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Hymn singing, concerts launch  
new Southern Baptist hymnal

By Charles Willis

*N-SSB*

NASHVILLE (BP)--Nashville's Grand Ole Opry House was temporarily transformed into a cathedral as the words and music of "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" filled the hall March 14 to start the unveiling of "The Baptist Hymnal."

About 7,500 Southern Baptists and guests from across the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, Japan, Canada, Guam and Puerto Rico attended two identical evening sessions concluding PraiSing II. The four-day music and worship celebration marked the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's centennial year, the church music department's 50th anniversary and the hymnal's publication.

Congregational singing from souvenir editions of the hymnal was led by Wesley L. Forbis, hymnal editor and director of the board's church music department, and joined by singing groups from 17 states, The Centurymen and an orchestra.

Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas, and a member of the hymnal committee since its formation in 1987, was presented a copy of the hymnal. W. Hines Sims, editor of "Baptist Hymnal, 1956 edition," and Mark Edwards, president of the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference, also received presentation copies. William J. Reynolds, editor of "Baptist Hymnal, 1975 edition," had planned to attend, but was recovering from knee surgery.

Gary Cook, vice president for church programs and services at the board, noted that the Ryman Auditorium, the first home of the Grand Ole Opry, had originally been a church. "This week, the Grand Ole Opry House has become a cathedral," he said.

Earlier in the week, PraiSing participants heard a concert dedicated to the memories of Oklahomans James D. Woodward, Paul and Judy Magar and Mary June Tabor who were killed in a Jan. 14 airplane crash. The concert was given by the 216 musicians in the Oklahoma Singing Churchwomen and Singing Churchmen groups. Woodward, director of the Churchmen since its founding in 1961, had planned the concert to celebrate the new hymnal.

Southern Baptist entertainer Jerry Clower, widely known for his association with the Grand Ole Opry, said his musical heritage began with the "Broadman Hymnal" published in 1940 and continues with the new hymnal "that is gonna give us a new enthusiasm and a new direction to stamp out negativism."

Clower said he believes Southern Baptists who are not choir members should "open the hymnbook and try to sing; listen to the words."

Soloists Karla Worley, Cynthia Clawson, Henrietta Davis and David Ford, along with choirs from Southern Baptist churches, seminaries and colleges presented a wide range of musical styles from the new hymnal throughout the week.

Clawson said hymns have remained in the forefront of Southern Baptist worship because they provide classic lyrics easy to understand without "vain repetition. Hymns were the way I learned theology."

Handbell ringers, brass instrumentalists and full orchestras completed the musical offerings in daytime concerts and evening performances.

Rumiko Kikuchi, a student at Tokyo Baptist Theological Seminary, said, "Hymns help the people of Japan give response to God for the things he has given us. PraiSing II is a good opportunity for us to discover what to do with music in the future."

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In a repeat feature, modeled after the original PraiSing which introduced the 1975 edition of the hymnal, church choirs and state singing groups participated in a 30-hour, marathon sing-through-the-hymnal event at Two Rivers Baptist Church.

Jimmy McCaleb, a veteran bivocational music leader from Jackson, Miss., repeated his performance of 16 years ago by sitting through the entire sing-thru of 2,356 stanzas of all 625 hymns.

Hugh McElrath, professor of church music at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., called the music of PraiSing II "a foretaste of heaven. We're going to be singing in heaven, so it's good to get some practice here below."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press

New hymnal for all,  
SBC president says

By Charles Willis

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NASHVILLE (BP)--"The Baptist Hymnal" is a book for all Southern Baptist people, Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman said March 14 during PraiSing II, a music and worship celebration in Nashville.

Chapman, who was a member of the hymnal committee and was a member of the theology/doctrine subcommittee, said the hymnal is "filled with songs which readily can be sung to the glory of God and which minister to the hearts of Baptist people.

Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas, said a personal interest in music made the hymnal committee assignment particularly appealing.

"As a college student, I initially felt God was calling me into the music ministry," he reflected. "Consequently, I have a bachelor of music degree in voice from Mississippi College. That certainly has made me more aware and sensitive to the kinds of music Southern Baptists have used through the years.

The process for the theology/doctrine subcommittee required each of the 10 members to work individually, reviewing for theological and doctrinal integrity an assigned number of the hymns under consideration.

