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July 10, 1991

91-104

Veteran student work leader
killed in auto crash

By William Neal

N-~~10~~ (GA)

ATLANTA (BP)--D. Eugene Briscoe, director of the Georgia Baptist department of student work, was killed in a four-car highway accident July 8 while traveling to a meeting at Middle Georgia College in Cochran. He was 59.

Briscoe had one of the longest tenures among the Georgia Baptist Convention staff, having served with the department since 1958. He was elected director of the department in 1973. His death came as a shock to the 36 campus ministers presently serving in his department along with the thousands of college students and BSU alumni who had close contact with him over the years.

Joe Graham, an assistant director in the student work department, was traveling with Briscoe at the time and was seriously injured. Graham was taken to a Macon, Ga., hospital where he was treated for a mild concussion and bruises. His face required a number of stitches and he lost a great deal of blood. Doctors were able to get his blood pressure stabilized and he was expected to be released from the hospital later in the week.

Briscoe's car apparently was hit head-on by another vehicle that crossed the median into his lane. Two other cars then hit his car from the rear when they came over a hill that had hidden the accident from their view. Briscoe's car was completely destroyed and observers said it was a miracle Graham survived. There were other injuries from the accident but no other fatalities.

The accident occurred in the small community of Bullard north of Cochran. Briscoe was on his way to Cochran to introduce a prospective new campus minister to the local student work committee.

A memorial service was held July 10 at Briarlake Baptist Church in Decatur, where Briscoe had served in recent years as a Sunday school teacher. Burial was scheduled for July 11 at Big Creek Baptist Church Cemetery just north of Thomasville, Ga.

A native of San Angelo, Texas, Briscoe was a graduate of Baylor University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He also had done graduate work at Georgia State University. Most of his ministerial career had been in student work, but he also had held pastorates in Texas, Ohio, Kentucky and Georgia.

Joining the student work department in 1958, Briscoe served as area director in south Georgia, area director for northwest Georgia, and assistant to then director Aubrey L. Hawkins. During those years Briscoe was responsible for starting many new Baptist Student Union programs throughout the state. Today there are BSU programs on 60 college and university campuses throughout the state, making the Georgia program one of the largest in the country.

Briscoe was a contributor to numerous periodicals related to student work and was a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention's State Student Directors Association.

He is survived by his wife, the former Jean Williamson; a son and daughter-in-law, Douglas E. and Jane Briscoe of Thomasville, Ga.; and a sister, Irene Taylor of Abilene, Texas.

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Commenting upon Briscoe's death, James N. Griffith, executive director-treasurer of the Georgia Baptist Convention, said "the passing of Eugene Briscoe is a great loss to our Georgia Baptist Convention and to student work throughout the state. ... His ability and dedication to the task have left a lasting mark and contribution to the overall student work among Southern Baptists."

The Georgia Baptist Foundation in Atlanta is receiving gifts for the D. Eugene Briscoe Memorial, which will be used for Baptist Student Center development across Georgia.

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Directors of missions
honored for service

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7/10/91

N-CO

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Three associational directors of missions received directors of the year awards during a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board meeting at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Bob Brindle received the award for a town and country association in the eastern United States. He serves in Upper New England Baptist Association in Portsmouth, N.H. The association is the only association in the Southern Baptist Convention that includes two states -- New Hampshire and Maine.

Joe Courson received the award for a metropolitan association in the eastern United States. He serves in Gulf Stream Baptist Association in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The association has grown from 70 churches to more than 100 churches during Courson's five-year tenure.

Doyle Braden was honored as metropolitan director of missions for the western United States. He serves in Orange County Baptist Association in southern California. The association has 79 congregations, compared to 55 when Braden began working for the association in 1985. The association also has begun several outreach ministries through Braden's leadership.

The town and country director of missions for the western United States will be honored during home missions week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center later in July.

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Crusade evangelist
task force formed

Baptist Press
7/10/91

N-CO
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ATLANTA (BP)--A crusade evangelist task force has been formed to develop a strategy to plan and implement area-wide and city-wide crusades.

Initiated by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board evangelism section, the task force will encourage quality crusade leadership, cooperative training and the use of crusade evangelists. Long-term goals include developing materials for conducting effective and affordable multi-church crusades.

