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91-107

John Cobb Smith
dies in Texas

N-Texas

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--John Cobb Smith, former director of TV operations for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, died of an apparent heart attack July 11. He would have been 57 Aug. 1.

Smith, who lived in Arlington, Texas, worked at the RTVC from 1955 to 1987 and had held numerous positions. In recent years, he had been in business for himself. He was owner of Network Production and Management, Inc., of Arlington.

He had produced numerous videotapes for Baptist agencies and institutions, including a half-hour dramatic screenplay for the Woman's Missionary Union's 100th anniversary celebration. The play, entitled "Go Forward," was about the life of Annie Armstrong, WMU's first national executive, who initiated the weeks of prayer for both home and foreign missions.

Smith is survived by his wife, Mary Jane; sons Gregg and Cliff of Waco, Texas; his mother, Glynton Smith of Decatur, Ga.; and a brother, William of Chapel Hill, N.C.

Smith was a graduate of Baylor University and had attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

He was on the board of directors of Big Brothers and Sisters of Tarrant County and was a deacon and Sunday school teacher at Lamar Baptist Church in Arlington.

The family requested, in lieu of flowers, memorials be made to the Big Brothers and Sisters of Tarrant County or the American Heart Association.

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Jericho participants urged
to color outside the lines

By Linda Lawson

F-SSB

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptists, it's OK -- absolutely necessary, in fact -- to color outside the lines to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That was the single-focused message in worship services, conferences, missions fair, global walkaround, a world awareness game and even a construction project during Jericho: A Southern Baptist Missions Festival held July 6-12 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

"If the people don't come to us, we must take the gospel to them," said Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. "A church meeting in a game room of a high-rise apartment building is just as much church as the congregation that gathers in a brick building with white columns.

"It's hard to imagine a place where we can't start a church if we color outside the lines," said Lewis.

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Designed to increase awareness of Southern Baptist home and foreign missions and to help participants see themselves as missionaries wherever they are, Jericho has been held at Southern Baptists' two national conference centers, Ridgecrest and Glorieta, N.M., since 1989. It is sponsored by the Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board, Sunday School Board, Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union.

A total of 241 of the 1,348 participants made public commitments to career missions, volunteer missions or pledged to pray or give more to missions during the Thursday night and Friday morning sessions.

"If I understand anything at all about what God is doing, he has again laid before us an open door beyond anything in the last 50 years," R. Keith Parks, president of the Foreign Mission Board, said.

In some places, increased mission efforts bear immediate, dramatic results, while work in other places will be "slow and difficult," he said. One of the first "unreached people" groups for whom the FMB called for prayer in 1988 was the Kurdish people of the Middle East, then virtually unknown, he noted.

"God moved in the hearts of Southern Baptists three and one-half years ago to get ready for the time when he opened the door," said Parks. "God brought it together in his time."

However, he warned doors could close unless Southern Baptists are willing to pray, give and become personally involved as never before.

Carolyn Miller, newly elected national president of Woman's Missionary Union, challenged Jericho participants "to make missions our lifestyle" by praying for missionaries and by doing mission work in the community or wherever God calls.

"We have delegated our priestly role to paid clergy. We cannot win this world by paying to get it done," she said.

More than 100 home and foreign missionaries participated in Jericho -- leading conferences, giving testimonies and being available to talk and counsel with people.

Paul Dodd, a U.S. Army chaplain at Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, thanked Southern Baptists "for giving me the opportunity to take healing, reconciliation and grace to our soldiers wherever they are."

The grounds of Ridgecrest were transformed into a missions fairground Monday afternoon. Amid helium balloons, inflated "crayons" and wind socks, Jericho participants of all ages wandered among 57 booths where they could watch performing artists, play missions games such as pick-a-duck or tour the mobile medical-dental center sponsored by North Carolina Baptist Men.

At the SBC Stewardship Commission booth, participants turned in a piece of colored cord they had received at registration. The pieces then were tied together with others to form the Cooperative Program Missions Life Line.

