



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 15, 1991

91-57

Morris Chapman appoints
family ministry task force

By Terri Lackey

N-55B

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman has appointed a seven-member family ministry task force to identify ways churches can minister to the needs of families in trouble.

"I have a growing burden for the deterioration of the family in America," said Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas. "This task force can help bring greater attention to the need of all Southern Baptists to minister effectively to dysfunctional families and struggling singles."

The purpose of the task force is to explore ways to reverse the trends of dysfunctional families, Chapman said.

"I have appointed the SBC family ministry task force to headline the enormous erosion of the family in our generation. Marriages are falling apart, homes are disintegrating, the number of single parents has risen drastically and unmarried couples are living together in record numbers.

"If these trends are not reversed," Chapman continued, "the moral fiber of our nation will soon be shredded beyond repair."

The task force will work closely with Doug Anderson, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's family ministry department, in identifying and meeting specific needs of families, Chapman said. Anderson will serve as staff to the task force.

Anderson said he is grateful to Chapman for recognizing the needs of families during a time when the family ministry department is highlighting families in its 1990-95 Bold Mission Thrust plans. "Families Touching Families" is the department's five-year theme, Anderson said. That focus is spotlighted in the SBC during the annual Christian Home Emphasis, the six weeks beginning with Mother's Day in May and concluding on Father's Day in June.

"The time of Mother's Day to Father's Day reminds us again of the high value that the Bible holds for families," Anderson said. "Christian Home Emphasis is one of the best things our churches have going for reaching persons in the community and strengthening fellowship within the church and the family."

Chapman has appointed Charles Lowery, pastor of Hoffmantown Baptist Church in Albuquerque, N.M., chairman of the task force. Anderson said Lowery has an "excellent track record of trying to strengthen families in his church."

Other members of the seven-member task force which is expected to hold its first meeting prior to the Southern Baptist Convention June 4-6 in Atlanta are: Kay Moore, freelance writer and family life speaker from Nashville; Tom King, minister of family enrichment at First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas; Ron Mumbower, director of counseling for First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss.; Charles Page, pastor of First Baptist Church of Charlotte, N.C.; Suzanne Groce, former missionary to Ethiopia, now living in Gainesville, Fla.; and Jay Wolf, pastor of First Baptist Church of Alexandria, Va.

SBC Forum considers
dissolution in June

N-C (WC)

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (BP)--The possible dissolution of the SBC Forum will be a focus of its eighth annual meeting scheduled June 3 at the Wieuca Road Baptist Church in Atlanta.

The Forum is one of a number of meetings scheduled by Southern Baptists prior to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 4-6, in Atlanta.

Although the program will not be available until May 1, notice of the possible dissolution of the group was needed to fulfill legal obligations of the Texas non-profit corporation, SBC Forum, Inc., said John H. Hewett, president and pastor of First Baptist Church of Asheville, NC.

The Forum was created at the SBC meeting in Kansas City, Mo., in 1984. The group will consider disbanding because its purpose has been met by the convocation of The Baptist Fellowship, said Hewett. The Fellowship is a coalition of moderates who plan a convocation in Atlanta in May. Fellowship spokesmen have indicated they felt displaced in the Southern Baptist Convention.

"That organization continues to fill the need for which The Forum was created," said Hewett who is also a member of The Forum's nine-member steering committee.

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Workers may be counselors
in helping children grieve

By Terri Lackey

N-SSB

Baptist Press
4/15/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Children's leaders will likely have to counsel little ones who have experienced the death of a loved one, and becoming familiar with their coping behavior can be helpful, a leader in the field said.

But first, teachers must be familiar with their own feelings about death, said Bill Young, director of the preschool-children's section of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship training department. Young led a conference on "Helping Children Cope with Death" during the Advanced Training for Preschool-Children's Workers Seminar VI, April 8-11, at the Sunday School Board. His section sponsored the seminar.

