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February 24, 1992

92-33

**Baptists reaching Hispanics better  
than Catholics, professor says**

By David Winfrey

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Evangelical churches, with smaller congregations and intimate Bible study groups, are better poised to reach Hispanic Americans than the Roman Catholic Church, a Baptist seminary professor said.

"We are now witnessing the greatest response on the part of Hispanic Americans to evangelical Christianity in the history of this nation," said Daniel Sanchez, professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"How are we going to respond to the challenge?" asked Sanchez, one of the speakers at a Home Mission Board-sponsored leadership conference.

Sanchez quoted news articles on Catholics who acknowledged Hispanic Americans are leaving their traditional source of religion for evangelical churches.

Sanchez said reasons cited by Catholics include:

- Poor outreach efforts by Catholic churches.
- Willingness of Protestant churches to include Hispanic culture in their style of worship.
- An impersonal feeling in the Roman Catholic Church compared to smaller, more intimate evangelical congregations.
- A lack of Hispanic priests among Catholics.

"They (Catholics) say we have three times more Hispanics in our seminaries than they do," Sanchez said.

Sanchez added that the goal is to teach all people about Christ, not lure Hispanics away from one group to another.

But while "Catholics are saying we are being successful, we are saying we could be doing a lot more," Sanchez said.

He said small Bible study groups appeal to Hispanics and Southern Baptists should develop a nationwide strategy using such groups to reach more Hispanic Americans.

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**Black church growth to match  
white by 2000, director predicts**

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press  
2/24/92

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Black Southern Baptist churches will grow at a pace of one a day by the year 2000, matching white church growth, a Southern Baptist leader predicted.

"Blacks will be at the forefront of Southern Baptist (church growth) by the turn of the century," said Willie McPherson, who became director of black church extension for the Home Mission Board in January.

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The Southern Baptist Convention currently has 1,300 black churches. A new black SBC church or mission is established about every four and a half days, McPherson said during a HMB leadership conference.

McPherson said he wants strong black SBC churches to get involved in starting churches and supporting weaker congregations. "We should be doing a lot more church planting," he said.

McPherson added he received leads on 18 perspective new black congregations during the conference.

Personnel and money remain barriers to church growth, he said, but racial insensitivity is another obstacle, said a black Baptist pastor from Baltimore.

Leroy Fitts, pastor of First Baptist Church in Baltimore, said one example is literature designed for black congregations that includes art and photos of white majorities.

"I think it's done and not thought of," Fitts said. "I don't think white people think of the impact on black people."

More than 350 black, ethnic and anglo Baptist leaders from local, state and national organizations attended the leadership conference sponsored by the Home Mission Board.

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HMB leader advises churches  
to prepare for ethnic diversity

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press  
2/24/92

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Churches must prepare for the challenges of an increasingly ethnically diverse nation if they hope to spread the gospel to all Americans, a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board official said.

"We need to boldly prepare ourselves and our organizations for the certain transformation that's going to come," said Charles Chaney, HMB vice-president for extension.

Such preparation includes addressing cultural biases and imperialistic attitudes evident when Anglo churches treat other ethnic groups as though they should be more like Anglos, he said.

Chaney was speaking at the annual national leadership conference of the Home Mission Board's extension section.

This year's conference focused on America's growing ethnic diversity and Southern Baptists' evangelism efforts at reaching more 22 million Hispanic Americans.

Chaney told missionaries, church planters and state missions directors that Anglo churches often hurt their efforts to evangelize other ethnic groups by imposing Anglo styles of worship.

"In the name of being unified and doing everything together, we impose our own culture," he said.

Such bias also is found sometimes in churches in transitional areas that shut their doors and sell their buildings to the highest bidder "rather than share them with a congregation of another race."

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Chaney said churches should prepare for change and expect God to use them for mighty deeds. "We need to consciously condition ourselves to get ready for something better than we presently have," he said. "We need to confidently attempt something big enough to honor God, challenge men and meet human needs."

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NEA's Frohnmayer resigns;  
critics credit Buchanan

By Tom Strobe

Baptist Press  
2/24/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--Evangelical leaders say the timing of John Frohnmayer's announcement of his resignation as chairman of the controversial National Endowment for the Arts is significant.

Frohnmayer announced his resignation Feb. 21, three days after President George Bush's unimpressive victory over Pat Buchanan in the Republican primary in New Hampshire. The day prior to the announcement, Buchanan cited the NEA in lashing out at the president for his unfaithfulness to conservative Republicans.