"When we met in Nashville, we were asked to raise any questions about the hymns we had studied. Obviously, that gave any one member a great responsibility for the hymns he initially reviewed," he recalled. "On the other hand, the subcommittee meetings gave us all an opportunity to discuss the concerns raised by the reviewers or to raise questions about hymns that were not originally assigned to us.

While the final selection of hymns to be included was made by the larger committee composed of members of all subcommittees, Chapman said he feels "the involvement of more than 100 persons outside the Sunday School Board's church music department was an exercise in doing things the traditional Baptist way.

"Although there were obvious differences in the theological perspectives of different members, that didn't hinder the work of the subcommittee because we were talking about basic beliefs ingrained in the vast majority of Southern Baptists," he said.

"I thought it was a very smooth and amicable process. There were times when people spoke very candidly, but with an expressed understanding we were working together to come to ultimate conclusions," he observed. "There was a constant give and take, which was very healthy to the process. In sessions I attended, I did not feel my personal convictions were compromised."

From the beginning of the subcommittee's work, Chapman said, members were aware "each song would be evaluated on the basis of careful attention to the 'Baptist Faith and Message.'"

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The resulting product, Chapman said, provides a variety of music "imperative for this generation of worshippers. I am personally glad we not only retained many of the grand old hymns, but that we reinstated some of the hymns that have always been precious to us and very much a part of our heritage."

He cited "The Lily of the Valley" and "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" as two hymns among several from the 1940 "Broadman Hymnal" and the "Baptist Hymnal, 1956 edition" he is pleased to see in the new book.

"Believers in our generation have become very conscious of praising the Lord," he observed. "The more contemporary songs like 'Behold the Lamb' and 'Majesty,' along with the praise choruses which are included will be, I think, encouraging to all of our Southern Baptist congregations."

In the area of worship aids, Chapman said he is "especially pleased that printed beneath each hymn title is the Scripture on which the song is based, and," he added, "no doubt all Southern Baptists will be thrilled by the inclusion of the plan of salvation placed immediately before the responsive readings."

The new hymnal has been carefully and prayerfully developed," he continued. "Hopefully it will meet the needs of every Baptist congregation, large and small."

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Bivocational music minister  
enjoys hymn singing marathon

By Chip Alford

F-SSB

Baptist Press  
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NASHVILLE (BP)--Next to his Bible, "The Baptist Hymnal" is Jimmy McCaleb's favorite book. So when he learned he could listen to the new edition of the songbook from cover to cover, he jumped at the chance.

"I've been looking forward to this for months," the 66-year-old Jackson, Miss., resident said in an interview during the Sing-Through-The-Hymnal marathon March 13-14 in Nashville. Part of PraiSing II festivities, the event brought 47 singing groups from 19 states to perform in 30-minute or one-hour intervals at Two Rivers Baptist Church.

"Man, this new edition is terrific," McCaleb, part-time music director at Southside Baptist Church in Jackson, remarked as he jotted down notes on each choir's performance on a yellow legal pad. "This (hymnal) will benefit any size church in our convention regardless of their musical taste."

Munching occasionally on fruit and other snack foods, McCaleb said he had little problem staying awake during the 30-hour marathon. He even sang with the Mississippi Singing Churchmen in their 5 a.m. performance.

Morning and evening sessions of the sing-through were well attended, and crowds ranged between 25-75 people for the late night and early morning performances. Annie Mary Wilson of Little Rock, Ark., brought her cross-stitching along as she enjoyed groups performing between 12:30 and 4 a.m.

"I came to hear the Arkansas Master Singers and Singing Women and they came on at 3 a.m.," she said. "I didn't go to bed. It was easier for me to just stay up."

Janie Thompson, who sang with the Arkansas group, said she got a couple of hours sleep before performing.

"I thought it might be difficult singing so early in the morning, but once I got up there I really enjoyed it. I told myself before hand that it really needed to be a worship experience for me as well as the audience, and it really was."

McCaleb had a proven track record on hymn singing marathons because 15 years earlier he sat through the sing-through of the "Baptist Hymnal, 1975 edition."

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"I really feel that all our choirs should learn to sing hymns," McCaleb said. "It's a great way to pick up on Baptist doctrine."