Young said teachers should be aware about "how you feel about death, your philosophy and spiritual beliefs. How do life losses affect you?" he asked. "What makes you uncomfortable in dealing with death?"

Leaders must then approach a child who has experienced a recent death and learn what and what not to say.

"It's easy for us to avoid people who are having problems because we feel uncomfortable about it. We unconsciously avoid the bereaved. But we should just be straightforward and say, 'Sorry about your mother's death' or 'I just don't know what to say.'

"If you feel uncertain or afraid, don't hide it. Honesty is good," said Young.

Teachers should avoid using fantasy stories with children when discussing a recent death Young said. "For instance, don't say, 'God just needed more angels' or 'It will all be ok.' That just impedes a child's understanding of death."

A teacher should let children talk about death if they want to, he said, "but if they don't want to, don't force them. When they want to talk, listen with your heart as well as your ears.

"Demonstrate how much you care in word and touch. I've yet to find a substitute for a good bear hug," he said.

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Use common sense when dealing with physical touch, Young urged. A child might want to be left alone. "But touching when touching is needed might outweigh the slight possibility it would be unacceptable."

Teachers might find it helpful to study the developmental perceptions children have about death, Young said.

Until age three, a child has little or no perception of death, he said. "They have no idea of time. Any separation could be viewed as death."

Children, ages three to five, have a general awareness of death but not in a permanent sense. "They see death as reversible. They think the dead can come back."

From ages five to nine, children see death as more severe and ominous. "Children that age think of death as the grim reaper or the bogeyman," he said.

"By nine on, children recognize death as the end of physical life as we know it," he said.

Death can be a growing experience for the child if adults handle it correctly, according to Young.

"Don't hide the reality of death from children, but make it as less hurtful as possible," he said.

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Stopping crime is way of life
for Indiana 'crime stopper'

By Kim Steele

F-10 (end.)

Baptist Press
4/15/91

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (BP)--The history of crime goes back to the beginning of recorded time.

Ever since Cain murdered Abel, the Bible has described numerous incidents of man's transgressions against the laws of God and man. Moses killed an Egyptian. Jacob's sons kidnapped Joseph. The Philistines bribed Delilah. Amnon raped Tamar.

Today, the story is the same. Newspapers scream headlines of murder, kidnap, bribery and rape. Police departments are overworked and understaffed. And law-abiding citizens stagger under the financial burden of operating an increasing number of local and state prisons. Crime is a common occurrence in Indiana.

But for Lt. Sam Walsh, it's more than that. It's a way of life. Walsh, a member of Southside Baptist Church in South Bend, is coordinator of the South Bend Area Crime Stoppers, Inc. for the South Bend Police Department. And as a police officer, he's seen more of the bad side of life than most people will ever know exists.

"I worked uniform patrol for five years, then narcotics," said Walsh, who has been in charge of Crime Stoppers for eight years. "I worked it two years. It was difficult to simulate a boozier or dooper and not get caught up in it. You walk a fine line. If you're in an unfriendly situation and they find out you aren't one of them, you can get killed.

"I was involved in my church, and my wife and I prayed about it. We said that if my job ever compromised my Christianity, I'd get out. And my beliefs were my guiding light. I didn't have to talk trash and smoke dope. When you work, you go to bars to buy drugs. But I never went into bars off-duty. The time away from my job was spent with my family."

After several years in narcotics, Walsh was chosen to become a homicide investigator for two more years. Then he coordinated the police department's special operations unit, which investigates illegal activities in the community. There, he heard about the department's new program called Crime Stoppers and decided that was where he'd like to focus his efforts.

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"Crime Stoppers is a not-for-profit organization that unites citizens with law enforcement and media to fight crime," explained Walsh as he thumbed through a newsletter. "Every week we go out and reenact a crime for television and radio. Citizens can call us about any unsolved felony crime, and an investigator will assign them a number. If an arrest is made, the caller is eligible to receive \$1,000."

