



-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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January 20, 1992

92-9

Morris Chapman is executive
nominee; to start after SBC

By Herb Hollinger

DURHAM, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Morris H. Chapman is the nominee to succeed Harold C. Bennett as President-Treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, according to the search committee chairman, with an employment date sometime after the SBC annual meeting in Indianapolis in June.

Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, was selected from 11 candidates recommended to the search committee. Julian Motley, pastor of Gorman Baptist Church in Durham, N.C., and search committee chairman, said the committee interviewed three top candidates, one of which included Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas. Motley would not identify the third candidate.

Assuming the Executive Committee approves the nominee at its Feb. 17-19 meeting in Nashville, Chapman is expected to begin after he finishes his second term as SBC president at the June 9-11 meeting. Chapman informed the Wichita Falls congregation Jan. 19 but details of the exact employment date with the Executive Committee will be worked out at the February meeting, Motley told Baptist Press.

As chief executive officer of the Executive Committee, Chapman, 51, would lead the body which determines distribution of more than \$140 million in Cooperative Program gifts and acts for the convention between its annual meetings. Bennett, 67, has announced his retirement, effective Oct. 1.

"In presenting Dr. Chapman ... (the committee) will call attention in its report to the significant contribution which he has made to the conservative renewal in the convention," Motley said, "and to his mission vision and leadership skills demonstrated as president of the SBC in helping to mobilize its agencies and people in Bold Mission Thrust.

"The decision to recommend Chapman ... was reached, (our) report will reveal, only after having thoroughly considered other candidates also for the position and after having become fully persuaded of God's will," Motley told Baptist Press.

The search committee had six scheduled meetings, Motley said, and three conference calls.

"The work of this committee began to be a soul-searching pilgrimage as we proceeded with the task of narrowing our consideration down, eventually to three candidates and then to two. Three were interviewed by the full committee," Motley said. Asked by Baptist Press if Patterson were the number two candidate, Motley would not comment further.

The committee conducted three interview sessions with Chapman, two including his wife, Jodi. The committee conducted extensive research into all aspects of Chapman's personal and public life, Motley said, and engaged the services of a noted corporate management firm in Nashville and a well-known medical clinic in Dallas to conduct professional examinations covering physical, psychological, professional, corporate skills and personal fitness for the position.

Chapman's role in SBC life was underscored in the committee's report to the Executive Committee.

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"He has held numerous positions of leadership on state and SBC levels and has traveled and preached extensively in evangelism conferences and crusades and in preaching missions with the Foreign Mission Board. As a pastor and denominational leader, Dr. Chapman has distinguished himself as a man of vision and of diplomacy and of administrative skills. Through the years he has demonstrated a genuine commitment to evangelism and world missions.

"At the historic First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, during his 12-year pastorate, he has led the church to increase its Cooperative Program gifts from 12 percent to 14 and a half percent and has averaged over 160 baptisms per year, placing the church in the top one percent of Southern Baptist churches in CP gifts and baptisms.

"Prior to Wichita Falls, Dr. Chapman was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Albuquerque, N.M., where he also served two terms as president of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico. During his years in Wichita Falls, he has served on the (state convention) Executive Board, on the Hardin-Simmons University board of trustees, on committees to nominate trustees for Baylor University and on coordinating boards for other Texas Baptist institutions.

"Dr. Chapman is theologically conservative and has demonstrated his personal commitment of the direction taken by the SBC theologically and toward a sound, biblical evangelism and missions thrust His main strengths as identified in the professional testing are compassion, sensitivity, a logical mind, excellent verbal communication skills, and mediation skills without compromising principles. He is characterized in these tests as one who commands respect and performs with dignity and as a Christian statesman."

Chapman's wife, the former Jodi Francis of Memphis, Tenn., has served on the SBC Peace Committee and as a trustee of the Baptist Sunday School Board. The couple has a son, Christopher Morris, a single adult and college minister at First Baptist of Lakeland, Fla., and a daughter, Stephanie Evans, in Christian counseling in Houston.

Chapman is a native of Kosciusko, Miss., and a graduate of Mississippi College. He holds master and doctorate degrees from Southwestern Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and a doctor of sacred theology from Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo. In addition to convention president, Chapman has served on various boards and committees, including the chair of the SBC Committee on Order of Business.

Others serving on the search committee, in addition to Motley, were Joe B. Warwick, vice chairman, Tennessee; Ronnie W. Floyd, secretary, Arkansas; Doyle J. Collins, Oregon; David E. Hankins, Louisiana; Guy S. Sanders, Florida; Simon H.L. Tsoi, Arizona; Fred H. Wolfe, Alabama; and Stan D. Coffey and Gwyna Parker, both of Texas.

The committee was appointed in June 1991 following Bennett's announcement of his plans to retire. There also is a transition committee appointed to work out details of the transition of new and outgoing presidents. Both committees are expected to make reports at the February Executive Committee meeting.