Instead of traditional dining room fare, Jericho participants dined from the North Carolina Baptist Men disaster relief van.

"We tried to emphasize the idea of coloring outside the lines to show we can do missions in different ways," said Betty Hurtt, fair coordinator and manager of the library services group at Woman's Missionary Union.

A new feature for 1991 was the Jericho construction project where people could work in morning or afternoon shifts to build simple plywood furniture for mission churches.

Catherine Smoak and Lucille Veronee, senior adults from First Baptist Church of Elloree, S.C., built a table Wednesday afternoon with the help of Frank Ford, a member of the church builders group from Oak Grove Baptist Church in Clyde, N.C.

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While neither woman had ever built a piece of furniture and Smoak had not used a hammer before, they termed the experience "fantastic."

During three afternoons, participants could visit the Global Walkaround to talk with missionaries, test their missions knowledge at a computer bank, call the FMB prayer line for missions needs or pick up phones and hear John 3:16 in different languages.

"The Company," a performing group from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, directed an afternoon global awareness game, AirJericho, and presented daily theme interpretations. With a choir from Wieuca Road Baptist Church in Atlanta, they presented the musical Jericho during the opening night worship service. The musical was published by Genevox Music Group of the Sunday School Board.

Jericho participants were quick to say involvement in the week had changed their lives.

Dawn Daniels, a graduating senior and a member of West Edgecombe Baptist Church in Rocky Mount, N.C., attended for the second consecutive year. She recalled arriving at Jericho 1990 with one goal in life, "to make a lot of money and be successful."

After meeting missionaries and seeing their happiness in doing God's will, Daniels said she determined to "be willing to do whatever God wants me to."

Lu Radd, a layman from First Baptist Church of Dade City, Fla., said three years of participation in Jericho "has had a profound influence on our people." Eighty-nine from the church attended in 1989, 43 in 1990 and 46 this year.

"As a direct result of Jericho we now have seven young men in seminary preparing for ministry and one couple has been appointed as missionaries," said Radd. "Also, 14 youth have surrendered to full-time Christian service."

Radd, who is going blind and gets around with the aid of a white cane, said he accepted God's call to preach during Jericho 1989. He plans to enter Baptist Bible Institute in Graceville, Fla., in a few weeks.

Jericho at Glorieta will be held July 27-Aug. 2.

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

Women carry out multitude
of duties as missionaries

By Linda Lawson

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F-SSB

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Teaching Bible studies, planting churches, coordinating multi-housing ministries, counseling single mothers and telling others about Jesus Christ represent only a few of the missionary activities carried out by Southern Baptist women around the world and in the United States.

Four women -- two home missionaries and two foreign missionaries -- described their work during a conference on women in missions during Jericho: A Southern Baptist Missions Festival held July 6-12 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

"A lot of things I've done were not because I was prepared but because I was there and there was a need," said Shelby Castlen, who has served in the Philippines with her husband, Jim. They now live and work as Baptist representatives in Australia.

With one college course in library science, Castlen became a seminary librarian in the Philippines "because there was a need."

She also has counseled students, coordinated rabbit and gardening projects, worked with volunteers to make 60 puppets, ministered in hospitals and jails as well as leading Bible studies and participating in church and community activities.

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The title home and church evangelist has given me "tremendous freedom to use the gifts God has given me," said Castlen. "I've always hopped around to a lot of different things. I'm a short-term person."

In contrast, Elizabeth Beane works in the southwest Atlanta community where "I had chosen to stay when people were moving out." For 16 years, she has directed a Christian social work program at United Baptist Church.

"I really believe I am doing what God chose me to do," said Beane, an associate missionary with the Home Mission Board.

Her first recollections of missions were in GAs (a missions organization for girls) when the leader would ask how many in the group felt God might call them into missions.

"I wanted to raise my hand, but I was afraid," Beane recalled.