Frohnmayer served nearly two and a half years as chairman. His years were marked by criticism from some members of Congress as well as evangelical and conservative groups for funding what they considered sexually explicit and sacrilegious "art." Many organizations, including the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, repeatedly called for his dismissal as part of a reformation of the NEA.

"I believe that the Christian Life Commission and other evangelical groups softened Mr. Frohnmayer up and Pat Buchanan delivered the knockout punch in New Hampshire," said Richard D. Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's moral issues and religious liberty agency.

"I think he was fired for the same reasons he was hired -- that is political reasons," said Don Wildmon, president of the American Family Association. "He was a stone around the president's neck that the president couldn't have during an election year.

"I think the decision probably had been made prior to primary that Frohnmayer had to go. He would have probably stayed on a little bit longer had the primary not turned out like it did," Wildmon said.

While critics observed the timing appeared to be forced upon Frohnmayer by the White House, he said in a written statement the resignation was something he had planned for several months. He had told the president in October he wanted to return to private life, Frohnmayer said. The president left the timing to him, Frohnmayer said. The resignation will be effective May 1.

In his statement, Frohnmayer reiterated his support for government funding of the arts "free of content restrictions." In private life, he expects to work "for quality art, for less hate and for a generosity of spirit that allows us to live with our differences in real community," he said in the statement.

"The wonder, frankly, is that John Frohnmayer held on as long as he did," said Melanne Verveer, executive vice president of People for the American Way. "He has been the target of an unrelenting campaign of distortion and demagoguery by Pat Buchanan and his allies on the religious right. Simply put, he was hounded from office."

Frohnmayer's departure will be fruitless unless an appropriate replacement is named by the president, Land said.

"This is a step in the right direction," Land said. "In and of itself, it doesn't mean much, however, unless Frohnmayer is replaced by someone who will go in there and shake the place up.

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"We need someone with academic credibility who understands the outrage of the American people at the use of tax funds by a minuscule, artistic, effete elite to sponsor obscene, perverted and sacrilegious 'art,'" Land said. "William Bennett, former head of the Department of Education, and John Silber, president of Boston University, are excellent examples of the type of person we need."

People for the American Way's Verveer disagreed.

"In choosing a successor," she said, "President Bush should look for a candidate with an unwavering commitment to artistic excellence and freedom of expression and the strength of character to withstand the political posturing that has come, sadly, to be part of the territory."

"I personally think they will probably wait until after the election before they make that appointment," Wildmon said. "After the election, obviously they're going to have more freedom to do whatever they're wanting to do."

Controversy over NEA grants existed before Frohnmayer's appointment by President Bush in October 1989. Robert Mapplethorpe's homoerotic photographs and Andres Serrano's photograph of a crucifix submerged in urine, both included in grants approved before Frohnmayer, attracted widespread public attention at about the time he became chairman.

The controversial grants continued, however, during Frohnmayer's tenure and included:

- Sexually explicit, often homosexual-oriented, and sacrilegious presentations by performance artists such as Annie Sprinkle, Holly Hughes, Karen Finley, John Fleck and Tim Miller.

- "Poison," a movie with "unabashed homoeroticism" as its writer/director Todd Haynes described it.

- Homosexual film festivals in six cities.

- "Women for Choice," a 30-second pro-abortion ad promoting the National Abortion Rights Action League.

- "Tongues Untied," a movie about black homosexuals and filled with obscenities. It was presented on the Public Broadcasting System but many PBS stations refused to broadcast it.

- A poem from Queer City, a NEA-funded book, depicting Jesus as a homosexual child molester.

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Video use increases,  
librarians observe

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
2/24/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists are asking church media librarians for video tapes, cassette tapes and compact discs in increasing numbers, a random sampling of churches indicates.

At the same time, interest in phonograph records, filmstrips and some print materials appears to be decreasing.

Kay Jarrett, media librarian at Chester (Va.) Baptist Church, said she gets requests "more for videos and audiovisuals."

"People are just not taking time to sit down and read," she said, though she and her staff continue to use book clubs to promote reading.

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Carolyn Walker, media librarian at Fellowship Baptist Church in Chickamauga, Ga., agrees videotapes are the most popular resources except among "die-hard readers."

While commentaries and other Bible study-related materials are as popular as ever with teachers, leisure reading has taken a back seat to leisure viewing.

Jarrett said preschoolers and children continue to be interested in books about firemen, policemen, the seasons and animals.

