



**BAPTIST PRESS**

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January 11, 1989

89-4

300 mission leaders declare world evangelization 'possible'

By Art Toalston

N-FMB

SINGAPORE (BP)--"We believe that it is possible to bring the gospel to all people by the year 2000," world mission leaders meeting in Singapore declared Jan. 8.

But they added an admission of past failures, noting, "We humbly confess our pride, prejudice, competition and disobedience that have hindered our generation from effectively working at the task of world evangelization."

Their statements were among the declarations in a "Great Commission Manifesto" adopted by more than 300 Christian leaders from 50 countries. Their unanimous vote came during the Jan. 5-8 "Global Consultation on World Evangelization by AD 2000 and Beyond" in Singapore. More than half of the 300-plus participants were mission leaders from the Third World.

"We see afresh," the consultation's manifesto stated, "that cooperation and partnership are absolute necessities if the Great Commission (Christ's command to share the gospel with all peoples) is going to be fulfilled by the year 2000."

Four basic aims were listed in the manifesto:

- "Focus particularly on those who have not yet heard the gospel."
- "Provide every people and population on earth with a valid opportunity to hear the gospel in a language they can understand. It is our fervent prayer that at least half of humanity will profess allegiance to the Lord Jesus."
- "Establish a mission-minded church-planting movement within every unreached people group so that the gospel is accessible to all people."
- "Establish a Christian community of worship, instruction in the word, healing, fellowship, prayer, disciple making, evangelism and missionary concern in every human community."

The manifesto noted that Christian compassion must extend to "those who live under the bondage of sin and ... victims of poverty and injustice." And it acknowledged that "only in the power of the Holy Spirit" can the world be evangelized. Christians "must be more impressed with God's great power than any force arrayed against us."

"The AD 2000 movement has now laid a foundation," said Thomas Wang, chairman of the consultation's steering committee, an international director of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.

The consultation reflected a new era when Christians are expanding their efforts beyond institutional structures "to a task, a common task," said Bill O'Brien, the consultation's program chairman and executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Through its openness to mission leaders from a wide range of Christian traditions and its focus on world evangelization by the year 2000, the consultation enabled "a much broader scope of the body of Christ to come to a plateau where we can meet without other encumbrances," O'Brien said.

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Expectations were high during the meeting's final session until Wang unexpectedly announced that the consultation's steering committee would not seek to form an implementing task force, observers said. The action left unclear whether any continuity for the movement would be established.

The steering committee decided to disband, Wang explained, to give consultation participants "total freedom to decide what they want to do for the future."

Just before dismissal, however, Ralph Winter, general director of the U.S. Center for World Mission, rose to ask for a meeting with participants wanting a means of follow-up -- a "meek and mild information office" to allow participants to maintain contact with each other.

About 100 participants who stayed for the meeting adopted Winter's proposal. Several Christian organizations and 85 individuals expressed interest in covering start-up expenses.

Winter said he appreciated the steering committee's efforts and its humility in placing the movement's future in the hands of consultation participants. But he said the absence of communication following the meeting would have been disastrous.

Months before the consultation, Winter declared it could be "the meeting of the century" and "the most important meeting Christian leaders have ever proposed" if it resulted in world evangelization. About 1.3 billion of the world's 5 billion people are untouched by Christian evangelistic efforts, according to mission researchers. After the meeting, Winter said his assessments of the consultation's potential significance had not changed.

Several points of tension emerged during sessions, however. Latin American participants, in a "statement of concern" about Roman Catholic participation in the consultation, said "the religious-political force of the Roman Catholic Church is using all means available and is in fact the most fierce opponent to all evangelistic efforts on our part."

Only six Catholics were present, but one of several "case study" segments of the program focused on "Evangelization 2000," a Catholic plan for world evangelization.

Latin American evangelicals said cooperation with Catholics "goes beyond our historical and biblical commitment." One church leader said being known as ecumenicals in their home countries would destroy their ministries.