The program -- which encompasses a 10-county area and includes the University of Notre Dame -- is looked upon as a model throughout the United States, said Walsh. Besides numerous participating television stations, a total of 18 radio stations and 12 newspapers carry the Crime Stoppers "Crime of the Week." The program is funded solely through donations and fundraisers -- including a moonlight walk against crime which raised \$24,000 last year. Walsh is also in demand as a speaker to other Crime Stoppers organizations.

And Walsh's statistics are impressive. Since its inception in 1983, the South Bend program has solved 1,900 felony cases in its area, with 1,500 people arrested. Fourteen murders have been solved. A total of \$4.4 million in stolen property has been recovered, said Walsh, and \$200,000 in rewards has been paid out to citizens who phoned or brought in tips.

But being a police officer -- especially in narcotics and homicide hasn't always been easy for Walsh. From a religious perspective, it has brought questions to mind that have no answers. And it has forced Walsh to re-evaluate his views on many subjects -- including police work, church, family and God.

"When I was a homicide investigator, the thing that bothered me most was that each time you wondered how one human being could take another person's life," he said. "That person was made by God. But because I was a Christian, I realized that for every action, there is a purpose. You can see things from a biblical standpoint, and if you use the Bible as a roadmap, you can see scripture and reconcile this."

As for church, Walsh said his undercover work has served to enhance his testimony -- especially with the youth. He and his wife were youth directors when he worked narcotics. Walsh also has been a trustee at the church, and he currently is Sunday school director.

"The kids knew I was a police officer with a big red afro," he said. "I was a hippie-type who would go into dangerous situations and could use young people's lives as examples. I could bring it home through real-life illustrations. My pastor was concerned, but a strong family and church family helped out. (The scripture) John 3:16 has been my pillar."

Walsh also said he has re-evaluated his thoughts about police work. "Cops are a real cynical group," he said. "Word got around that I was a religious fanatic. I've presented the plan of salvation a number of times to those arrested in narcotics or homicide, but you have to do it discreetly.

"I'm not ashamed or embarrassed, but there have been a few guys in my 20 years here who have been outspoken and were labeled as a preacher, but in a criticizing way. That does more harm than good. You've got to single out a person who is receptive."

But although he loves it, Walsh doesn't recommend police work to everyone. Because of its built-in temptations, narcotics investigation isn't an easy department for a Christian officer to handle. That's why Walsh has chosen to work with Crime Stoppers, and why he recommends police officers in doubt about their calling should seek counseling from their pastors and spend daily time in close communication with God.

"For me, this has been a calling," said Walsh. "But I've seen officers who couldn't keep the distinction and who went to jail for breaking the law. The thing I kept remembering was that I was doing more good through the job by taking drugs off the street."

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Kim Steele is a writer for the Indiana Baptist, newsjournal of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.)

1941 missionary tragedy voyage
marks 50th anniversary

By Maria Sykes

F-10

OPHIEM, Ill. (BP)--"Be calm, kiddies. Remember that no matter what happens, Jesus loves you more than mommy and daddy," Eleanor (Danielson) Anderson recounted her mother, Lillian, comforting her six children as the Egyptian steamer on which they were sailing repeatedly came under fire by a German raider.

April 17 will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the sinking of the African-bound passenger ship Zamzam. Four Southern Baptist missionaries and one child were among the passengers.

The ship carrying 201 passengers, including 144 missionaries and 33 children, bound for their mission fields in Africa, was attacked by enemy fire in the South Atlantic. Twenty Protestant denominations were represented among the passengers. Zamzam was about 1,450 miles from its destination, Capetown, Africa.

On the evening of March 20, 1941, the group of missionaries and some refugees met in New York and boarded Zamzam for their voyage to Africa. The group included Africans, Americans, Belgians, Britons, Canadians, Czechoslavs, Egyptians, French, Greeks, Jews, Russians, Sudanese, Turks and Yugoslavs.

Because the ship would be traveling through unfriendly territory they wandered through the South Atlantic with "black-out." Black out, a ban issued by the captain of the ship, W.G. Smith, meant at night no lights were allowed. Not even the flicker of a match was permitted because of fear of being sighted by the enemy.