She now directs a wide range of ministries including providing food and clothing to the poor and drug and alcohol counseling. Her back door is open, and there is an empty place at her kitchen table for anyone who wants to come in and talk.

Often she does not see the end results of her work. But "God gave me a wonderful Christmas present," she said, when she met a man, an alcoholic, who had come for food and clothing at the center.

He told her he had stopped drinking, "got me a good woman, and we go to church."

Lily Stone's earliest recollections of missions were occasions when her mother pulled from Stone's closet flags she had stored there for a missions procession of flags.

"The Lord was working on my heart to be a missionary before I became a Christian," said Stone, who with her husband, Gary, has been a journeyman (two-year missionary) to Ecuador. As career missionaries, they have completed three and one-half years as fraternal representatives in the outback of northern Australia and next will go to Guatemala.

When they concluded in 1986 God was calling them to Australia, they were told there were no openings in the country. One year later, the Baptist Union of Australia requested through the Foreign Mission Board a couple to start a mission in Katherine. They arrived April 7, 1988, and began the church on April 11.

"The waiting paid off. We found the people in Australia were waiting for us to come," said Stone.

Like Stone, Nancy Anthony felt God might be calling her to missions even before she became a Christian. However, "I thought if a woman was called into full-time Christian service she either went to Africa or China!"

For the last 13 years, Anthony's call to foreign missions has been in the Chicago Metro Baptist Association. Of 147 churches in the association, one-third are Anglo; one-third, African-American; and one-third speak a language other than English. Anthony's husband, Everett, is associational director of missions.

She has assisted her husband as well as carrying out her own personal ministry.

"We do a lot of entertaining in our home," said Anthony, seeking people to contribute money for starting churches.

On her own she has taught English as a second language and, for last several years, worked with single mothers and their children.

Karen Park of the FMB international service department said she talks with many college students about missions, and young women always want to know the specific kinds of opportunities open to them.

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"It's exciting to know women are involved in church planting, teaching, working with publications and even in graphic design," along with many other jobs and responsibilities, said Park.

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

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Flea market volunteers
make two free offers

By Sarah Zimmerman

F-RLMB

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ASHEVILLE, N.C. (BP)--Like an auctioneer hawking his wares, Bill Jones drives a hard bargain.

"Can I give you a cup of ice water?" he asks people at the Dreamland Flea Market in Asheville, N.C. "It's wet. It's cold. It's free."

The thought of something for nothing at a flea market makes most people at least stop to look. If they linger long enough, Jones tells them about another free offer, the gift of salvation.

Last month Jones and volunteers from North Carolina's Buncombe Baptist Association began giving away cold water to shoppers and sellers at the flea market. One Sunday, they gave away 1,227 cups of water.

Seemingly endless rows of everything from tire rims to hair bows fill the lot of the abandoned drive-in movie theater. Customers and vendors line up at the gates by 7 a.m. every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, eager to conduct their business.

Next to a woman selling rugs and across from a man selling T-shirts, Jones makes his pitch.

"People are suspicious," Jones says. "They want to know, 'What's the catch?' One person thought we were selling filtered water."

There is no catch, other than volunteers asking people who take the water to also take a tract. Jones says one person refused to take a tract, but another person read the tract and prayed to receive Christ.

Patsy Hilliard, retired foreign missionary and member of Merrimom Avenue Baptist Church in Asheville, worked at the booth one weekend. She recalls one child who came to her saying, "My mother said for you to tell me more about God." The child's mother was working at the flea market.

Chairs are set up behind the water counter so volunteers can talk to people away from the mainstream of shoppers. A directory of the association's 92 churches is on hand to help people who say they do not have a church home.

As chairman of the association's resort ministries committee, Jones is responsible for logistics of the operation. Participating churches rotate the responsibility of providing volunteers.

In time, Jones hopes to begin a Sunday Bible study for people working at the flea market.

Taking the gospel to people instead of requiring them to come to church buildings is essence of the project, Jones says.

"If we're sitting in church and the people are out here, we're never going to reach them."

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