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Keith Parks to face
trustee questions Feb. 10

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
1/20/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustee leaders have asked Keith Parks to explain details surrounding a controversial Jan. 7 press conference during which two board executives announced early retirement in protest of trustee actions and policies.

Amid growing tension and speculation about his future, the FMB president will face trustees at a special session of the full board Feb. 10, according to a Jan. 14 letter from trustee chairman Bill Hancock to the 88 trustees.

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The special session, called by Hancock in consultation with other trustee officers, will convene at 2 p.m. on the first day of the trustees' regular Feb. 10-12 meeting. Normally trustees hold two days of committee sessions before convening the full board for business on the third day.

Immediately before the special session, Parks will meet for two hours with trustee leaders in the FMB chairman's council. The 19-member council is made up of trustee officers and chairmen of committees.

Hancock's letter said the announcement of retirement by board administrators Isam Ballenger and Keith Parker "has heightened the anxiety and concern of trustees." He also noted he has "received a great deal of counsel" regarding a trustee response in the wake of press reports and reactions from individuals across the Southern Baptist Convention.

Ballenger, 56, vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and Parker, 55, area director for Europe, said at the press conference they could no longer represent the agency because of what they termed the trustees' "global agenda" to exert control and enforce theological orthodoxy overseas. Their decision to step down early followed weeks of controversy surrounding trustee votes in October and December to defund the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

Parks, who appeared at the news conference, praised Ballenger and Parker, both veterans of foreign missions, for their integrity and commitment to missions.

Reports have persisted that some will begin efforts -- perhaps as soon as the February meeting -- to speed up establishment of a search committee to replace Parks, a 37-year veteran of missions who turns 65 in October. He has been FMB president since 1980.

Last year Parks said he wanted to remain as president until 1995 to implement an ambitious 10-point strategy he outlined for global evangelization. A report in the News Leader, Richmond's afternoon newspaper, said a "coalition of fundamentalist trustees" will report that Parks' leadership will not be necessary to implement his plan.

Parks will not speculate on his future with the mission board other than to note discussions over his tenure will "intensify." But Hancock has maintained Parks should remain in office until he decides to retire.

Earlier Hancock told Baptist Press: "There are some who desire that he (Parks) would go ahead and retire, but my belief is that he should not do so until he chooses. Now is the time to mount a bold offensive to address the mission opportunities in Europe, the former Soviet Union and around the world rather than to react to past developments and negative attitudes."

Hancock's letter appealed to trustees "to pray diligently for the proper expressions and relationships as we approach this significant meeting." He urged them to be "slow to speak" and to do so "with caution and grace as we dialogue with each other and respond to inquiries."

He also promised he would pray for trustees, as well as "all of our (FMB) staff and the ministry of the Foreign Mission Board as we approach this critical meeting."

Strong negative trustee reaction following the press conference resulted in a shortened tenure for Ballenger and Parker, who had announced they would leave their posts May 31 and July 1, respectively.

Under a negotiated agreement, the two men will leave their positions Jan. 31, serve as consultants through February and remain on salary until May 31 and July 1. Hancock and Steve Hardy, chairman of the trustee committee overseeing work in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, negotiated the agreement with Parks and Executive Vice President Don Kammerdiener. They also agreed Winston Crawley, a retired missions veteran, will be interim vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, effective Feb. 3.

Dockery is leading candidate
to become seminary's dean

By Art Toalston

NASHVILLE (BP)--David S. Dockery, general editor of The New American Commentary by Broadman Press, is the leading candidate to become dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., seminary officials have confirmed.

Provost Larry L. McSwain said Jan. 17 Dockery will be interviewed by the seminary's faculty Jan. 24 as part of the process for election to the faculty and appointment as dean. "It's a little early (for an official announcement) but word has gotten out," McSwain told Baptist Press, "and we're delighted" that Dockery may return to the seminary.

Dockery, 39, as assistant professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern from 1988-91, served "with incredible distinction," McSwain said. "We think David Dockery will be an excellent dean for the school of theology. He is a highly competent teacher and scholar." McSwain added he believes Dockery will receive strong support from the seminary's faculty, trustees and alumni.

Dockery has been general editor of the planned 40-volume conservative New American Commentary since May 1990. Broadman Press, a division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, has released three volumes to date, Philipians/Colossians/Philemon, Mark and Acts.

Dockery, in an interview, said no determination has been made about his role as editor of the series if his election to Southern's faculty and appointment as dean proceed smoothly. "I hope to keep some involvement with the project, which is yet to be determined," he said. He is to be the commentary's writer for 1, 2 Peter and Jude.

From 1984-88, Dockery was professor of theology and New Testament at Criswell College and associate pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas. He was pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Brooklyn, N.Y., from 1982-84.

McSwain said seminary policy will require Dockery's election as a member of the faculty before his official recommendation as dean of the school of theology to Southern President Roy L. Honeycutt Jr. McSwain said Honeycutt likewise is enthusiastic about naming Dockery to the post, effective Aug. 1.

