



BAPTIST PRESS

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89-179

Bold Mission Thrust goal achievable, Spurgeon says

By Brenda J. Sanders

*NCO
(MW BTS)*

KANSAS CITY, MO. (BP)--With God's help, Southern Baptists can achieve their Bold Mission Thrust campaign goal to share the gospel of Christ with the whole world by the year 2000, according to an administrator with the convention's Foreign Mission Board.

Harlan E. Spurgeon, FMB vice president for mission personnel, addressed Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary students on "World Missions Day," a quarterly event focusing on Southern Baptist mission work around the world.

Spurgeon, a former missionary to Taiwan and a Midwestern Seminary graduate, said the commitment Southern Baptists made in 1976 to reach the world for Christ by the year 2000 still can be realized.

"If we include the year 2000, we stand now with only 11 years left," he pointed out. "The clock is ticking, and there remains a great deal to be done.

"How in the world are we going to do it?"

"Perhaps it's fortunate that we don't always know the full implication of the kind of commitments we make. The more we learn about what we've set out to do, the more impossible it seems. In fact, it is impossible save the grace of God."

Southern Baptists can learn a lesson about commitment from the apostle Paul and New Testament Christians.

"In the midst of overwhelming odds, they were able to take the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome in one generation," he noted. The early Christians were not ashamed of the gospel of Christ and were willing to pay any price to share that gospel with the world, he added.

"They were willing to walk through the doors of opportunity that God presented to them, and as a result, they did the impossible in their generation," Spurgeon said. "Now, how can we do the impossible in our generation?"

"I truly believe that if each one of us who call ourselves Christians in this day were to do what the early Christians did, the impossible would become possible.

"Around the world, God has opened great doors of opportunity to Southern Baptists in these days, and we need people to walk through these doors. God is giving us opportunities to reach the lost people of the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now, in places that have been under communism for 40 years, the human heart is crying out after God."

By the year 2000, 83 percent of the world's non-Christians will live in countries where missionaries can't get visas.

The FMB has developed a non-residential program to deal with this problem, he said. Non-residential missionaries relate to unchurched people groups even though they cannot live among them.

"Where doors are closing, we are opening windows or going under the door," he said.

"God has been good to us. He's given us unlimited opportunities. Will you step through the door he opens to you?"

Preregistration available
for New Orleans child care

N-CO

NASHVILLE (BP)--Preregistration packets are available for messengers to the 1990 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting who will need care for their preschool children, announced Convention Manager Tim A. Hedquist.

The packets are available by writing to SBC Preschool Child Care, c/o FBC, 4301 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, La. 70115.

The packets will include information about child care policies, hours of operation, rates and preregistration forms, Hedquist said. They will be mailed directly to messengers who plan to take their children to New Orleans for the annual meeting.

The child care will be held in the Hyatt Regency Hotel, located about one block from the Louisiana Superdome, site of the annual meeting.

The Hyatt was selected because it affords better facilities and better control of the program than the Superdome, Hedquist said.

Child care registration is limited and will be confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis, he noted.

The child care will be offered only during the times of the SBC annual meeting, June 12-14. However, bonded child care is available through New Orleans hotels both during the annual meeting and the days prior, when auxiliary meetings will be held.

Information about the hotels' child care is available from the SBC Executive Committee, 901 Commerce St., Nashville, Tenn., 37203.

A day camp for school-age children also will be available, sponsored by the SBC Brotherhood Commission. Information about that program is available by writing to SBC Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn., 38104.

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Southwestern Seminary graduates
282 at 1989 fall commencement

N - (S) (SWBTS)

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--As the dawn of a new decade approaches, Baptist layman Norman Wiggins encouraged fall graduates of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to "lead America in reaffirming her covenant relationship to God."

"America is in a moral crisis," said Wiggins, president of Campbell University in Buies Creek, N.C. Pointing to the country's failure to cope with problems such as drug addiction, material obsession and the homeless, he said the American people "have lost our ability to feel" and are following dreams and drives "without any moral foundation to guide them."

Seminary graduates must lead the way in America's reawakening by reading, teaching and preaching the Bible, the only book that can "erase the confusion," he said.

Southwestern President Russell Dilday conferred 288 degrees on the class with six students receiving dual degrees. The ceremony was held Dec. 15 at Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. The fall class included students representing six foreign countries and 26 states.

Wiggins told the last class of graduates for the 1980s that Baptist congregations across America are expecting changes in the years ahead.

"With God as your inspiration, you need not be afraid of change," he said. "And we expect change from you." He encouraged graduates to work hard, be creative and innovative.

"We believe that you can perform miracles," he said. "We know that God performs miracles through human beings."

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Gift from Dallas church
benefits hospital in India

By Orville Scott

N-Texas

DALLAS (BP)--First Baptist Church of Dallas will give \$150,000 over and above its Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering gifts to help build a new \$400,000 wing to enable Bangalore Baptist Hospital in India to become self-supporting.

The allocation was approved by the fellowship of deacons on recommendation of the church's world missions and wills and trusts committees, a church spokesman said. The church's Lottie Moon Offering goal is \$177,777.77.

