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March 30, 1989

89-50

CLC's Land challenged  
to link faith, actions

By Louis Moore

N-60  
(CLC)

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Richard D. Land was installed March 27 as the fifth executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission amid challenges from the denomination's president and a Baptist theologian to link faith with actions, words with deeds and example with leadership.

"Do not merely ascertain for us Bible truth; show us how to apply that truth to life," said convention president Jerry Vines during the installation service in Kansas City, Mo. "Do not merely find Bible teachings; show us how to follow that Bible teaching in Bible living. Do not satisfy yourselves merely to state doctrine but stimulate duty."

Vines admonished Land to "always keep in mind that the ultimate purpose of it all is to share with men and women, boys and girls in our society the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, for the ultimate immorality is to have the saving gospel and fail to share it."

The installation ceremony was held in conjunction with the commission's annual seminar.

Theologian/author Carl F.H. Henry, founding editor of Christianity Today magazine, told the installation-service audience of about 425 an "appalling culture-crisis" swirls through the nation today, and Southern Baptists must respond by promoting "authentic and effective evangelical solutions."

"Around us today lives a multitude of seething and tormented minds (and) souls lashed by furious winds and waves of a drug culture and a society threatened by AIDS," Henry said. "They are disinherited spirits, cognitive wanderers, feeble characters whose dutiful selfhood has almost expired and whose agitated hearts seem steeled against the truth. Except for an eerie sense of ultimate catastrophe, a bewildering chaos chills their sense of future."

The "present generation refuses to admit that it is coping with demons; its teachers were unhelpful in confronting the ghastly terrors that stem from a paganism born of their rejection of Christianity," Henry said.

Land, who was elected to the CLC last September and took office Oct. 26, responded with a call for Southern Baptists to become "the salt of the earth and the light of the world."

"From this century's midpoint onward, our descent has gathered momentum," Land said. "Present-day Christians are no longer confronted by a 'merely secular' culture. The downward spiral of sin outlined by Paul for the Roman Christians has materialized before our very eyes.

"The end result is that for the last half of this century Christianity has increasingly ceased to function in any meaningful way for our culture."

The Christian's answer to the degenerated society should be a heavier emphasis on biblical truths and lifestyle, he said.

"As we face our neo-pagan cultural milieu under the command to be salt and light, we must realize that an ability to do so successfully will first be governed not only by his (God's) presence in our lives but also by the extent we surrender on a daily basis to his lordship," Land said.

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He cited three as in modern society as particular examples of the many subjects needing attention from Christians: pornography, racism and abortion.

"You ask any Christian psychologist, and he or she will tell you pornography's slimy clutches have reached inside our churches," he said. "Pornography is a major contributing cause to the epidemic of child abuse and rape that affects us.

"Racism continues to plague our nation and our world. This should dismay us but should not surprise us. Racism is an enemy within as well as without.

"Racism and all other forms of prejudice and bigotry are at heart a problem of sinful pride and of thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think."

Abortion "is perhaps the supreme contemporary example of our need to be salt and light," Land said. "Since 1973, abortion -- the taking of unborn life in the womb -- has assumed staggering proportions in our society."

Christians, including the Christian Life Commission, "must force people to confront what they are doing," he said. "We must confront them with the horror of what they are doing. They must understand the implications of our knowledge of fetal development."

Land pledged to lead the commission to "help other changed people change the world."

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Success measured by Christ, not programs, Elder tells students

N-10  
(SWBTS)

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Jesus Christ's resurrection stands as the only true measurement of Christian ministry, Lloyd Elder told students and faculty during a chapel service March 28 at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the measurement of Christian ministry and the proclamation of the lordship of Jesus Christ is its message," said Elder, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. "If we have any other context, power or message, we fall short of the biblical environment."

Elder's message was part of Baptist Sunday School Emphasis Week at Southwestern. Other events included a chapel message by Michael A. Smith, chief editor of general religious books for Broadman Press; dialogue sessions between faculty, students and board personnel; and classroom lectures by board leaders.