David R. Wilkinson, vice president for seminary relations, said the process for Dockery's election includes an interview and vote by Southern's 70-member faculty Jan. 24, presentation to the trustees' academic personnel committee Feb. 3, recommendation to the trustees' executive committee for election to a tenurable New Testament faculty position Feb. 4 and election as a tenured faculty member during the trustees April 27-29 meeting.

Dockery was born in Tuscaloosa and grew up in Fairfield, Ala. A 1975 graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, he earned a master of divinity degree at Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Ind., in 1979; a master of divinity degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1981; a master of arts degree in New Testament at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth in 1986; and a doctor of philosophy degree in humanities, with emphasis in history of biblical interpretation, at the University of Texas at Arlington in 1988.

Dockery is author of The Doctrine of the Bible, used in the Southern Baptist Convention's 1992 doctrine study. He is the author, co-author or co-editor of nine other books, including Broadman releases Baptist Theologians (1990) and People of God: Essays on the Believers' Church (1991) and a Zondervan release, New Testament Criticism and Interpretation (1991).

He and his wife, Lanese, have three sons.

Baylor regents delay
Truett seminary opening

By Toby Druin

WACO, Texas (BP)--Baylor University's board of regents Jan. 17 authorized a committee to respond to a recommendation the George W. Truett Theological Seminary in the fall of 1994.

A five-member committee of the regents was named by chairman Glenn Biggs of San Antonio to meet with five members of the seminary trustees to be named by their chairman, Daniel Vestal, pastor of Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston.

Named to the regents' group were John T. Boyd, Amarillo, chairman; Tom Powers, Houston; Roger McDonald, Garland; Max Brown, Galveston; and W. Dewey Presley, Dallas. Names of the five to be selected by Vestal were not available.

The joint committee is expected to make a recommendation at the regents' next regular meeting March 20.

The trustees made the unanimous recommendation to open the seminary in 1994 in response to what was described as "a window of opportunity" to share the gospel with the world, a need for more preachers and for a "stackpole" around which to build a new consensus in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The 1994 opening would give time to hire faculty and staff, establish procedures and begin soliciting endowment. It was emphasized the seminary would not be a "deficit" operation and would not siphon funds from the operation of the university.

Baylor reserved the name George W. Truett Theological Seminary in 1990 and incorporated the institution and elected trustees in 1991. The 15-member body includes four Southern Baptists from outside Texas. Vestal was elected its first chairman.

University regents initiated proceedings to establish the school, explaining the seminary would begin operations if it were determined the six SBC seminaries were being led away from their historic mission by "extremist" elements -- conservatives who now control all SBC seminary boards of trustees.

That rationale, including observations that Southeastern Seminary has been "devastated," the futures of Golden Gate and Midwestern seminaries are in question and great changes are being made at Southern Seminary, was aired in a two-hour dialogue between regents and seminary trustees in Waco Jan. 16, during which Truett trustees unanimously recommended opening the seminary in 1994.

Instruction is still sound at Southwestern Seminary, it was noted, but conservative pressures have affected faculty selection and the future of the seminary was questioned after current administrative leadership is gone. "True learning" exists only in an "atmosphere of freedoms," it was observed.

The faculty of Southwestern Seminary recently approved a resolution asking Baylor to delay opening the seminary. The resolution was read to trustees and regents and will be presented to the Baylor faculty Jan. 20.

The Baptist Standard, newsjournal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, was permitted to have a representative at the regents/trustees dialogue under background rules, which permit no direct quotes or attribution of positions taken.

Though the denominational controversy and its effects on SBC institutions were mentioned, officers of the trustees and the university emphasized the positive in presenting their rationale for the new seminary. Among reasons cited were:

-- Robert Sloan's message to the state convention in November calling for a return to the basics of sharing the gospel of a crucified and risen Christ with the world. Sloan is George W. Truett professor of evangelism at the university and has been mentioned as possible dean of the seminary.

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-- Sloan's emphasis that Southern Baptists must build a new consensus or die, and Baylor as the "flagship" institution among Southern Baptists should be the "stackpole" around which to build such a consensus.

-- Unprecedented opportunity with the "walls down" around the world and the need for more preachers to preach the gospel.

-- An atmosphere of freedom to publish, learn and make open inquiry in a university setting.

-- A "constituency shift" in Southern Baptist life, where some feel disenfranchised. The new seminary would give those people a place to send their gifts and their students.

Some regents questioned delaying opening the seminary but were told time is needed to elect faculty and staff, establish procedures and begin to build an endowment operation.

Truett trustees recommended an enrollment cap at 1,000 students. Several scenarios of initial enrollment goals and costs to be charged during the initial years were outlined. Most prominent in the discussion was an initial cost of about \$2,600 annually. That would be about \$2,000 more than the current cost at a Cooperative Program-subsidized seminary but would be much less than many other seminaries, it was noted.

The seminary would offer master of divinity and master of theology degrees in both English and biblical languages tracks. Students who want to pursue doctorate degrees would do so in the university's department of religion, which offers a doctor of philosophy degree.