Gino Henriques, a Catholic priest from India who heads "Evangelization 2000" in Asia, responded to the Latin Americans' concerns: "For whatever hurts they have received from Catholics, I'm not only grieved, but I would beg pardon for those hurts, and I love them in the Lord. I was not aware of this undercurrent that was going on, because of all the kindness and fellowship I've experienced here."

Another debate during the consultation involved a 50-page, 104-point global evangelization plan prepared by a team of 15 missiologists, headed by David Barrett, an Anglican missionary researcher from Wales.

A key proposal in the plan entailed the creation of an "AD 2000 Global Task Force" to spread a vision for world evangelization and to strengthen cooperation among groups with specific goals and plans. It also would foster local and national evangelistic movements throughout the world.

Numerous participants affirmed the global plan, but others expressed concerns. They included fears that the plan could be perceived as top-down, ignoring grass-roots input; that an additional structure should not be formed that might duplicate the roles of the Lausanne movement or the World Evangelical Fellowship; that the plan's theological base and spiritual emphasis needed strengthening; and that it is too detailed to be effectively communicated.

The global plan, the steering committee said in a written statement, "would become part of our ongoing 'tool boxes,'" and it will be revised to include key points from more than 300 pages of suggestions submitted by the participants or their working groups.

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The plan includes an array of declarations and steps toward world evangelization, such as the creation of "a Christian equivalent to Worldwatch" to monitor social, political and religious conditions and trends throughout the world; cataloging all Christian resources that can aid world evangelization; and translating key materials into the six languages used at the United Nations, and ultimately into some 100 languages, each spoken by 1 million or more Christians throughout the world.

The plan also calls for efforts to redeploy Christian missionaries to unevangelized people. Currently, 92 percent of all foreign missionaries "work with heavily Christianized populations in predominantly Christian lands," the plan states.

"We had differences of opinion, methodology and procedure," Wang said, "but in the areas of world evangelization, missions and a burden for fulfilling the Great Commission, we are in total harmony."

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WMU gives \$200,000 to fund,  
awards \$59,000 in grants

By Susan Todd

N - (P)  
(WMU)

Baptist Press  
1/11/89

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union's executive board announced Jan. 9 it had donated \$200,000 to the two-year-old Second Century Fund. The contribution brings the total amount in the fund to \$414,000.

WMU established the Second Century Fund, a permanent endowment, to observe its centennial year, 1988. The fund was created as a gift to future generations of women in missions. All contributions are invested permanently. Only the interest earned on the principal is given as grants.

The grants are given to develop women's missions organizations abroad; to enhance WMU leadership development in the United States; and to foster education about missions and WMU among Southern Baptist seminary students and faculty.

From the interest earned on the fund's investment and from a supplement from the executive board, more than \$59,000 in grants were awarded to 13 recipients during the annual January meeting, WMU leaders said.

This year's grants are:

-- \$8,000 to Colorado WMU, to assist with expenses in its first year as an auxiliary to the state convention.

-- \$1,800 to Wyoming WMU, to assist with promotional and office expenses in a new state convention.

-- \$2,000 to New England WMU, to underwrite a campaign to increase WMU awareness among pastors and their spouses.

-- \$7,500 to finance a WMU leadership conference for representatives from 12 ethnic groups.

-- \$1,800 to help fund the work of the state WMU executive director in the Dakota Southern Baptist Fellowship.

-- \$500 to fund WMU associational leadership training in Michigan.

-- \$750 to fund a WMU associational training conference in the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey.

-- \$6,000 to provide WMU literature in Southern Baptist new-work areas.

-- \$5,410 to produce WMU literature in Cambodian, Arabic and Korean languages.

-- \$14,375 to assist the WMU of Korea to launch a missions education organization for children ages 7 through 12.

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-- \$7,500 to the building fund of the WMU headquarters in Ibadan, Nigeria.

-- \$2,500 to pay the expenses of a woman from the People's Republic of China to attend the 1990 meeting in Seoul, Korea, of the women's department of the Baptist World Alliance.

A \$1,133 grant was given from the Carolyn Weatherford Scholarship Fund to Eileen Mitchell, an intern with Colorado WMU. The scholarship fund was established in 1988 by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to honor WMU's centennial.