McCaleb said the sing-through was a great way for him to pick up innovative ideas for presenting hymns in church worship services.

"I am seeking hymn treatments -- different ways of performing the hymns," he explained. "I share these ideas with bivocational ministers of music at conferences across the country. Our small churches depend on bivocational ministers, and with little or no music budget, they depend on 'The Baptist Hymnal.' It's really a music library in itself."

McCaleb said he found what he was looking for as choirs performed some hymns in unison, others in four-part harmony, some accompanied by piano and organ, and others sung acappella. Some choirs featured soloists and others were even accompanied by orchestras. A few directors asked the audience to sing along on some selections.

Also staying for the entire program were Gib Rogers from Lexington, Ky., who planned ahead and brought his own pillow; Wesley Dickman from Springville, Ala.; and Bill Anderson, coordinator of the event and a senior design editor at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church music department.

By the end of the sing-through, all 2,356 stanzas of the 625 hymns in the new songbook had been performed. A group of employees from the Sunday School Board's church music department and Genevox Music Group started things off by conducting the first stanza of the first hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

"Every one of these people have their fingerprints in this hymnal," Wes Forbis, director of the board's church music department said. "We wanted them to be able to say they directed the first hymn (at the premiere) of the new hymnal."

The sing-through was originated by William J. Reynolds, retired director of the church music department and now on the music faculty at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, Anderson said.

"At the first Praising in 1975, Dr. Reynolds thought it would be a good idea to sing through all the hymns before the end of the conference. It worked out well, and we decided to continue the tradition," Anderson said.

"This is a marvelous thing that we've experienced this week," Anderson said at the conclusion of this year's event. "I'm just blown away by all the trouble people went to participate in this, especially those who sang in the middle of the night. We really loosened the ceiling in this place at 4 o'clock in the morning. Everybody had a great time."

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Missionaries now in Bulgaria,  
spreading through East Europe

By Mike Creswell

N-FM/B

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BRUSSELS, Belgium (BP)--The first Southern Baptist missionaries arrived in Bulgaria in early March as the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board continues a major buildup of personnel and ministry throughout Eastern Europe.

Even a year ago, sending missionaries to Bulgaria was only a dream. Now the dream is a reality as the nation moves slowly towards democratization and puts aside its anti-religion stance like other countries in the region.

Career missionaries William and June Wardlaw of Texarkana, Texas, and West Palm Beach, Fla., respectively, transferred from Japan to Sofia, Bulgaria. They will serve as fraternal representatives to 700 Bulgarian Baptists in 16 churches and mission congregations. The Wardlaws will work in evangelism and education after they complete language study.

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Joining the Wardlaws are two International Service Corps workers, Lybia Pyon and Spencer Stith, who will work in student ministry.

Arrival of the workers in Bulgaria marks another step forward in the Foreign Mission Board's drive to place mission workers in the opening Eastern European countries as quickly as possible. Plans call for having about 100 workers in the region within a year or so. More than 30 already are assigned there. Others are expected to arrive on the field before the end of the year or are being sought. In several cases, experienced missionaries are being transferred from Western Europe and other areas.

Mission officials also are monitoring other areas of the region still not open to mission personnel, said Keith Parker, the board's director for Europe. Should opportunities develop, they are prepared to respond quickly.

The board also allocated \$1.25 million in capital funds last year to aid Eastern European Baptists.

The many other signs of progress include:

-- George and Veda Rae Lozuk, first Southern Baptist workers assigned to the Soviet Union, arrived in mid-February in Moscow, where they have launched a series of meetings with Baptist leaders about future ministries. The Lozuks were delayed in their arrival in the Soviet Union because he underwent cancer surgery. They worked earlier in evangelism and media in South America.

-- In Poland, missionaries Tom and Joyce Cleary are nearing completion of Polish language study and soon will begin their ministry in literacy education. Missionaries Mark and Susan Edworthy are scheduled to arrive in Poland by May 1 to begin language study for work in general evangelism. Volunteers Robin Barr and Laurie Berry are working in literacy training in conjunction with the English-language school of Wroclaw Baptist Church.

-- Bob and Marsha Ford, missionaries in Scotland, are transferring to Czechoslovakia and will be on the job there later this year.