It would be housed initially in current university buildings and require a projected faculty of 15 members.

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Dilday welcomes any delay
in Baylor's Truett seminary

By Toby Druin

Baptist Press
1/20/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Southwestern Seminary President Russell H. Dilday Jr. said last week he "welcomed any delay" in the establishment of George W. Truett Seminary at Baylor University.

Dilday and a delegation of Southwestern faculty members on Jan. 6 delivered a request from the faculty to Baylor University President Herbert H. Reynolds that the new Truett Seminary be delayed. Baylor regents voted Jan. 17 to open the seminary in the fall of 1994.

"We welcome any delay because it give times for dialogue with our colleagues at Baylor that we might find new avenues of cooperation rather than competing," Dilday said.

"We have valued our cooperative relationship with Baylor and other colleges and universities here in Texas and would not be enthusiastic about any development that would threaten a tense or competitive relationship between our schools."

He said Baylor's stance that it wants a school that is "scholarly, evangelical and with a world vision is precisely what Southwestern has been and is today and it would not seem necessary to have two institutions with that same missions statement or purpose here together."

Dilday said he and others at Southwestern are trying to correct a misconception, a part of which is the premise on why the Truett Seminary was projected, "that we are immobilized or paralyzed by the denominational situation."

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"That is just not the case," he said. "In spite of some of the difficulties of these days in Southern Baptist life, the seminary is moving forward full steam with the same high quality of work and emphasis on Baptist principles we have had from the beginning."

Dilday said the seminary, however, has "become more sensitive to our constituency here during these day of conflict, but Southwestern is limited only by self-imposed parameters. We have always established for ourselves the kind of school we are and set our curriculum and elected faculty within those parameters. That hasn't changed, despite the pressures."

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Two Annuity Board funds
set records in 1991

By Tim Tune

Baptist Press
1/20/92

DALLAS (BP)--Two of the Annuity Board's four retirement plan funds performed well above expectations in 1991, returning more than 20 percent for the year and setting records.

The Variable Fund earned 28.27 percent, propelling the unit value to a record high, from \$8.50 on Dec. 31, 1990, to \$10.90 on Dec. 31, 1991.

The Balanced Fund earned 22.42 percent, its highest return ever.

The board's Fixed Fund earned 8.8 percent and the Short-Term Fund earned 5.71 percent.

Market performance for 1991 was a surprise even to investment experts, according to John Jones, the Annuity Board's senior vice president for investments.

"Most experts expected somewhat lackluster returns" for stock and bond investments in 1991, Jones said, but surges at the beginning and end of the year produced "superlative" returns.

Jones and his staff direct and monitor a stable of outside investment managers.

All Variable Fund assets are invested in U.S. stocks (equities). The Balanced Fund's assets are invested in a mixture of stocks and high-quality bonds. On Dec. 31 almost 56 percent of Balanced Fund assets were in equities.

The Federal Reserve Board's action to reduce short-term interest rates helps explain the moderate earnings in 1991 of the Short-Term Fund, Jones said. The return "mirrored the downward trend of short-term interest rates," he said. The fund's assets are invested in government, agency and corporate securities with average maturities of 12 months or less.

And "despite the declining interest rates," Jones said, "we were pleased to credit earnings equal to our projected rate for the Fixed Fund." The board credited 8.8 percent earnings to accumulations in the Fixed Fund in 1991. Investments are in short- and intermediate-term fixed-income assets, including securities of the federal government, federal agencies, corporations, insurance companies and banks.

Over the next six years the Annuity Board will restructure the Fixed Fund, gradually replacing insurance company guaranteed investment contracts with short-term maturity investments in marketable government, government agency and high-grade corporate instruments.

"We will not estimate a specific rate of earnings but rather a target earnings 'range' which is 7.5 to 8.5 percent for 1992," Jones said. Actual earnings will be posted to members' accounts quarterly.

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Good earnings in the board's Defined Benefit Fund made it possible for trustees to increase benefits for more than 16,000 annuitants. The permanent 10 percent increase will be included in checks mailed at the end of January to retirees who participated in Plan A, which was closed to new contributions at the end of 1987. Almost 25,000 working members who participated in Plan A will benefit from the increase when they retire.

All Church Annuity Plan members should receive an accounting statement in the mail by mid-February. Employers will receive annual Member Benefit Statements for employees who are members of the Convention Annuity Plan.

With the statements will be a newly designed brochure describing the four funds and offering some information to help participants decide which might be best for their contributions and accumulations.

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Raleigh church asked
to bless gay union

Baptist Press
1/20/92

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh is considering whether it should sanction a "same-gender union" between two men.

Pastor Mahan Siler and the deacons sent the 900-member congregation a six-page letter Jan. 7 addressing the subject, according to a report in The News & Observer, Raleigh's daily newspaper. Siler could not be reached in efforts by Baptist Press for comment.

