas, speaking to the congregation of more than 600 people. Morris, with her husband, Russell, was a veteran of 31 years on the field.

"I said, 'Lord, you don't want me; I don't know how to do anything. I'm not a nurse, I'm not a doctor, I'm not a teacher; I don't even know how to type, and I don't know how to sing or play the piano. Call somebody else,'" she recalled.

But at the end of her logic, God was still calling. Morris decided to trade fear of change for security in God's plan. "'All right, Lord, I will be your missionary,'" she said. "'But on one condition -- that you'll go with me wherever you send me.'"

Morris told how on their first term her children were playing outside in Beirut, Lebanon, when gunfire broke out around their house. She and another missionary went to get the children, but heavy firing kept them from getting it back inside. "We've got to pray," she said. As they did, the firing stopped.

Two weeks later, a letter came from a friend in her home town. "Betty, the Lord woke me up early this morning and said get up and pray -- pray for Betty and Russell," a woman wrote. "What happened over there?"

The Morrises studied Arabic in Lebanon for two years and worked in Ajloun, Jordan, for three years. Then they moved to eastern Africa, living first in Tanzania and then in Mombasa, Kenya. Later they went back to Tanzania.

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"God sustains you in every situation," said another retiring missionary, Charles Campbell of Mount Enterprise, Texas, appointed in 1953 with his wife, Bernadene, to work in Argentina. "The verse God used to call us into his service was, 'It is God working in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' He works in your heart until you want to, and then he gives you the ability to do it. He is an enabling God," Campbell said.

Martha Robison of Mayfield, Ky., a missionary in Nigeria and Liberia for 35 years, and August Lovegren of Cedartown, Ga., a missionary doctor for 36 years in Jordan, Gaza and Yemen, both spoke of how they gave God all they had -- their lives -- and how he used their gifts and always stood by them.

"I didn't have a lot to give, so I gave him my life," said Robison. "He took my life, and he gave it worth and filled it with meaning." God needed it in the remote places where she and her husband, Oren, served, she added.

As a high school student and new Christian, Lovegren came across the Bible verse, "I must decrease so Christ may increase." Later, when he was appointed a foreign missionary, he received a book titled "Try Giving Yourself Away."

"That's really what a missionary does, giving himself away in the name of Christ to people in a foreign land," he said.

Lovegren told how, as surgeon and physician at Baptist Hospital in Jordan, he stayed in Ajloun during a period of the 1967 civil war when his own wife and children were seeking safety in Beirut, and he was the only missionary at the station. One evening he was on call and decided to sleep in the hospital instead of at home.

"As I was going to sleep, I looked across the room and saw what looked like a large hand stretched out there," he recalled. "After a few seconds I saw myself in the middle of that hand. Then I realized it was the hand of God, and he was telling me, 'I am with you, and I am supporting you in this time of difficulty.'"

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CORRECTION: Please note the following correction in the 10/5/88 BP story titled "Deaf have new link to foreign board":

The first sentence in the 7th graf should read: Opportunities for deaf people to serve as volunteers in overseas ministry are "growing every day," Ray Bearden said.

The first sentence in the 8th graf should read: Also, the board now has one request for a career missionary to minister to the deaf in the Dominican Republic.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Kentucky dentist
serves area poor

By Mark C. Whitt

Baptist Press
10/13/88

WINCHESTER, Ky. (BP)--"Wherever He Leads, I'll Go." Since 1965, William Snowden of Winchester, Ky., has epitomized the meaning of this hymn by giving himself to world missions.

A dentist for more than 31 years and a 1953 graduate of Georgetown College, a Baptist school in Georgetown, Ky., Snowden has been led to share Christ's living word with many people.

Since the mid-1960's, he has visited the mission fields of Brazil, Haiti, Dominica, Zimbabwe, Ghana and Kenya, taking advantage of every spiritual opportunity.

Today, Snowden feels a new calling. It's a calling which enables him to reach out to the poor, the uneducated and the hopeless.

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He dedicates every other Thursday to providing free dental services to the working poor of Winchester and Clark counties. He also takes time to share with them his love for Christ.

"When Jesus Christ came into my life, I believed he wanted to use my talents and my practice," Snowden explained. "The Lord has blessed me. I feel that I owe this service to him, not as an obligation, but because people need help, and this is a way I can thank him for his many blessing.

"The people I serve are not on welfare but also cannot generally afford normal dental fees. They get lost in the cracks. I want to help them."

One recent Thursday morning, Snowden meticulously worked with a patient. She agonized with a shooting pain she has experienced for many days in her gums. The nerves were inflamed and sensitive.

As he gently alleviated her problem, Snowden consoled the woman with his sense of humor and kind demeanor. Before long, he finished and returned her to a life much less painful than the one she had prior to her visit that morning.

"Most of the people I serve are uneducated, unappreciative people. The majority of them are scared when they come in," said Snowden.

In contrast to his patients' fear, Snowden is excited about the prospects for his free dental clinic. His goal is to serve between 25 and 30 people at each clinic. His office staff also joins with him in his commitment.

An active member of Central Baptist Church in Winchester, Snowden enthusiastically shares his love and devotion for people.

He admitted he is a product of the many people who have influenced his life as a Christian and as a person.

He first gave credit to his wife, Peggy: "The one great spiritual turnaround in my life was when I married Peggy. She has seen me through the good times and the bad."

Snowden also recognized C.R. Daley, one-time editor of the Western Recorder, Kentucky Baptists' weekly newsjournal, and a past religion professor at Georgetown College.

"I first met him (Daley) as a student at Georgetown," Snowden said. "He had a tremendous spiritual influence on my life. Often times he would share with me this deep religious concerns and he, in turn, would sit down and listen to mine. The college and he helped me to become a major part of who I am."

Perhaps now more than ever before, Snowden envisions his dental profession as a ministry in a mission field. Before patients leave his clinic, he has shared something of himself and his relationship of Christ with them.

"The clinic has been a tremendous witness to these very poor people," he noted. "I want my patients to achieve a spiritual awareness that God can change and heal broken lives.

"People may wonder why I provide this free service to the poor. I simply say, 'I'm required to be faithful.'"