The building gift will be presented Sunday morning, Dec. 31, to Don Kammerdeiner, executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and to the hospital's administrator, Rebekah Naylor, who also is a surgeon in the 100-bed hospital.

She is a member of First Baptist Church of Dallas. Her father, Robert E. Naylor, is president emeritus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

The only other Southern Baptist foreign missionaries in India are the Jason Lees, a couple from Little Rock, Ark., who are doing evangelism and church development in the Bangalore area.

The Foreign Mission Board has allocated \$200,000 from Lottie Moon Offering funds for the new wing, which will provide 23 beds for private paying patients to help the hospital become self-supporting.

Rebekah Naylor said the hospital will continue ministering to poor people unable to pay for medical care, but circumstances require that it be self-supporting.

More than 400 churches have been started through the ministry of Bangalore Baptist Hospital, she said.

An average of 15 Southern Baptist volunteers per year have gone to Bangalore to assist in the hospital's ministry, but more volunteers are needed, particularly doctors, nurses, dentists and para-medical personnel, she said.

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Good deeds to Chinese family
lead to decisions for Christ

By Ken Camp

F-Texas

Baptist Press
12/18/89

DALLAS (BP)--A family from mainland China who came to the United States as students may go home as lay missionaries, thanks to the Good Samaritans at First Baptist Church of Carrollton, Texas.

Having completed college in Florida, the Chinese couple and their 25-year-old son were traveling to California to begin graduate studies there when an automobile accident stopped them near Dallas.

"They were traveling in two cars to carry all of their possessions," said John Yarbrough, minister of missions at First Baptist Church of Carrollton. "The car that the son was driving was hit in the rear, and it flipped over. Nobody was hurt, but the car couldn't be driven."

Confused about their nationality but aware of the family's needs, the officer assigned to the accident called the only name on file at the police station: Jim Cox, former pastor of the Cambodian mission of First Baptist Church.

Cox helped the family make a decision about where to have the car towed for repairs, and then he asked what they planned to do overnight. The father said they would have to sleep in their car to protect their property.

"You can store your belongings in my van and come home with me," the retired pastor said.

The next day, the Chinese family had breakfast with Cox and his wife, Ida Mae, and lunch with the pastor of Carrollton's Chinese Baptist Fellowship.

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"They all shared the Lord in various ways with the family," Yarbrough said, noting the mission pastor learned the mother was a Christian but the father and son were not.

In the meantime, the damaged car was towed to the First Baptist Church parking lot when the family learned that repairs would exceed \$1,000. After attempting to repair the car himself, the father of the Chinese family finally decided to sell the car to a junkyard and use the money to ship the family's possessions ahead to California.

"That night, I went by the Cox's house after supper to visit the family. I read the Bible with them and presented the gospel to them," Yarbrough said.

"Undoubtedly, the seeds had already been planted. The table was already set. I just had to present the gospel, and the father and son prayed to receive the Lord."

The next day, the family loaded into their remaining car and headed out toward California. Several weeks later, First Baptist Church received a letter from them.

"They expressed appreciation and said they were thankful for the way God had used their time in Carrollton," Yarbrough said. "They were frightened. They were in a new city. They didn't know anybody. But they came to know the Lord.

"They indicated they may return to China in one year. Now we hope they will go back as Christian witnesses and missionaries."

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High school incident raises

religious freedom questions By William Neal & R. Albert Mohler Jr.

N-CO
(Ga.)

Baptist Press
12/18/89

ATLANTA (BP)--An Atlanta high school has become the latest focus of an ongoing nationwide controversy related to protecting the civil rights of students while maintaining separation of church and state in public schools.

A 17-year-old senior at DeKalb County's Henderson High School was suspended just before the Thanksgiving holidays on charges of disobeying orders from school officials. He had been caught passing a handwritten note to a fellow student in the school hallway, informing sophomore Matt Hinton of the time and place for their next Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting.

School officials later said a mistake had been made and agreed to rescind the suspension of the senior. He and his family have requested that his name be kept of the press at this time.

But the issue is not settled, since Henderson High Principal Bobby Jordan reportedly told a parent that students could not bring Bibles to school or wear religious T-shirts, buttons or other symbols of their faith.

The conflict at Henderson High has been developing. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes has been barred from meeting after school on the campus and was told it must drop the word "Christian" from its name to participate in any school activities.

In October, FCA members, including the student who later was suspended, distributed flyers at school advertising an FCA meeting. They were told that was in violation of school rules and warned not to do it again.

Bill Hinton, Matt's father reported that Jordan had disallowed possession of religious materials. But Andy Olson, a spokesperson for DeKalb County schools, said that was not the policy of the DeKalb County School Board.

"There is absolutely no basis for preventing any student from possessing and reading religious literature on his own time," Olson said. The apparent discrepancy between board policy and the principal's directive demonstrates the confusion of the case.

A lawyer for the DeKalb County School Board stated in writing that when the note addressed to Hinton was intercepted by the school's assistant principal, he thought it "was an attempt to repeat activity which (the student) had already been told was inappropriate during school hours."