"I'm very realistic about the depth of homophobia in our culture and in all of us," Siler told the newspaper. "That homophobia has erupted before in a great deal of violence ... (But) we believe in the wisdom of the congregation. It is our tradition to address contemporary concerns and injustices."

The letter recounted a Sept. 12 visit in Siler's office with Kevin Turner, 27, a member of the church, and Steven Churchill, 23, when the two men asked the pastor to perform a "Blessing of the Holy Union." While not a legal marriage, the couple intended to make a marriage-like promise to be caring and monogamous.

"We want it for the same reason as people feel when they get married," Churchill told The News & Observer. "We are going before God, family and friends to show a commitment for the rest of our lives."

Siler told the newspaper he met with the men three times to determine their seriousness. In November he wrote a letter to the church's 24 deacons explaining why he believed the union would be consistent with the church's mission -- which he described as "the ... nurture of faithful covenants and the healing of broken covenants."

According to the newspaper, the deacons met in December. Some backed Siler; some feared the ceremony would divide the congregation and prompt members to leave; some wanted more information.

"Our struggle has been difficult, sometimes painful," the letter to members recounted. "In the process we experienced an exhilarating bond of respect and compassion, though differences remain. We all agreed that such an important question should be shared with the congregation, and that the congregation should have the final decision. ..."

Small groups are being organized to discuss the matter in deacons' home and other sites. The letter asked the groups to assure "confidentiality, respect for all persons and a chance for each to be heard." They will meet until early February. Turner and Churchill told The News & Observer they weren't sure whether they would participate in the discussions.

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Church takes low-key approach
to reach Jewish neighbors

By Sharon Copeland

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Parkway Baptist Church, located in a western suburb of St. Louis with a large Jewish population, struggled for years with a desire to reach Jewish neighbors with a Christian witness.

But neither the staff nor the members knew the best way to go about it, according to minister of education Earl Haskins.

"About a year ago, a man approach us who is in charge of the Friends of Israel organization," Haskins recounted. "His name is Andy Ferrier. He came by and started sharing a vision He was curious if we would be interested in beginning something like that. Friends of Israel is a very low-key approach to Jewish evangelism. We didn't want to high-pressure people, but build relationships. And that's what the Friends of Israel is all about."

Friends of Israel meets each month in the church's fellowship hall. With the setting and refreshments such as bagels, cream cheese and soft drinks, "the atmosphere is more conducive to the approach we want," Haskins explained. "It's more non-threatening to the Jewish folks who come in than going into our sanctuary."

Haskins said the meetings got off to a slow start in June with only 10 or 15 people attending, most of them Parkway members. But the December meeting attracted about 70 adults and children, most of them Jewish, for a Hanukkah party. Almost 90 attended the night a survivor of the Holocaust and several Israeli wars told how he found the Messiah.

Parkway mails out fliers every month promoting the next meeting. "We do the legwork," Haskins said. "Andy sets up the programs because he understands the Jewish people and what would interest them."

Started 50 years ago to help Jewish people coming out of the Holocaust, Friends of Israel is a worldwide organization with 30 missionaries in the United States. Ferrier represents the group as a full-time missionary in the St. Louis area.

"First, we try to educate Christians in how to be a more effective witness to their Jewish friends," Ferrier explained. "Secondly, we're trying to do hands-on evangelism of the Jewish people. Since Friends of Israel started in June, we've had unsaved Jewish people coming to almost every meeting."

As a Jew and Christian both, Ferrier understands the problems facing those who become Christian believers. "Rabbis tell Jews that if they become Christians they are no longer Jews. That's just not true. We're called completed Jews because we have found the Messiah."

"I'm glad God opened our eyes up to this," Haskins remarked. "As gentiles we didn't know the mind-set of the Jewish faith. It was tough for us trying to design something to meet their needs."

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(Sharon Copeland is a correspondent for Word and Way, newsjournal of the Missouri Baptist Convention.)

Tanzanian relief project yeilds
new believers, congregations

By Donald D. Martin

Baptist Press
1/20/92

ARUSHA, Tanzania (BP)--The success of Southern Baptist hunger relief in Tanzania can be seen in the grateful eyes of an elderly Maasai man.

"He was gaunt, gray-headed and very old," recalled Southern Baptist missionary Billy Oliver of Abilen, Texas. "He said his family was hungry and that some of his children were going days without food. Before he left with his food, he came over and, with tears in his eyes, expressed his appreciation for what we were doing."

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Oliver has distributed more than 500 tons of food to nearly 5,000 families affected by drought in the east African nation. But the face of the Maasai man, locked in an expression of relief and gratitude, lingers in Oliver's mind.

The dilemma the old man faces also oppresses the lives of many other people as the drought tightens its grip on Tanzania's Arusha area. The dry savanna region, at the base of Africa's tallest mountain, Kilimanjaro, is in its second year of little or no rain. Oliver knows of five starvation deaths in the area.

The \$106,000 hunger relief project became possible because of Southern Baptists' donations channeled through the Foreign Mission Board's hunger relief fund.

