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91-122

Jack Redford, HMB pioneer,
missions leader, dies

N-HMB

CISCO, Texas (BP)--F. Jack Redford, retired director of church extension for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, died Aug. 9 after an extended illness.

Redford took early retirement from the HMB in 1986 to become director of missions for the Cisco Baptist Association and return to the small west Texas town where he lived as a boy. Cisco is located about 50 miles east of Abilene, Texas.

Redford, 69, had been in ill health for several years and had undergone bypass surgery several years ago.

Funeral services were held Aug. 12 at First Baptist Church, Cisco, with burial at Oakwood Cemetery in Cisco.

Before retirement, he had worked for 19 years on the staff of the Home Mission Board in Atlanta, joining the HMB staff in 1967 as associate secretary of the department of pioneer missions. He became director of the department of church extension in 1971, and later was promoted to director of the HMB division of church extension.

Before joining the HMB staff, Redford was secretary of the department of missions and stewardship for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana from 1962-67. He was also an area missionary for southeast Indiana and chaplain at the Army missile battalion in Gary, Ind. A veteran of World War II in Europe, he also served for seven years as chaplain in Korea, Texas and Louisiana.

Previously, he had been pastor of Southern Baptist churches in Colorado Springs, Col.; Winslow, Ark.; and in Graham, Kempner and Powderly, Texas.

He was a graduate of Howard Payne College, Brownwood; Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene; and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth; all in Texas.

Survivors include his wife, Mildred, a son, Bill Redford of San Antonio, and two daughters, Charlotte Craig of Cisco, and Rita Peeks of Grapevine, Texas.

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SBC conference of deaf
has sense of movement

By Mona Collett

NCO

Baptist Press
8/13/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--The auditorium was filled with the same pre-worship murmur found in the sanctuary of every church on Sunday morning. But rather than the low clamor of voices there was a sense of movement.

The movement did not stop throughout the daily worship services during the annual Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf held at Belmont College's Massey Auditorium Aug. 3-9. Worshipers who are deaf and blind held on to their interpreters' hands as the morning message was delivered in sign language.

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Attendance for the 43rd annual conference, which met in Nashville, was estimated at 900. The meeting sites rotate between Glorieta, N.M. and Ridgecrest, N.C. and a local site. Every third year meeting draws the largest crowds said David Fair, who was "born and raised coming to these conferences."

Fair, the outgoing president of SBCD, is the son of James and Lavern Fair and has attended SBCD since he was young. Fair, his parents and grandparents are all deaf.

Pastor of Austin, Texas, Baptist Deaf Church, Fair said if there was one thing he could make hearing people understand about deaf people, it would be that "deaf people can succeed. We can do all that hearing people can do, except hear."

James Gregory of First Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tenn., was elected the new president during the weeklong conference.

One of the joys of being involved in the deaf conference, said William L. Asbridge, is seeing children like Fair grow and take on leadership roles. Asbridge has been attending the SBCD since 1948.

"It was like planting a mustard seed and watching it grow into a huge plant," said Asbridge who has been surprised by the growth of the conference.

One of 21 charter members, Asbridge said SBCD was "not my idea, but God's idea." He and his wife, Doris, also a charter member, are members of First Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.

Another charter member who attended the annual meeting this year was Fay Lanham, also a member of the Memphis church.

"My wish (for SBCD) is to spread farther and farther into the world. It is beginning," said Asbridge, "the roots are getting longer and longer."

Carter Bearden, national ethnic consultant for the deaf with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board affirmed that missions endeavors with the deaf in the states and abroad continue to grow. Through a cooperative effort with the SBC Foreign Mission Board the gospel is being carried to the deaf in more and more foreign countries, he said.

Vladimire Boev, a hearing pastor from the Soviet Union and raised by deaf parents, visited this year's SBCD with an interest in forming a partnership to minister to the deaf in Russia.

It is not unusual for family members of the deaf to be involved in ministry to the deaf. Bearden has two hearing sons who are pastors of deaf congregations. Carter Bearden, Jr. is pastor of the deaf at First Baptist Church, Richmond, Va.

"Being the son of Carter Bearden, I've been a child of missions," said Ray Bearden. The First Baptist Church, Alexandria, Va., associate pastor perceives that "over the last five or six years, more and more deaf churches and ministries are becoming more and more sensitive to needs around the world.

"Most churches have a growing awareness of the need to evangelize the deaf in America," said Bearden. He estimates the 49 deaf churches and missions in the state are trying to reach 2.5 million deaf people in America.

The 1993 simultaneous revivals focusing on the deaf will increase awareness of the need for ministry to the deaf, the Beardens said.

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Mona Collett is assistant director of Public Relations at Belmont College.
(BP) photos available upon request from Belmont's Public Relations Office

Vestal may move to Houston;
asks Dunwoody for prayer

By Jim Newton

N-DMB

ATLANTA (BP)--Daniel Vestal, first chairman of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's steering committee and pastor of Dunwoody Baptist Church, told his congregation he was seriously considering a possible move to the pastorate of Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston.

During a Sunday night worship service on Aug. 11, Vestal asked members of suburban Atlanta church to pray for him as he preaches in view of a call to the 5,500-member Houston church on Sunday, Aug. 18.

At the conclusion of the emotion-packed service, about 50 Dunwoody members knelt at the altar to pray for their pastor.

"The greatest desire of my life is to know and do the will of God," Vestal told the 3,800-member congregation. "I realize this is a bit unusual, but I wanted to be as honest with you as soon as I could. I am sharing this with you because I love you and want you to pray for me."

Vestal explained he was not resigning, nor had he been called as pastor of the Houston church. He said he would not be preaching "in view of a call" if he were not seriously considering the move. "I began to feel several months ago that my ministry was coming to a conclusion here."