Since its beginning almost 100 years ago, the board has grown from one employee to a staff of more than 2,000 people, from one to 17 programs and from \$19,000 in annual revenues to \$166 million last year. But staffing, programs and budgets cannot be the primary measuring stick for the success of any Christian ministry, Elder said.

"The unique message of the Christian faith is that Jesus Christ is the risen Lord. When that grips us, it is not possible for us simply to be encrusted with all of the traditions of the day. It is not enough for us to be embroiled in a controversy with its issues and heroes and its spoils. It is only enough when our lives are captured by the message, 'He is Lord,'" Elder added.

Once believers come to grips with resurrection power, they will see the danger of patterning church growth after some agency- or institution-sponsored methodology, he said, noting, "Let the churches grow not on the slippery slope of someone's rational theology, but on the sunlit slope of the kingdom of God."

Churches also must grow in spiritual power, he added, "for these are times when we cannot face all that challenges us in human energy alone."

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Joy, laughter to be focus  
of ministers' wives' luncheon

N-CD  
(WMA)

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--Led by entertainer Jerry Clower, Southern Baptist ministers' wives will spend the lunch hour laughing June 13 in Las Vegas, Nev.

"We (ministers' wives) take criticism too personally, and we analyze why people treat us the way they do," said Joy Yates, president of Southern Baptist Conference of Ministers' Wives. Yates' husband, James, is pastor of First Baptist Church of Yazoo City, Miss.

"It's time we start laughing a little," she said. "That's why we have chosen 'A Joyful Heart' as the theme of the luncheon."

The conference's 34th annual luncheon is to be held at 12:15 p.m. in the Sahara Hotel.

Clower, also of Yazoo City, will be the guest speaker. Music will be provided by Michael Smith of Arlington, Texas, and Carol Sparkman of Jackson, Miss.

Terry Peck, author and consultant with the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church administration department in Nashville, will be the special guest. Peck has written the book "Parenting in the Minister's Home." A copy will be given to each person attending the luncheon.

Advance tickets for the luncheon are \$13 and may be ordered from June Myers, P.O. Box 5010, Reno, Nev. 89513. Advance tickets must be ordered by June 1. All orders must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Tickets will be \$15 if purchased on site.

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Eastern pilot looks to God,  
not airline, for daily security

By Joe Westbury

F - HMB

Baptist Press  
3/30/89

ATLANTA (BP)--When Eastern Airlines pilot Jim Hopkins found himself in the middle of a strike at the 60-year-old airline, he didn't expect to learn a spiritual lesson from the labor strife.

But Hopkins, a member of First Baptist Church of Newnan, Ga., an Atlanta suburb, has turned potential career disaster into a ministry to other pilots affected by the strike. Nearly 1,100 Eastern pilots are based in Atlanta at the airline's largest hub.

"Eastern employees have been under tremendous stress since the airline was sold to Frank Lorenzo three years ago," Hopkin explained. Unions did not take to Lorenzo's management style, and contract negotiations have been at the boiling point since the acquisition.

The Chattanooga, Tenn., native was in his 24th year with Eastern when the three-year-old labor dispute grounded the international carrier March 4. Today, instead of flying Boeing 727 jets around the nation, Hopkins is part of a lay ministry formed to minister to pilots caught in the dispute.

Hopkins is no stranger to personal ministry. For 15 years he has been a volunteer in lay renewal with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Brotherhood Commission. But the ongoing stress at Eastern had taken his mind off the spiritual dimension of dealing with the labor strife, he said.

Much of his current ministry can be traced to the day his wife, Karen, challenged him to use his faith to help others at work.

"Karen said this was the perfect opportunity to witness in the marketplace to remind others that God was ultimately in control of the future," he recalled. "She reminded me that we needed to look to him for our security and daily needs, rather than our employer.

"That changed my whole attitude and opened up a lot of doors to ministry. I started going to work with a smile on my face. People began asking what I had to be so happy about, and that's when I shared my faith.

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"I was able to remind friends that God, not an employer, was in control of my life. That's when I came to the realization that there is life after Frank Lorenzo and Eastern Airlines."