As planned, the Zamzam ported at Trinidad on March 30 and Recife, South America, April 9 for refueling and relaxation.

On the afternoon of April 14 the ship suddenly changed course and turned back toward South America. Though Smith told passengers not to be alarmed, he had picked up a mysterious message over the radio indicating there may be a German raider in the area, a term for a destroyer during World War II in the South Atlantic.

Later, without danger, Zamzam was able to get back on course. The ship was scheduled to reach Capetown within four days.

April 16 the chief officer, Stanko Fiedel, assured passengers once more they were out of danger. There were no emergency preparations made. However, many of the passengers had carefully placed passports and other valuables in case of trouble.

Panic and confusion took hold of crew members early on the morning of April 17 in the sighting of a nearing German raider.

At 5:30 a.m. the first of about 10 heavy calibre shells hit the Zamzam, violently shaking it and awakening its passengers with shock and terror.

"As I reached to open the lounge door to enter, I saw a red flash coming toward me," wrote Isabella Moore, Southern Baptist missionary to Africa, recounting her experience in The Commission magazine, Sept. 1941. "A blasting shot forced me to fall upon the floor. ... I tried to crawl to the door (toward the stairwell)," she wrote. "Another crash and I was at the bottom of the first flight of steps. There was silence everywhere," Moore said.

Blasts from other shells echoed the sounds of women and children screaming and the moaning from the depths of the aged ship.

Smith surrendered the ship after about 10 minutes of attack.

Lifeboats were launched into the water. One lifeboat was destroyed by a shell seconds before it was to be full of Zamzam passengers. Some passengers stumbled as they fought to get on life jackets and find a lifeboat.

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The lifeboat Danielson and her children were assigned to capsized when it was launched into the water. Anderson recalled her mother calmly guiding and consoling her six children, the oldest 11-years-old and the youngest 18 months, as they floated near the capsized lifeboat.

"Keep your mouth closed kiddies and remember Jesus loves you no matter what happens," her mother instructed.

Danielson and her children were going to Africa to be with her husband who was a Lutheran missionary already in Africa. Earlier in the spring of 1941, the law forbidding women and children into Africa was rescinded, allowing the family to reunite.

All passengers were rescued and taken aboard the German raider, Tamesis, and became prisoners of war that morning.

"We were treated kindly, though there was lack of food, space and clothes. Some people wore mattress covers and towels wrapped around them," said Anderson, who recalled the prisoners being locked in a room at the bottom of the ship. Women and children were kept separately from the men.

Later that afternoon everyone was called up to witness the sinking of the Zamzam.

All captured passengers were transferred to another German ship, the Dresden, where they were held for 33 days.

The Dresden circled in the South Atlantic for nine days before moving north toward the British blockade (about 4 days traveling time). These proved to be the most trying days for passengers aboard, fearing what could happen when they reached the blockade.

However, at the time the prison ship arrived at the blockade, British warships were focusing their attentions on the Bismarck, a large German battleship. The prison ship passed through the blockade safely.

May 20 the ship was escorted into the harbor of Saint Jean de Lutz, in southern France, by two mine sweepers and a destroyer. Americans were taken to Biarritz, France and all others were taken to concentration camps.

American prisoners were herded into trains and transported through Portugal before finally arriving in the United States.

Though the Zamzam ended up on the bottom of the sea, only three people died. Several were badly wounded.

"We are grateful for the experiences through which we passed. ... Since leaving we have traveled with (several) nationalities. Among every group, someone has heard from us the gospel. Germans heard!" Moore wrote.

Zamzam passengers traveled 18,000 miles and were on the sea 73 days.

Survivors and their families (descendants) are invited to a reunion July 21, 1991 at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn. For more information, contact Laurence Danielson, 3750 Emerson Ave., Boulder, CO 80303. (303) 494-5323.

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Course map and reunion information available upon request from Nashville bureau of Baptist Press