Since November 1991 Oliver has given 200-pound bags of dried corn or 110-pound bags of cornmeal to local families through area Baptist churches, involving three Maasai and four Arusha churches. Most people in the area are Arusha, giving their tribe's name to the region and the town of 55,000. Oliver and his wife, Janice, of Muleshoe, Texas, live in the town of Arusha.

Evangelistic efforts among the Arusha and the Maasai have benefited by linking hunger relief to the local Baptist churches. The most recent result is the opening of a Baptist church Jan. 5. At the first service, 78 Maasai adults attended and 34 of them made professions of faith in Jesus Christ.

"This village church, like almost all the others, started through hunger relief or human needs ministries," Oliver said. "When I have an opportunity to evangelize people, I try to take it. Hunger relief or human needs provide excellent opportunities for evangelism. We want to alleviate hunger but we also want to have an opportunity to preach the gospel."

At each distribution, located in villages scattered throughout the area, Oliver or a church leader begins with a worship service. Oliver estimates they have preached to 1,300 Maasai.

In 1988, when Oliver began church development in the Arusha area, 12 Baptist churches and "preaching points" were meeting. Today the area has 26 churches and 12 preaching points.

"We've seen an openness to the gospel like we've never seen before in Arusha," he explained. "Baptists are known for their compassion and the people have responded to that."

Oliver had planned to draw the feeding project to close. But anticipated rains that normally begin in December failed to ease the drought.

"The rains should have been in full force by now but they've been disappointing. Dry winds have returned and everything is turning brown," he said. "The next rainy season is in April. But the next harvest isn't until September. So relief is quite far off in the distance."

The Arusha share a similar culture and language with their more famous cousins, the Maasai. Although the Arusha are more settled and have taken up farming, both ethnic groups depend heavily on dairy products as part of their diet, Oliver explained.

"The cattle have all dried up, most of the calves have died and until the cows have new calves, there's not going to be any milk to drink. Not only is there not a harvest of crops, but there's no milk. That's a big problem."

Oliver may request additional hunger relief funds soon. But cash may not be enough. "I'm having a real problem finding food to buy and give out. That's a good indication of the seriousness of the food shortage here."

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Often Oliver is forced to buy cornmeal, which is more expensive than dried corn. "We're not able to give as much out as a result of that, but there's really no other alternative."

However, the hunger relief project's shortcomings fade compared to the results. "Despite the frustrations, it's wonderful to see people being saved, and when you see doors opening you have to say it's well worth it."

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Brasington: baseball's
loss, missions' gain

By Mary E. Speidel

Baptist Press
1/20/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Bryan "Breezy" Brasington slammed his baseball cleats into the closet. "OK, Lord. You win," he said.

It's been more than 40 years since Brasington gave up professional baseball to follow God's call into Christian ministry. He has no regrets.

"I've been on the right team," said Brasington, who recently retired as Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board area director for Spanish South America. That area, where about 600 missionaries work, includes Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

His sports background has served him well in missions. "In sports you have to make decisions quickly -- and accurately -- if you're going to win. Every day an area director has to make decisions that affect the lives of people," said Brasington, nicknamed "Breezy" for his speed as an athlete.

From Heath Springs, S.C., Brasington and his wife, the former Vickey Young of Gainesville, Fla., served 36 years in missions. Before their missionary days, he played baseball for the De Land Red Hats in the Florida State League for two years.

At the time, Brasington already had made a commitment to full-time ministry. But playing pro ball meant he could afford to get married while finishing his last year at Stetson University in De Land, where he later was named to the school's sports hall of fame. The couple married in 1948, the year he made league rookie of the year as a Red Hats' centerfielder.

After his graduation, the league offered to pay Brasington's way to seminary if he would play ball that summer. "But I knew if I played for the rest of that summer. I probably would have stayed in baseball," he said. And even during his first year at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., "baseball was still in my blood."

After the first year at Southern, Brasington accepted an offer to play summer baseball in South Carolina. Before he went, he told God if a church called him as pastor, he would know he was to leave baseball. When a seminary friend unexpectedly recommended him for a pastorate, the couple visited the church just to see what it was like. The congregation called him as pastor on the spot. That was the night he flung his cleats into the closet.

A few years later Mrs. Brasington faced her own struggle with God. She had been interested in missions since childhood but "I wasn't saintly," she said. "I wasn't brave. I wasn't patient. I figured God didn't have any use for a person who had none of those characteristics."

Later, when the couple sensed a call to missions, she thought God would give her those qualities. Instead, "God made me want to be a missionary more than anything else in the world. He didn't change my personality," said Mrs. Brasington, who has been active in teaching, writing and music ministries.

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The Brasingtons were appointed missionaries to Peru in 1955. They worked in student ministry, theological education and evangelism, living in Lima and Trujillo. Later they lived in Cali, Colombia, after Brasington moved into administration. In 1975 they resigned as missionaries when he became area director for Western South America, a position then based at the board's headquarters in Richmond, Va. A 1987 board reorganization added all of Spanish South America to his portfolio. That change took them to Quito, Ecuador.