This year is the second year grants have been given. The first awards were announced during WMU's Centennial Celebration in Richmond, Va., in May 1988.

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RTVC trustees ask network  
censors be reinstated

N-CO  
(RTVC)

Baptist Press  
1/11/89

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission trustees called on the three major television networks to reinstate to program practices offices, their in-house censors.

The trustees approved a resolution to be sent to the heads of the ABC, NBC and CBS television networks, the Federal Communications Commission and "appropriate committees of Congress."

The resolution was approved after commission President Jimmy R. Allen reported that the three networks had either closed or drastically reduced the size of their offices of program practices and standards. Program standards offices were responsible for screening programs for offensive content.

The resolution deplored "the increased violence, sadism, explicit sexual content and popularizing of behavior destructive to family life in America contained in network television programming."

Trustees also reviewed the 1988 audit of commission finances, learned that the number of households able to receive ACTS programs now exceeds 9 million and heard a report of a special broadcast on mainland China television.

The program, featuring the Centurymen choir in concert with the Central China Broadcast Traditional Orchestra, was broadcast nationwide in China twice during November. Production Vice President Bob Thornton said Chinese authorities estimated the audience at 350 million viewers for each broadcast.

The Centurymen concert will be carried on the ACTS network Feb. 25, at 8 p.m. Eastern Daylight Saving Time.

Trustees also reviewed two programs produced for national network distribution. An NBC special, "The Hunger Next Door," is scheduled to run on NBC Sunday, Jan. 29, and "Musical Bridges" is to be carried on ABC Sunday, March 5.

"The Hunger Next Door" documents responses of churches and missionaries to the problem of hunger in America and in other parts of the world. "Musical Bridges" is a documentary produced during the visit of the Centurymen to China. It features interviews with Chinese Christians and church leaders.

A progress report from Friends of ACTS was distributed to trustees. Friends of ACTS is the San Antonio, Texas-based organization that has contracted to purchase the ACTS network from the commission.

In the report, Center (Chip) Atkins, president of Friends of ACTS, said, "Favorable response to our presentations to various business investors causes us to believe that all the necessary due-diligence will be complete no later than the March 14 closing."

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Atkins' group had spent more than \$1.2 million in pursuit of the transaction, he said, adding, "We plan to continue to make the necessary substantial investments in the transponder, personnel, marketing, legal and related expenses because our meetings with our investors give us confidence in closing the transaction."

The commission has granted three extensions of time for Friends of ACTS to raise money to complete the purchase. The most recent extension to March 14 will coincide with expiration of Friends of ACTS' stock offering document, Allen said.

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Supreme Court accepts  
Missouri abortion case

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press  
1/11/89

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to review the constitutionality of a Missouri abortion law.

The 1986 law states that human life "begins at conception" and "unborn children have protectable interests in life, health and well-being." It prohibits the use of public funds, employees and facilities for "performing or assisting" an abortion or "encouraging or counseling" a woman to have an abortion not necessary to save her life. The law also requires doctors to perform tests to determine the viability of any fetus 20 weeks old or older.

Following a legal challenge filed by five publicly employed doctors and nurses and two non-profit corporations, the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals struck down specific provisions of the Missouri law last July.

The federal appeals court held the law's preamble statement that life begins at conception is "simply an impermissible state adoption of a theory of when life begins to justify its abortion regulations."

The appeals panel ruled while a state has the right to refuse direct funding of abortions, the provisions of the Missouri law barring the use of public funds created "an undue burden or obstacle" to women seeking counseling or abortion services.

In addition, the 8th Circuit held that requiring doctors to perform specific tests is an "unconstitutional legislative intrusion on a matter of medical skill and judgment."

In his appeal, Missouri Attorney General William L. Webster asked the Supreme Court not only to overturn the lower court's decision, but also to reconsider its own 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade -- the landmark case that established a constitutional right to abortion.