Vestal, an unsuccessful candidate for president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1989 and 1990, was elected chairman of the "interim" steering committee for "The Fellowship" at the organization's first meeting in August of 1990. When the "Cooperative Baptist Fellowship" was officially organized in May of 1991, Vestal declined to serve in any major leadership capacity other than membership on the 80-member steering committee.

A native of Texas, Vestal was pastor of the 7,800-member First Baptist Church of Midland, Texas, before becoming pastor of the affluent Dunwoody church three years ago.

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Misplaced priorities
hurt ministers' lives

By Chip Alford

F-SSB

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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Can ministers be fun to live with?

According to counselor Glenn Booth, the answer is "yes," if they choose to be.

"It's the misdirection of priorities that often place us in the predicament of not being fun to live with," Booth, coordinator of the Ministers Counseling Service of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, told pastors and other church leaders attending Bible-Preaching-Administration Week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center. The Aug. 3-10 conference was sponsored by the church administration department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Booth, who led a series of marriage enrichment seminars for ministers and their wives, said too many pastors are putting church and ministry before their families and even before God.

"It is very easy for a minister to think that because he is putting church and ministry first that he is putting God first," he said. "But that is not necessarily true. The two are not synonymous."

Booth said ministers can "busy" themselves with church work and fail to spend quality time alone with God. This is one of the leading contributors to burnout among ministers, he said.

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To live life effectively and be fun to live with, Booth said pastors must get their priorities straight. He suggested the following as a biblical model for life's priorities: God first, self second, family third (with mate before children), and ministry and church fourth.

"I conceive it to be a biblical order because in the beginning God first created Adam, then gave him a wife, then a family and finally a job to do," Booth explained.

In putting self in second place above family and ministry, Booth said he is not suggesting self-centeredness or selfishness but rather a "self-evaluation in the mirror of God.

"This type of evaluation is needed to help you become the minister God wants you to be," he said. "I cannot rightly relate to my family if I am not rightly related to myself, and I can not relate to myself unless I am in right relationship with the Father."

Booth also said ministers often sacrifice family time to be the most effective minister possible. "But the truth is I am at my best in ministry when I am rightly related to my family," he said. "Try preaching a sermon on love when you've just had a fight with your wife."

One of the keys in maintaining a healthy family life is for ministers to schedule time alone with their families and then honor it.

"Don't let your scheduled family time be interrupted unless it is a bonafide emergency," he said, adding "most of us tend to put more things in that 'emergency bucket' than belong there."

Ministers must learn to delegate authority and responsibility in the church, he said.

"And sometimes you have to learn to say no when you are already overscheduled. Besides, about 90 percent of the time when people make demands on you they do it at their convenience, not yours."

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Sexual misconduct and lies
end Gilyard's SBC ministry

By Ken Camp

N-Jordan

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DALLAS (BP)--Plagued by charges of sexual impropriety and lies about his rags-to-riches background, Darrell Gilyard -- perhaps the most sought-after black preacher on the Southern Baptist preaching circuit -- is starting over as pastor of a new non-denominational church near Dallas.

Gilyard resigned on July 10 as pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Richardson, Texas, after recurring allegations of sexual misconduct with female members of his church.

Eleven days later, he announced the formation of the new Grace Community Church at a hotel in Richardson.

And soon after Gilyard returned to the pulpit, a Dallas newspaper reported the preacher's much-repeated story of having lived under a bridge as a homeless teenager was untrue.

In the early 1980s, Jerry Vines -- pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla., and later president of the Southern Baptist Convention -- helped Gilyard prepare for the ministry by asking Paige Patterson, president of Criswell Bible College, to secure a scholarship for the young preacher, and putting Gilyard on a Greyhound bus to Dallas.

Although Gilyard took only one class under Patterson and he never completed his degree at Criswell College, the dynamic young preacher remained in close contact with his mentor after leaving school. With Patterson's endorsement, Gilyard became a rising star on the predominantly white Southern Baptist speaking circuit.

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And under Gilyard's leadership, Victory Baptist Church -- while not a member of the local Dallas Baptist Association -- began contributing to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget, strengthening its ties to the SBC and the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

But after being confronted with what Patterson termed "a mountain" of circumstantial evidence pointing toward sexual misconduct, Gilyard resigned from Victory Baptist Church on July 10. However, he returned to a pulpit 11 days later to launch a new congregation saying he wanted to help others "who have fallen into crisis situations."

Gilyard gained the national spotlight on Jerry Falwell's "Old Time Gospel Hour" and at various Southern Baptist evangelistic rallies with his heart-wrenching story of growing up homeless beneath the St. John's River bridge in Palatka, Fla. The tale was recounted in "The Darrell Gilyard Miracle Story," a videotape produced and distributed by Falwell's ministry.

But in a copyrighted story on July 28, the Dallas Morning News reported Gilyard actually was brought up in a comfortable north Florida home by a woman who reared him as if he were her son.

The article included an interview with Barbara Davis, the 65-year-old Palatka woman who said she helped to rear Gilyard from age 8 months until he left home at age 19.

The paper also reported Gilyard misrepresented his academic background; accepted a \$10,000 "love offering" from Falwell's ministry under false pretenses; and lied about repeated traffic offenses and a suspended drivers license in Florida.

In his July 28 sermon, Gilyard blamed Falwell for the promotion of the "under the bridge" story, claiming that the Lynchburg, Va., televangelist used the videotape version of his biography as a fund-raising ploy.

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NOTICE: Aug. 30, 1991 will be the last day for use of the Jacquard computer in the Baptist Press office. After that date, Baptist Press will be available electronically only on the CompuServe system. We will, of course, continue to mail Baptist Press to all our subscribers. Contact David Haywood at the Baptist Sunday School Board for more information.

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