Youth in her church "do not read that much and we have difficulty finding books for them." Of those youth who do read, Jarrett finds them interested in "fiction about youth their age and in youth-related interests -- beauty and inner beauty for girls and sports biographies and detective stories for boys."

Men are not readers "like women are," Jarrett said, "though we do have good books for men."

"Reading is important," Jarrett said. "We need to encourage it. The videos and audiocassettes are fine but I don't think there is anything like sitting down and reading a book. You just get more out of reading a book."

Walker, another believer in reading, also puts aside her bias to meet the needs of her users.

"I hate to see reading eliminated by 'watching' but I have a tendency to provide what our users want. Collecting dust is no good."

Like Jarrett and Walker, Paula Bailey of First Baptist Church in Nederland, Texas, said a large percentage of her customers are preparing lessons to teach.

"Videos are the thing that's coming," she observed. "I don't like it. We librarians like to see people read."

Records and filmstrips no longer are being used, she agreed.

Books on family life, rearing children, marriage and finances seem to be popular in any geographic area of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Ann Scharsenberg, media librarian at Central Baptist Church in North Little Rock, Ark., said tracts and magazines as well as books on family topics are popular.

While Scharsenberg senses her users "would rather check out a video than a book any day," she continues to check out more books than videos to adults, while youth tend to favor videos first.

In Liberal, Kansas, Faye Hudnall said videotapes are so popular at First Southern Baptist Church, "our circulation has almost doubled for both adults and children."

Waiting lists of 15 to 20 names are not unusual, she continued, particularly for children. And while children continue to be readers until ages 11 or 12, teen-agers are not Hudnall's most faithful customers.

Cassette tape requests are strong while records are used only by preschool and occasional children's Sunday school classes.

"In the past decade many church libraries have become full-fledged media libraries," observed Mancil Ezell, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church media library department. "Providing media resources that meet the needs of 1990s lifestyles is consistent with the dramatic changes we've seen in media and services across the convention."

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

Kentucky church's revival  
wears out its baptistry

By Mark Wingfield

RADCLIFF, Ky. (BP)--Mill Creek Baptist Church in Radcliff, Ky., wore out its baptistry last year.

"We had water in our baptistry all the time," said James Shaw, pastor of the church which recorded the largest number of baptisms in the Kentucky Baptist Convention last year. "We had water in it so much, it wore out."

Mill Creek baptized 139 people last year -- a dramatic increase from the 26 baptisms recorded the year before.

The reason, Shaw said, is not a program or plan but "a sovereign moving of the Spirit of God brought about by prayer and the preaching and application of God's Word." There has been no special emphasis on evangelism alone, Shaw said, just an emphasis on right relationships with God. What resulted was not an evangelism program but "God's program," he added.

Evangelism became the by-product of revival, Shaw said. "When the people of the church get right with the Lord, God draws people to that church.

"The real revival we've had in the last two years was the result of the church realizing that unless they had a fresh breath from the Lord, they were in real dire straits."

This turnaround should be encouragement for other churches of all sizes and locations, Shaw explained. "We are a mile off the main highway. It says to me God will bring a Holy Ghost revival to any church, anywhere if they are ready to receive it."

When Shaw was considering whether he should accept the call to serve the Mill Creek church, looking at the church statistics was not encouraging, he recalled. Yet he said he claimed the promise of Psalm 37:5 -- that God will bless those who commit their way to him.

During the time Shaw was dealing with the pastor search committee in 1990, the Mill Creek congregation was participating in Southern Baptists' nationwide "Here's Hope" revivals. The immediate results of that revival appeared disappointing but the seeds sown quickly began to bear fruit.

Shaw came as the church's pastor soon after the revival meeting and 13 people made professions of faith on his first Sunday.

However, his arrival was not the cause of the revival that already had started, he said. Rather, it is the culmination of a series of events.

"Credit ought to be given to the previous pastor, Jim Dixon," he said. "So many times it is easy for us when we're in a harvest ministry to get all the glory. I have to believe some of the things he planted as spiritual seeds, I was able to come in and reap."

On top of that, the members of the congregation made themselves ready for spiritual renewal, he explained, and a competent staff assisted along the way.

The greatest explanation for what people are calling the Mill Creek revival is that "people seriously sought the Lord," Shaw said. "Above all other things, the church was of one accord. I believe that is the key."

As the revival grew, it was not uncommon to hold baptismal services three times a week, Shaw said.