"The 8th Circuit's analysis expands Supreme Court precedents in favor of abortion on demand, further contracts the state's compelling interest in the life of viable unborn children and disregards the Supreme Court's holdings that abortion is a private matter which government need in no way subsidize," Webster wrote. "Consequently, if Missouri's carefully drafted statutory provisions are unconstitutional under Roe v. Wade and its progeny as the court below maintains, appellants submit that Roe v. Wade should itself be reconsidered."

U.S. Solicitor General Charles Fried has filed a friend-of-the-court brief also suggesting the high court reconsider Roe v. Wade.

In announcing its decision to review the case, the Supreme Court gave no indication whether it will reconsider the 1973 decision or limit itself to the Missouri law in question. The court is expected to hear oral arguments in the case later this spring and announce its decision before the end of the current court term. (88-605, Webster v. Reproductive Health Service)

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'International Service Corps'  
considered by Foreign Board

By Marty Croll

N-FMB

Baptist Press  
1/11/89

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board is working to develop clearer paths for Southern Baptists who want to work overseas in roles other than career missions, board leaders said.

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In February, board trustees will consider a plan that would combine all non-career workers who serve terms from four months to two years under a program called the International Service Corps.

Missionaries requesting help from non-career personnel also would benefit from the simplicity of the proposed International Service Corps, said Tom Prevost, director of the international lay missions department. The department will recruit and enlist personnel for the International Service Corps, should the program be adopted.

The International Service Corps would include what are now separate programs for Mission Service Corps, special assignment and journeymen personnel. Workers currently receive various levels of support depending on their program. In many instances, they work side-by-side overseas performing similar jobs but receive varying stipends and degrees of training because they applied under different programs, Prevost said.

In some cases, workers have been frustrated when they discovered they were receiving treatment unequal to someone else doing the same task, Prevost added. Under the International Service Corps proposal, the support structure would be equal for all workers, but the board would encourage participants to pay as much of their own support as possible.

International Service Corps candidates selected from applications would attend one of six annual conferences at the Foreign Mission Board. Following the conferences, board staff members would match candidates to job requests and work out financial arrangements, or recommend no placement, or place the candidates' files in a human resource pool for future assignment.

At its Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va., the board would train seven groups of new International Service Corps workers each year. These would include five groups assigned to countries where Southern Baptist missionaries work, one group assigned to countries where missionaries cannot work and one group of those who choose the "journeyman option."

The Journeyman Program, which began about 25 years ago, has allowed college graduates under age 27 to train as a group and work alongside missionaries for two years. Under the International Service Corps, younger college graduates would have the opportunity to choose the "journeyman option" and commit themselves to two-year stints overseas after training with others who choose the same option.

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Bible called only textbook  
for Baptist Sunday schools

By Linda Lawson

N-SSB

Baptist Press  
1/11/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Bible must be the only textbook for the Sunday school, with curriculum materials being used to help teachers and students better understand biblical content, participants in a Jan. 6 teleconference were told.

Transmitted live on the Baptist Telecommunication Network, personnel from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday school division presented information about improvements in curriculum and fielded questions during the 30-minute teleconference.

"A good curriculum plan takes into consideration comprehensiveness, balance and sequencing of Bible studies," said Harry Piland, director of the Sunday school division. "We need help in teaching the word of God. That is why we have curriculum."

Forrest Moorehead, curriculum development coordinator, said, "One of our purposes in curriculum is to help churches be true to their mission and achieve their objectives."

In response to a question from K.H. Grammer of Mountain View Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., Moorehead said the three lines of youth-adult Sunday school curriculum produced by the board are biblically based but take different approaches to Bible study.

Curriculum development for the Bible Book Series begins with the Bible book, and then application of the text is made, Moorehead said. The Life and Work Series begins with life concerns and denominational issues, and then Bible passages or books are identified that speak to the needs. And the Convention Uniform Series takes a middle-ground approach, beginning with the Bible text filtered through the needs of the learner.

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"Choice of curriculum line depends on the approach to Bible study the church may want," said Moorehead.

Literature produced by the board always has included a strong emphasis on evangelism, but this is being heightened through several actions -- including the plan of salvation quarterly in virtually every piece of Sunday school material and regular emphases in lessons where teachers of older children, youth and adults may present the plan of salvation or invite people to make professions of faith, Piland said.