During retirement they will live in Richmond. Brasington is working part-time with the board's development office.

The Brasingtons leave behind significant contributions to Baptist work in South America, said Betty Law, vice president for the Americas. They were "part of the foundation" for Southern Baptist work in Peru, she said.

Law said Brasington also has been a strong supporter of "one work," a missions strategy which means missionaries and local Baptists integrate their efforts so all Baptist work in a country is done together.

And he has urged missionaries to start innovative ministries such as sports evangelism and outreach to the deaf. For example, he encouraged one missionary to start a baseball ministry in Venezuela, where baseball is the most popular sport.

As an administrator, Brasington puts relationships first, Law noted. "People are our No. 1 priority," was the first thing Brasington said about the work when Law was considering joining the staff in 1981.

"He can be just as comfortable talking with the president of a country as he is with a janitor in a hotel where he's staying," added Tom Vassar, associate area director for Spanish South America. "And I think the person he's talking to will be just as comfortable as he is."

Lindy Gonzales, the Brasingtons' adult daughter, recalled when her father spoke at her school during a furlough in Gainesville. Before he arrived, she heard classmates snickering as they looked out the window. Mortified, she saw her father riding down the sidewalk on her bicycle, loaded with a stuffed llama and other Peruvian souvenirs. Her mother had needed the car that day.

But her embarrassment disappeared when classmates later said how much they liked her father. The same reaction regularly occurred in South America. "Wherever he has gone, people have been touched," said Gonzales, of Fort Myers, Fla.

Baptists from many countries paid tribute to the Brasingtons upon his retirement. Venezuelans established a scholarship in their honor at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Los Teques. They also named a building for the couple at their national Baptist camp. Brasington played a key role in helping Venezuelan Baptists obtain that property.

Peru's second vice president, Carlos Garcia, a Baptist minister, sent the Brasingtons a "medal of merit" for their retirement. The couple has known Garcia since his youth; they were present when he made public a decision to attend seminary.

As Brasington reflects on his vocational choice, he admits some baseball is still in his blood. But he knows he took the right path.

"After a tremendous battle between baseball and God, I'm glad I chose God."

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

Tony Campolo is a crusader
for 'biblical Christianity'

By Ferrell Foster

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)--Tony Campolo is a crusader for "biblical Christianity." He asserts, however, Americans tend to embrace a "cultural Christianity."

Campolo gave his opinions about biblical faith, Southern Baptists, pastors and an assortment of related topics during an interview while in Springfield, Ill., to speak to Southern Baptist teenagers.

He talked fast and his words were blunt. But at the center of all he said was his insistence on the Bible providing the basis of true Christian faith.

"If you read the inerrant Bible you will become socially radical," the popular author said.

And when Campolo talks about society, he sees economic issues as a key. "The '60s had it all wrong," he said. "America is not controlled by the political processes. It is controlled by economic forces."

Many are bemoaning the current economic situation in the United States but, Campolo said, "It seems to me in the '90s America is coming to her senses a little bit" and buying more reasonably. In the '80s, he said, America "got caught up in a spending spree in which we bought more and more and more stuff we don't need."

But the church has trouble dealing with economic injustice. "We are not about to disturb this massive affluent middle class lifestyle we've gotten used to."

Cultural Christianity "wraps up Jesus Christ in an American flag," Campolo said. And churches "can easily lose their prophetic edge. ... They lose their capacity to prophesy against their own nation, because if the nation is seen as somehow a nation ordained of God ... then any questioning of the nation is a questioning of God."

"This nation has an incredible capacity to swallow people up in a value system which is completely contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures," Campolo said.

"The United States of America is not the kingdom of God," he said. "When someone says, 'Are you ready to give your life for your country?,' I have to say, 'Well, how can I?' I've given it to Jesus Christ."

In making economic decisions, Christians should ask themselves about the food they eat, the cars they drive and the vacations they take. "Deep down inside we all know what a Christian looks like," Campolo said. "And he doesn't drive a big black car and have a house in Palm Beach."

The New Testament does not teach tithing, it teaches total surrender, he said. The church teaches a theology of tithing but it doesn't "tell people what they should do with the other 90 percent. ... So people can go out and buy a BMW, can buy fashion model clothes. They can use resources of God in very selfish, egotistical ways prescribed by culture."

As for enjoying life, "Christians are people who have fun," he said. "They just don't have fun the same way as the people of society... . I'm asking you to discover fun in the context of serving the poor."

Campolo is a sociology professor at Eastern College in St. David's, Penn., and has made "a lot of money" writing books and speaking around the world. When asked about his own lifestyle, he responded, "It's not wrong to make a lot of money. It's wrong to keep money. It's wrong to pocket the money and buy houses and cars and clothes. ... It's wrong to buy more than you need in a world where people don't have ... their basic needs."