Members of the volunteer task force are Richard H. Harris and Tom McEachin of the HMB mass evangelism department and full-time evangelists Kelly Green of Mobile, Ala., Paul Jackson of Little Rock, Ark., Jerry Johnston of Overland Park, Kan., Rick Stanley of Fort Walton Beach, Fla., Jay Strack of Dallas and Jim Wilson of Orlando, Fla.

Discipleship is another concern of the task force. The group will help churches "conduct crusades which lead individuals to profess their faith in Christ and obediently express their commitment in believers' baptism and meaningful church membership," Green said.

In addition, the task force will act as an accountability group for its members about their moral, ethical, personal evangelistic, financial, devotional and family life.

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"This accountability will be in the context of biblical standards for the office and for the calling of the evangelist," said Jay Strack.

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Missionary lifestyle includes
willingness to go where needed

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
7/10/91

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--A Southern Baptist church with missions as a lifestyle includes members with up-to-date passports, "prepared to go anywhere in the world that God calls," Douglas Beggs told participants in a conference session during Jericho: A Southern Baptist Missions Festival at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

"If we don't learn to see the world through the eyes of God, we'll never be a missionary congregation," said Beggs, director of the adult division of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

Developing a missionary lifestyle must begin with leaders who grapple with issues such as who Christians are and what the church should be, said Beggs.

As a church becomes a missionary congregation, leaders and members will come to understand ministry is more important than buildings, church members don't just pay the staff to do the ministry and ministry requires personal involvement as well as giving money, said Beggs.

In another conference, Bob Ethridge, assistant vice president in the Foreign Mission Board's office of communications, and Dwain Brown, missionary to French Guyana, said baby boomers (ages 25-45) tend to be the group least involved in missions in most churches. On the other hand, senior adults and youth are often more involved.

Short-term, innovative approaches are more likely to appeal to baby boomers, said Brown. They don't like ongoing activities, meetings or long-term commitments. They want action.

"While the traditional approach to missions has been education followed by action, with baby boomers it is better to begin with action," said Brown.

To increase missions involvement for people in any age group, Brown urged participants to adopt a home missionary and a foreign missionary, subscribe to "The Commission" for foreign missions information and "MissionsUSA" for home missions and to bring missionaries in to speak at church.

Also, he suggested praying God will call out missionaries from the church, sponsor a house for furloughing missionaries, conduct local missions projects and participate in volunteer projects.

Brown, who became a career missionary after going as a volunteer to Upper Volta, said "half of our missionaries appointed today have been volunteers."

Churches should use a planning process to increase their involvement in missions, beginning with a detailed analysis of what the church is presently doing and who is involved, Ethridge said.

Second, a church should determine how much they should be involved in missions and then identify desired results.

"The better desired result is for a church to create an environment where people take seriously the concept of obeying God's will," said Ethridge.

After determining desired results, he said leaders should identify how to achieve the results and a process for evaluating their results.

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Dale Hooper, research associate at the Foreign Mission Board, emphasized in another conference that Southern Baptists must educate themselves about global issues to better understand missions concerns and opportunities.

Critical issues for the future include the world population explosion, decreasing food availability, division of the rich and poor, the rise of Islam and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, he said.

"Traditional approaches to missions are not going to get the job done," said Hooper.

In another conference, Ernest Mosley outlined plans through the year 2000 for Bold Mission Thrust, Southern Baptists' effort to share the gospel with every person in the world by the year 2000.

"The ultimate test of Bold Mission Thrust is how well the individual members of your churches are doing in hearing and answering God's call in their lives," said Mosley, executive vice president of the SBC Executive Committee.

Jericho was sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission, Woman's Missionary Union, Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board and Sunday School Board.

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Soviet church leaders
receive additional training

By Frank Wm. White

F-SSB

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7/10/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--A second training session aimed at Bible study education for Evangelical-Christian Baptists provides enormous possibilities for the Christian movement in that country, according to Harry Piland, director of the Sunday school division at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Piland and three other Sunday school division leaders conducted the training to develop a strategy for implementing a Bible study education program in the Soviet Union for 11 Evangelical-Christian Baptist leaders participating in the 1991 Summer Institute for Theological Education in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

The institute is conducted each June by the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. The seminary invited Sunday School Board leaders to conduct the specialized training for the Soviet participants, based on a specific request for help.