However, "in no way are we moving away from nurturing and application," he added. "We are not lifting up evangelism and lowering the profile of nurturing."

Jerry Carter of Morningside Baptist Church in Yuma, Ariz., called in to ask why large-print editions of Sunday school material for senior adults do not include as much Bible content as periodicals with smaller type.

Moorehead and Piland said cost is a factor, but the possibility of change to add more Bible content in large-print editions is being considered.

Chris Clark of 14th Avenue Baptist Church in Sacramento, Calif., asked about upcoming changes in Sunday school curriculum.

Recommendations on proposals are the result of three to four years of study and will be presented to the board's trustees in February, Piland said. If approved, they would be implemented in October 1991.

"There will not be wholesale turnover or change," he said. "We see these as improvements to better meet the needs of Southern Baptists."

Improvements will be in four areas: increased Bible visibility, ease of use, attractiveness and stronger emphasis on evangelism, Moorehead said.

All Sunday school curriculum includes five common features: biblical foundation, written within the guidelines of the Baptist Faith and Message, evangelistic emphasis, emphasis on personal Christian growth and written by Southern Baptists who are sympathetic supporters of the Sunday school, he said.

The next Sunday school teleconference will focus on non-traditional approaches to conducting Sunday school and will air Thursday, April 6, at 1 p.m. Central Standard Time.

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Tennessee Baptist churches named  
in lawsuit over church parsonages

By Lonnie Wilkey

N-66  
(TN)

Baptist Press  
1/11/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--Twenty Nashville Baptist Association churches have been named in a lawsuit filed by the local metropolitan government regarding the tax-exempt status of church parsonages.

Overall, the city is seeking to tax 141 tax-exempt properties the city claims are not used for religious or charitable purposes.

The lawsuit, filed Dec. 29, seeks a "claritory judgment" regarding the taxability of church residential property, said Robert Taylor, attorney for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, who has been consulted by Nashville pastors.

Metro Tax Assessor Jim Ed Clary, a Southern Baptist who said he "has never advocated taxing the house of the Lord one bit," claimed the purpose of church parsonages is residential and that they are not used "purely and solely" for religious purposes.

State law allows churches one exemption for ministerial housing. Taylor said the lawsuit seeks to strike down a 1984 statute that states, "For the purposes of this section, a church parsonage shall be deemed to be property used purely and exclusively for religious purposes; provided, however, that no church shall be granted an exemption on more than one parsonage."

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Taylor noted the courts must determine if the legislature exceeded its authority in adopting the 1984 statute.

Clary said parsonages are built to "provide a service which every individual must have" and noted that residents of church parsonages receive the same government services, such as fire and police protection, at no cost that their neighbors support through property taxes.

"I feel that everybody should pay their fair share," he said.

At least one Nashville pastor agreed parsonages should be taxed.

"It's an act of integrity and fairness for churches to pay taxes, that as I see it, are on properties (church parsonages) not used for religious purposes and ministries," said Bill Sherman, pastor of Woodmont Baptist Church.

Sherman said he believes churches should pay a service fee for police and fire protection. "If we would do that, then the community would say churches are doing their part," he said.

But if the current lawsuit is "a precedential first step that would lead to the taxing of places of worship and places of Christian education, I think that's inappropriate," he added.

Several Nashville pastors, however, disputed Clary's claim that church parsonages are not used "purely and solely" for religious purposes.

Carl Price, pastor of Lakewood Baptist Church, said the parsonage "is an essential part of a church's ministry."

In most cases, the ministry of a pastor "includes a ministry to people in the community that exceeds the membership of his church," Price said.

Bob Old, pastor of First Baptist Church in Joelton, noted a pastor is not employed by a church, but is self-employed.

"A pastor is a man whose life is given solely for religious benefit. He is not called to work eight hours a day, but is on 24-hour call," Old said, noting he often counsels and prepares sermons at his home.

Tax Assessor Clary "has a lack of understanding of a man's call to a lifestyle of evangelism and religious activity," he added. "That cannot be separated from his private life."