-- Another missionary couple is scheduled to transfer to Romania later this year, but already several short-term medical volunteers have worked in the Bacau area of eastern Romania. The Foreign Mission Board earlier provided more than \$1 million for a major grain project in that area after the 1989 revolution.

-- Missionaries Errol and Mary Simmons have served more than two years in Budapest, Hungary -- the first Southern Baptist missionaries to live in an Eastern Bloc country since World War II. They have helped establish and administer the International Baptist Lay Academy. The school is providing basic Bible instruction and English-language training for Baptists from throughout Eastern Europe. IBLA is jointly sponsored by the Foreign Mission Board, the European Baptist Federation and the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland, in cooperation with Hungarian Baptists.

-- Eleven International Service Corps workers have joined the Simmonses in recent months. Most are teaching English, but one couple is doing evangelism work. Several already have completed their terms.

-- Missionaries David and Lynda Bodenheimer will promote Christian education and administer Bible Way correspondence courses in Hungary. Edward and Eniko Jordan will work in church planting and general evangelism. Both couples will arrive by the end of May.

-- Robert and Debbie Cochran have been transferred from Belgium to help evaluate and establish theological training programs throughout Eastern Europe.

-- Missionary Tim Marza began ministry in Vienna, Austria, last year, where he is helping Romanian Baptists in media work.

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-- Paul Thibodeaux, the Vienna-based administrator for Southern Baptists' Eastern Europe mission, and Jim Smith, a missionary based in Berlin and partnership coordinator for the mission, have been working overtime during recent months to arrange partnership efforts between Southern Baptists volunteers and Baptists in Eastern Europe.

The North Carolina/Poland partnership continues to go smoothly, Smith said. North Carolina Baptist Men are constructing a building for the new Polish Baptist seminary being built outside Warsaw. During early April a team of medical personnel from North Carolina will visit Poland to explore medical assistance and pastoral care training for pastors. The European Baptist Convention, a group of about 60 English-speaking Baptist congregations throughout Europe, also supports partnership efforts with Poland.

-- Virginia Baptists are entering a partnership with Baptists in Hungary to begin this spring, with a wide range of evangelistic efforts planned.

-- A research team from the Baptist General Convention of Texas will visit Estonia and Romania this spring to look into the possibilities of setting up partnership projects. "We're looking now for a state convention to partner with the Latvian Baptists," said Smith.

-- Desktop publishing equipment and other items being provided to Baptist unions in Eastern Europe through a \$1 million appropriation from the Foreign Mission Board are mostly in place and functioning, Thibodeaux said. In some locations, the board is now looking for volunteers who can train Baptists in how to prepare and print their own Christian literature.

Beyond state convention partnership projects either in place or being set up, numerous individual Southern Baptist churches have sent evangelism or construction teams to work with churches or associations in Eastern Europe. Several evangelistic efforts are planned between this spring and next fall, Smith said.

"At their request, we are trying to help equip and prepare national churches to do their own evangelism and missions," Parker said.

European Baptists also are helping in many ways, Smith said. For example, Finnish Baptists have been working closely with Estonian Baptists in the Soviet Union to help them have desktop publishing capability.

"There are so many positive and exciting things happening now. The main problem we have is just coordinating it all," said Parker.

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April 30 deadline to commit  
for Crossover Atlanta

By Mark Wingfield

N-NMB

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ATLANTA (BP)--April 30 is the deadline for volunteers to sign up for Crossover Atlanta, the evangelistic effort preceding this year's annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Despite rumors that have circulated in some states, Crossover Atlanta has not been cancelled, said Bobby Sunderland, project manager and Southern Baptist Home Mission Board staff member.

In fact, the multi-faceted event recently has been expanded to include feeding Atlanta's homeless and poor from mobile disaster relief units, Sunderland said. This ministry will be done by Baptist Men's groups from several state conventions.

The basic element of Crossover Atlanta is three days of door-to-door witnessing in eight metropolitan Atlanta associations. Additional projects include a one-day Soul Winning Encounter, street evangelism, construction of four to seven church buildings and a telemarketing project to start a new congregation.

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For the main evangelistic blitz, churches from outside the Atlanta area will team up with churches inside the Atlanta area. Due to coordination requirements, churches planning to participate must send a letter of commitment to the HMB no later than April 30.