The request followed an earlier session at the seminary in November 1989 when the Sunday school division provided training and materials for church leaders from 16 countries including the Soviet Union.

Some of the Soviet participants in the 1989 conference adapted and published the materials for distribution throughout the Soviet Union. More than 50,000 copies of some of those materials have been sold in the Soviet Union, according to John David Hopper, president of the seminary.

While the 1989 training provided steps to produce Bible study materials, along with outlines for a year's materials for each age group, the Soviet church leaders expressed a need for help in training writers and developing an organization and strategy for a national Bible study program.

"I believe that we have a one-time opportunity to utilize our resources to revolutionize Bible study in the Baptist churches of the USSR and, through them, to influence other churches in the years to come," Hopper wrote in his February request to Piland.

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With a Herculean effort to develop the requested materials and translate the three volumes into Russian, the team provided a plan for teaching in all age levels, writing and editing Bible study materials for all age groups and starting Bible study in all age groups, said Billie Pate, Sunday school division assistant director.

Piland and Pate along with Mavis Allen, senior coordinator of program development, and Forrest Moorehead, senior coordinator of curriculum development, made up the Sunday school division training team for the project.

"We have put resources in their hands that they will be able to use for years to come. They want to make it work nationwide," Pate said.

The Soviet leaders are at a fledgling stage of development and want something that is their own work, Pate explained. "They want to produce their own materials rather than translate ours. We've helped them move in that direction."

As the work in the Soviet Union develops, Pate said she believes the next step will be to assist church leaders in the technology of publishing.

The Sunday School Board will continue to respond to requests from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the Ruschlikon seminary, Piland said.

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Chaplain trades church staff
position for racetrack ministry

By Sarah Zimmerman

F-NMB

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7/10/91

MIAMI (BP)--Last year Jim Sweet left the staff of an established Southern Baptist church for a flock plagued with poverty, boredom, low self-esteem, lack of education and alcohol abuse.

His new congregation includes horse groomers, trainers and jockeys -- people who work on the backside of the Calder Race Track in Miami where Sweet is chaplain.

People on the backside rarely see the glamour of grandstands or profit from gambling purses. The highest paid workers are jockeys who typically earn \$40 for every horse they mount. They may ride in more than one race each day, but they have to win big to earn much money, Sweet says.

Work begins at the race track by 5 a.m. Sweet arrives two hours later when the workers are ready to take a break. Ninety percent of his ministry takes place on his early morning walks through the stables, he says.

By 11 a.m., most of the work on the backside is done and boredom sets in. That often leads to alcohol or drug abuse, Sweet says, even though the race track management has taken a hard-line approach to drug abuse.

"People here have deep hurts and needs," Sweet says. "A lot of people here are just running away."

The backside of a track hardly seems like a good place to run to, however. Dormitories for people who cannot afford to live elsewhere are concrete block buildings with five rooms and one bathroom. Some rooms are built over the 1,600 horse stalls, where horses have more living space than workers.

Close to 1,000 people live on the backside during racing season, which starts the first week of May and runs through the middle of January. The track's work force can reach as many as 2,000, including blacksmiths, veterinarians and security officials, Sweet says.

"Some people here will never leave the race track," Sweet says. "Horses are what they know and horses are what they love."

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His job among the horse lovers, Sweet says is to "be the presence of the Lord. I help them have as good a quality of life as they can, and help them know the quality of life they can have in the Lord that they can't find anywhere else."

Sweet does everything from set up doctor's appointments to provide clothing for the workers.

"I've seen people in tears because someone cared enough to do even the simplest things," he says.

"It often opens the door so you can later share the gospel. They seem to say, 'Can I really trust what you're telling me?' There's a lot of suspicion and mistrust here."

Sweet leads a Bible study in English every Thursday at the racetrack. Attendance varies from 15 to 20, though about 40 people attend at one time or another. A volunteer leads a Bible study in Spanish on Tuesday and Saturday.

One former backside worker is now a deacon at Pembroke Road Baptist Church in Miramar, Fla., where Sweet was minister of missions before becoming chaplain at the racetrack. Such examples of changed lives keep Sweet racing to minister at the backside.

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

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