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Hinton received a written reprimand that said, "Any further occurrence of possession of Christian material could lead to a suspension of some type."

Hinton's father reported he had been to see Jordan and asked for clarification of what was meant by "possession of Christian material."

"Would he get in trouble for bringing his Bible to school?" the father asked. "That's right," the principal responded.

The DeKalb County School Board has no written policy regarding the possession of religious materials or student religious groups meeting on school campuses. Individual principals have the authority to set policies within their own schools and some may be under pressure from parents opposed to any form of religious expression within the schools.

The incident has generated protests from students, parents, youth leaders and the general public.

Eli Bernard, youth minister at Briarlake Baptist Church in Decatur, said the confrontation is the culmination of a series of incidents at Henderson High and other DeKalb County schools, where Christian students are harassed for their faith. Both students involved in this incident, as well as other leaders of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at Henderson High, are members of Briarlake Baptist Church. Several families in that church are working through attorney Jay Sekulow to pressure the DeKalb County School Board to draft a fair policy that spells out the rights of students regarding their religious faith.

Sekulow, legal counsel with Christian Advocates Serving Evangelism said he believes some principals are frightened over the possibility of lawsuits stemming from incidents related to separation of church and state. Out of ignorance, he said, they may be going to extremes to avoid any conflict, and in the process end up denying basic rights to students.

Sekulow noted that despite equal access laws, groups such as the FCA are denied the right to meet on the Henderson High campus after school hours. Nevertheless, he insisted, the case of the suspended student does not relate to equal access issues but is a violation of civil rights.

The identification of religious speech as "disruptive" is an unsettling issue to Sekulow and his clients. "Democracy means that we are occasionally offended," he said, "and religious speech is just as protected as any other form of speech."

Sekulow's clients would like the school board to work out the problem without litigation, but they are prepared to take the case to court, he said.

Schools must guard against any establishment of religion, Sekulow acknowledged and insisted his clients do not intend to press the issue. Instead, he said, the case relates to student initiated speech, a right guaranteed under the First Amendment.

The issue is scheduled to be reargued before the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of Westside Community Schools v. Mergens, expected to be heard Jan. 9. That case although generally concerned with equal access, also raises the issues of free speech and religious expression. Sekulow is counsel of record for the respondents in the Mergens case.

Several religious groups, including the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the National Association of Evangelicals have joined with the Mergens respondents in a brief supporting equal access and rights of students to religious expression.

The groups suggest the current confusion arises from misunderstandings of the court's decisions regarding school prayer. Educators who prohibit students from religious expression "failed to comprehend the distinction between speech by the school and speech by the students -- between government sponsorship of religion and government sponsorship of religious exercise," the brief says. It also notes that in their determination to prevent any unconstitutional establishment of religion, educators "have trampled on the free speech and free exercise clauses."

School board officials would not predict what action the Board may take, nor would they make any comment on the Henderson High School case, citing the possibility of legal action initiated by the students. Sekulow and the group of parents involved in the case indicated that they would press the issue until the board takes appropriate action.

The fact is, "Sekulow insisted, "these students do not surrender their constitutional rights when they walk on school property."

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SBC's 'Master Control' praised
by Armed Forces Radio Network

N-CO
(RTVC)

Baptist Press
12/18/89

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"Master Control," Southern Baptists' weekly radio program urging listeners to let their lives be controlled by the Master, Jesus Christ, has received a thank-you note for Baptists -- engraved in wood.

The note is a plaque that cites Baptists and "Master Control" for "outstanding support of the United States Armed Forces overseas."

In the letter accompanying the award, Air Force Maj. Richard B. Davenport, religious program coordinator for the Department of Defense's Armed Forces Radio Network, called the program "an act of grace."

"Master Control" makes an outstanding contribution to the lives of service members and their families overseas, Davenport said in a letter to Ed Malone, the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission's vice president for radio. The show "bears witness to a faith in God that is alive and active," Davenport wrote.

The program also provides a bonus for Southern Baptists' mission efforts, he added, noting, "Having recently returned from an extended trip through the Pacific, I can tell you your show reaches not only a lot of Americans, but a large number of natives in that region as well."

Davenport, a Christian Scientist, praised "Master Control" for strengthening the the information and entertainment programming on the Armed Forces Radio Network schedule. "I'm well aware of the effort required to produce a high-quality program such as 'Master Control,'" he said.

Davenport called the good deeds of Southern Baptists, who offer the show to the military's large, diverse and scattered audience an act of grace. "It bears impressive testimony of your Christian faith and love," he said.

"National surveys indicate that today's mobile, fast-paced society gets most of its information from the broadcast media," said Richard T. McCartney, interim president of the Radio and Television Commission. "The Radio and Television Commission is determined to give Baptists a strong voice on the media, and we are pleased with this recognition from the military."

Two other Radio and Television Commission shows, "Country Crossroads" and "Powerline," also are heard weekly on the Armed Forces Radio network. In addition, "Country Crossroads" is heard on 1,300 additional stations around the world. "Powerline" is heard on 1,200 stations worldwide, and "Master Control" is heard on 800 stations.

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