Churches or individuals willing to participate in Crossover Atlanta should write to Bobby Sunderland, Home Mission Board, 1350 Spring St. NW, Atlanta, Ga. 30367.

Co-chairmen for Crossover Atlanta are Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss., and Dwight "Ike" Reighard, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church of Fayetteville, Ga.

"There are many people in the Atlanta area who do not know Christ," Reighard said. "Crossover Atlanta will give some of our churches a good deal of encouragement to reach out and touch their community, with the heightened awareness the Southern Baptist Convention will bring to Atlanta.

Reighard said another reason for churches to participate in Crossover Atlanta is to prepare for Crossover Indianapolis, a similar project planned prior to the convention's 1992 annual meeting.

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Churches should prepare for  
back side of Desert Storm

By Barbara Denman

*N. (P. Ho.)*

Baptist Press  
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MILTON, Fla. (BP)--As triumphant soldiers return from the Persian Gulf War to cheering crowds and excited families, ministers and psychologists are urging churches to prepare for "the back side" of Desert Storm and its aftershocks.

"While hostilities are over, we are in the eye of the storm," said Glen Owens, assistant executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention. "The storm has passed and left us with a calmness and euphoria, but there will be a back side to the storm."

The aftermath of Desert Storm will affect us for years -- not months, Christian psychologist Ron Guy of Fort Walton Beach, Fla., told people attending a Desert Calm conference March 9 at First Baptist Church of Milton, Fla.

Sponsored by the Florida Baptist Convention, the four-hour session was one of two conferences scheduled to help church leaders minister through the crisis.

"Home is not the same as when the soldiers left; and those who left are not the same," Owens added.

Peggy Smith, program coordinator for the Family Service Center at the Pensacola Naval Air Station agreed. "Everyone coming back has changed," she said. "You can't go through something like that and not have scars."

Congregations can help military personnel deal with the trauma they have experienced through support groups and personal ministry, Smith suggested. Marriage enrichment seminars and parenting classes can assist reunited families.

Smith expressed a concern that many of the reservists and their families will have more difficulty adjusting than their career military counterparts who have dealt with this type of trauma before. Churches can help by developing a sensitivity to the reservist family, she said.

She echoed the feelings that the war is not over, noting, "we're now changing modes because the emotional cycle is beginning."

As the jubilation of those returning from the Persian Gulf is shown through media outlets, other families whose relatives remain may find themselves in an increasing state of stress and depression, said Gary Laird, minister of education at First Baptist Church of Milton, Fla.

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Support groups for these families are as necessary now as they were during the war, Laird said. The Milton church began a support group for community families in January and later is offering a readjustment workshop.

Much of the information provided during the Desert Calm conference is applicable to other times of crisis, the experts agreed.

"Children are always in crisis, not only in the time of war," said Duane Ortego, preschool/children's minister at First Church of Panama City, Fla.

Fear, relocation, divorce and the death of a family member are all traumatic experiences for a youngster, Ortego said. But crisis does not always have to be a negative experience, he added. "It can be positive if we meet them where they are and demonstrate to them that life in an educational process."

Ortego gave four guidelines to use when helping children understand life's situations: only answer the question asked; ask probing questions to determine what information the child really wants; get on a child's level; and don't feel like you always need to have an answer.

Ministering in the time of death is a subject that is applicable everyday, according to Dallas Speight, chaplain at the Baptist Hospital in Pensacola, Fla., and chaplain with the Army Reserves.

In fact, Speight said, as he overhears conversations in the hospital's hall, he is convinced that many pastors do not know how to handle death. "I often hear pastors say 'It's God's will.' Sometimes that's the worse thing to say," he said.

Speight gave suggestions when consoling the bereaved:

-- Give permission to be angry.

-- Remind people of the hope they have in Christ, realizing that the grieving process is easier if a person has hope.

-- Recognize that it may be less traumatic to deal with grief caused by war than by accident, because one can find purpose and reason behind war.

-- Give support in the months following death when everyone is gone. "Time itself does not always heal wounds," he said.

Practical suggestions given by Speight for churches with a desire to minister during grief include: provide support groups to join people experiencing similar losses; encourage the bereaved to keep a log of feelings; and sponsor a survival workshop near the holidays on how to deal with grief.