Hopkins' biggest test came when the International Association of Machinists struck the carrier in early March and called on the pilots for support.

"It wasn't a struggle whether the unions were right or management was right," Hopkins said. "My struggle centered around my obedience to God in that situation.

"Because people were using Scripture to justify a variety of stands on the issue, I began to study my Bible even more closely. Though I respected the authority of my employer and felt obligated to cross the picket lines, my decision eventually changed.

"I decided that unless it was illegal, immoral or unethical, the Air Line Pilots Association (pilots union) was the recognized bargainer for my contract with Eastern, so I should follow their decision to honor the picket lines."

Consequently, Hopkins joined 11 Christian pilots who also were seeking a biblical response to the strike. The group, which called itself the Concerned Christian Pilots Committee, has now grown to 55 members as it seeks to minister to others in the profession.

"Since we formed this group, pilots are coming out of the woodwork who are struggling with these same issues. We're hoping it will eventually provide a witness to other pilots who are not Christians," he said.

Hopkins, 50, said although he didn't want to go on strike, the hours he is spending in Bible study -- and extra weekdays he's giving to the Home Mission Board's lay renewal department -- may have far-reaching effects on his career.

"This has brought me to realize God may be calling me into another vocation. I don't want to leave the airline industry, but I'm more open to the Lord's direction than at any other time in my life.

"Karen and I thought we might one day be involved in some form of evangelistic missions after I retire, but that may be coming sooner than we expected. I have 10 years left as a pilot, but God may be calling me into another vocation.

"The Eastern turmoil has not been easy on any of us, but through it I've developed a new sensitivity to his leading.

"What I've been able to share with other Eastern employees is that God never promised us wealth, riches or a life without pain or hurt. What he did promise us is that through faith in Jesus Christ, he would give us the strength and grace to endure them."

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Louisianians lead Koreans  
in lay evangelism training

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.

F-10  
(LD)

Baptist Press  
3/30/89

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--Louisiana Baptist volunteers have participated in five Lay Evangelism Schools in the past year as part of their partnership with Korea Baptists. More than 2,350 people have been trained in witnessing methods, said Calvin Cantrell, Louisiana associate evangelism director.

In addition, 1,739 professions of faith in Christ were reported as the result of evangelistic services that followed the schools, Cantrell said.

More than 90 Louisiana volunteers participated in five events beginning in March 1988.

The most recent visit was made Feb. 19-26, when Louisiana teams directed training in 10 Korean Baptist churches, certifying pastors and laypeople as Lay Evangelism School teachers in their churches. More than 730 people were certified, including 639 pastors, Cantrell reported.

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Each team led training sessions, shared in witnessing efforts and held evangelistic services in two churches on each trip to South Korea, he said.

The training prepared Korean Baptists for their centennial crusades, to be held May 14-21, with more than 150 Southern Baptist volunteers serving as team members, said Charles Lowry, director of the Louisiana Baptist church programs division and partnership coordinator.

"Korean Christians are meeting all over Korea to pray and plan for the revivals scheduled in May," said Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Mark Short. "Prospects are being located and cultivated for an evangelistic harvest. Koreans say they will have 600 revivals in May and another 400 in late summer."

Teams for the centennial crusade will have a pastor/evangelist and as many as four laypersons to assist with evangelistic witnessing, said Lowry.

Southern Baptist missionaries in Korea and Korean Baptist leaders stress that three or four laypeople on each team are essential for optimal evangelistic response.

Teams will lead revivals from Sunday through Wednesday in one church and from Thursday through Sunday in a second church.

Another part of the May crusade is distribution of more than 350,000 New Testaments during daily visitation, Lowry said: "Korean Baptists place great emphasis on lay witnesses in reaching their friends and family members. Much of the evangelism begins with house-to-house visitation and witnessing."

Although team members for the May crusades are primarily from Louisiana, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's volunteer missions office has enlisted Baptists from other states, including Arizona, Texas and Oklahoma.

This is the fourth partnership project involving Louisiana and Korean Baptists beginning with major cities crusades in 1970.