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Because of that philosophy, Campolo established a missions organization that stresses urban ministry to economically deprived people. But Campolo said he is not completely a biblical Christian himself. "There's nothing wrong in saying I'm not there yet, ... but I'm moving in that direction."

Campolo is not a Southern Baptist. He is a member of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in west Philadelphia, a predominantly black church aligned with National and American Baptists.

As an "outsider" looking at the Southern Baptist Convention, Campolo said, "The basic problem is that your people have gotten too rich. ... You have bought into the middle class culture and you have forgotten that sector of society that made the Southern Baptist Convention a powerful Bible group." He said Southern Baptists were once an "underclass denomination."

The key to leading churches to embrace biblical Christianity is the pastor, Campolo said. "I don't think anybody really understands how important pastors really are." What is needed are "pastors who think more radically, who act more directly," he said. When a pastor disturbs people's lifestyle, the church will lose some members. But Campolo said every great revival begins with a church losing some members.

"There is almost a Gideon thing," he said, referring to the Old Testament story of God having Gideon reduce the size of his army. "Before revival can take place you've got to get rid of all of these people who don't mean business with the kingdom. Then, when you're stripped down to the army, to the warriors, you're ready to move."

Pastors come out of seminary with a zeal to proclaim the gospel, Campolo said, but they are confronted with a cultural lifestyle. The pastor then "figures out how he can preach the gospel without disturbing that lifestyle. My argument is that what he really needs to do is disturb that lifestyle and call people to radical discipleship."

In most churches, "the dear saints ... who really want to do business with God" come each Sunday and "listen to those watered-down versions of the gospel catering to a yuppie, middle class, affluent America." Campolo said those committed Christians are waiting for someone to come along and say, "Let's do something wild for the kingdom."

When Campolo talks about radical discipleship, he said, "There's always some young minister who comes up and says, 'Well, it's easy for you to say this here. You'll never get away with this in the local church.' Quite the opposite. When I go into the local church and lay this radical stuff on them, I'm greeted with a sigh of relief, like, 'Yeah, this is what we need. This is what we want. This is what we're hungry for.'

"In fact, the ministers are holding back the congregations, not the congregations holding back the ministers." Campolo said there is "too much careerism in the ministry." He said some ministers "come to churches and these are only stopping places on their way to bigger and better things."

"I think we've got to go back and tell our seminaries to start teaching the Bible," he said. Young ministers need to be taught that faithfulness, not success, is "the measure of one's commitment." And they need to see "the absolute glory that exists in local congregations."

As for denominations, Campolo said, "I don't want to even mess around with the denominational machinery... . The secret to the renewal of the church is the local pastor."

"The primary task of the denomination is to form a group of people who hold individual pastors accountable," he said. At denominational meetings, "All we do is spend our time ... blowing wind about our achievements even when there are none."

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"What we really need is a denominational gathering in which denominational leaders do not serve as bureaucrats," but "as theologians." They should "stand there and say, 'Guys, here's what the radical gospel is saying. Is this what you're really preaching?'" What has been your ministry emphasis this last year?"

"Denominations should be groups that nurture pastors ... into faithfulness," he said.

As for denominational finances, Campolo said, "Southern Baptists think they need money for everything... . We have a checkbook mentality for missions... . The real trick of the trade is how do we increase our missionary efforts on half the money we are spending now."

He suggested it is much cheaper to send single young adults to mission fields than families. He cited Mormons, who send young missionaries around the world at no expense. "You've got a lot of young people coming out of college who can't find jobs. ... These people are ready and willing to spend full time in denominational missions." The professor added parents are "one of the biggest instruments that Satan has" for "preventing kids from going to the mission field."

Campolo also had a word for Baptists who are "awed" by mass meetings. He said people are won to Christ in the same way an insurance agent sells insurance -- one on one. "If you look at people eyeball to eyeball, they'll say, 'yes.'"

"The local church is the ultimate instrument God has chosen" to reach people and disciple them, he said. Southern Baptists, however, have a tendency to blame the denominational headquarters when things go bad, Campolo said.

He noted a relationship between that idea and the controversy within the Southern Baptist Convention.

"When I see the conflict, what I see is a group of Christians panicking" because of slowed growth in churches, he said. Therefore many fear the SBC will go the way of other denominations that have declined and the "defense against that becomes an attempt to make the denomination theologically pure."

Campolo doesn't think that will work. "You can be theologically orthodox and say, 'I believe in the inerrant Bible,' but if you're not calling people to be rebellious against their culture," then you don't have biblical Christianity.

"The Bible does mean what it says and says what it means," Campolo said. "The basic problem with Southern Baptists (is) you're having this big argument over inerrancy. I don't know what the issue is. After you prove the Bible is inerrant you're not going to do what it tells you anyway."

Those words came from a man who called himself an inerrantist and who said "the Bible is absolutely an inerrant Bible."

Campolo did say, however, "Southern Baptists are working hard to make sure that they don't get caught up in the malaise that has affected all the mainline denominations." And, "that's a rather happy thing to say."