Old, who is organizing Nashville pastors in defense of the suit, emphasized the parsonage is "an extension of the church's religious ministry, mission and influence."

From a historical view, the taxation of church parsonages is invalid, said Kenneth Castleberry, pastor of Dalewood Baptist Church.

"Because parsonages always have been considered part of the church's total ministry to the community, they should in effect be treated as other church property and not be taxed," he said.

Taylor concurred, noting, "There is no doubt in anyone's mind that the framers of the constitution, and legislators since, intended for church parsonages to be exempt from taxation."

The court decision in this case will have statewide impact, he added, predicting tax assessors in other areas also will tax church parsonages if the court rules in favor of the lawsuit. A favorable ruling would hurt small rural churches, he said.

Old agreed, noting that in most cases smaller churches could not afford full-time pastors if they did not provide church housing, and that property taxes on parsonages would cause a financial strain on some church budgets.

The Nashville churches involved in the suit have been summoned and have until Jan. 30 to file a defensive action to the plaintiff's attorney.

Brotherhood expands hours  
to improve accessibility

N-10  
(B'hood)

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, which has had a four-day work week since 1972, is returning to a five-day work week.

Starting Monday, Feb. 6, Brotherhood Commission offices will be open 50 hours every week, from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Central Daylight Saving Time, Monday through Friday.

"With this change, no other Southern Baptist agency will be 'open for business' to a greater extent than the Brotherhood Commission," said Brotherhood Commission President James H. Smith.

The daily "early start, late closing" feature will facilitate contact with people in all time zones of the United States, he said. The staff will meet the demands of the 50-hour opening by a flexible work week.

The revision in office hours was made in response to an administrative communications study completed last October, he said.

"The audit strongly recommended that the commission return to a five-day work week to become more accessible, available and visible to all Southern Baptists, especially to state convention Brotherhood leadership, local church leaders, state Baptist editors, leaders of Southern Baptist agencies and others," Smith said, "and we have taken this step to do just that."

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Texas CLC names black pastor  
as service award recipient

By Ken Camp

N-Texas  
Baptist Press  
1/11/89

DALLAS (BP)--Harold Branch, lauded as "a pioneer in race relations" during four decades as a Southern Baptist pastor, has been selected as the 1988 recipient of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission Distinguished Service Award.

Branch, who in 1973 became the first black vice president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, will receive the award at the Texas Christian Life Commission's annual statewide workshop, Feb. 20-21 at First Baptist Church of Austin. A recognition service also is scheduled at St. John Baptist Church in Corpus Christi, where Branch was pastor for 32 years before his retirement in March 1988.

"Harold Branch has bridged the color barrier with his remarkable compassion and caring for all of God's people," said Texas CLC Director Phil Strickland. "He has been one of the outstanding role models for racial cooperation in our convention."

Branch, a native of Conroe, Texas, earned a bachelor's degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1943. He was a pastor in Massachusetts while working on a master's degree at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary before returning to Texas in 1947.

"When I came back to Texas, my prayer was that I might serve as a mid-wife, helping to give birth to a new day in Texas and throughout the South," said Branch. For more than three decades, he worked to bring about that "new day" at the community, denominational and local church levels as pastor of St. John Baptist Church in Corpus Christi.

Branch served nine years on the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and also has worked on the state level with the CLC, the Texas Baptist executive board and the state missions commission.

His community involvement includes eight years with the Corpus Christi Housing Authority, four years on the Corpus Christi City Council, a term as president of the South Texas Council of Governments and additional service with the local Child Welfare Board, Community Action Board and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

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Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Branch helped integrate Corpus Christi institutions and public facilities. During this time, he helped Sydney Smith gain admission as the first black student at the University of Corpus Christi. Smith now is manager of the Black church development section at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"'Peaceably' is a good word to describe Harold and his manner of work," said Linn Self, pastor of Oak Ridge Baptist Church in Portland, Texas. "He has served as a peacemaker, avoiding unnecessary strife and conflict between different segments of the community here.

"He has been an encourager to other pastors and a positive factor in our association. In all, Harold Branch has been an exemplary sort of leader."