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Area residents heard about what was going on and called on the church for spiritual guidance. During the height of preparation for the Persian Gulf War, soldiers from nearby Fort Knox often called Shaw to say, "I'm going to Saudi in the morning and I'm not saved. Could I come to your church and become a Christian?"

At these times, Shaw would call together members of the church for an impromptu worship and baptismal service.

And in Sunday morning worship, it became common to have 30- to 45-minute altar calls, he added. "People kept coming. The Lord impressed me not to stop with one or two verses, and then I noticed that most of the people came after the third verse. The Lord needs that time to work with them."

There has been no shortage of people in the congregation ready to respond to the gospel message, he said. "We claimed the second chapter of Acts that says when the church is the church, the Lord brings those who should be saved. We let the Lord lead our church and be in control of our church."

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Eight-member church tops  
Kentucky baptism ratio

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press  
2/24/92

SHARPSBURG, Ky. (BP)--With only eight members, Sharpsburg Baptist Church recorded the highest per capita baptism ratio in the Kentucky Baptist Convention last year. Eighty-year-old Pastor Charles Thompson said the church could have done even better if they had indoor plumbing.

The Sharpsburg church baptized four people last year -- not a large amount by most standards but amazing for a 150-year-old church with more members in the cemetery than in the pews on Sunday mornings.

When Thompson and his wife came to the pastorate about a year ago, they began services with one other person -- the church organist. The two other members of the congregation were working out of state for several months.

Since that time, the church has picked up several members and experienced a successful summer ministry, including a Vacation Bible School that drew about 75 children. "Right now, we're trying to pick up from the winter slump," Thompson said. "It's very hard trying to revive an old church."

However, Thompson sees only possibilities. He and his wife recently moved to Bethel, a community only four miles away from the church. Living nearby already has increased visibility and the potential for ministry, he said.

The church pays him only a small amount weekly, which is supplemented by modest retirement benefits.

"I have every reason to believe this move we made to live here was the right thing," he said. "God has called me to this place or I wouldn't have come. I know this is a viable work."

Although larger churches might think he's too old for a pastorate, Thompson said he isn't through working for God. "I'm 80 years old and I am not burned out, brother. I'm not too old for God."

Sharpsburg is a rural community of 350 people with no other Baptist church, Thompson said. There is only one other Baptist church in Bath County.

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So in addition to revitalizing the 150-year-old church, Thompson has plans to start a new ministry in Bethel. He is convinced starting new a new unit will add to the growth of the existing church.

In the meantime, Thompson said he hopes his fellow Baptists would see the potential he sees in the small community. He is seeking volunteers to install indoor plumbing in the church building and upgrade the electrical system which currently draws only 15 amps.

Regardless, Thompson said he is there to stay: "I'm here as a pastor to serve this community. They need something that's going to have some depth to it, some continuity."

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Health official urges churches  
to develop programs for teens

By David E. Reid

Baptist Press  
2/24/92

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--To help prevent teen-age pregnancies, Baptist churches should offer teens more after-school programs, an Alabama public health official has suggested.

Chris Haag, director of adolescent health for the Alabama Department of Public Health and a Southern Baptist layman, said the most common time for conception is 3-6 p.m., according to data gathered by the agency. Those hours are when teen-agers are at home but parents haven't returned from work, he said.

"Our churches ought to offer something for these kids to do," Haag told members of the Alabama Baptist State Convention's Christian Life Commission at their Feb. 11 meeting in Montgomery.

Haag, a member of Eastern Hills Baptist Church in Montgomery, directs "Respect Yourself," a state-sponsored teen sexuality program which encourages abstinence. During the past four years, some 30,000 students have participated in the one-hour-a-day, five-day-a-week program.

Alone, such programs as Respect Yourself cannot significantly reduce teen pregnancies, Haag said.

"More needs to be done. When they sit in front of the TV all day and they're being told, 'Yes, yes, yes,' then five hours of 'No' isn't enough," Haag said in urging churches also to become involved in efforts to reduce teen pregnancy.

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Reid is the new associate for public relations with the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

Words make the music  
for George Beverly Shea

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press  
2/24/92

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Although beloved by Christians worldwide as a singer, George Beverly Shea says attention to words has been his theme.

Shea, 83, presented two concerts at Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., Feb. 15-16. He was accompanied by Don Mustad, senior professor of church music at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

Although these concerts weren't billed as an anniversary event, they marked 50 years of making music together for the two men. They first met in 1942 at a Chicago radio station owned by Moody Bible Institute and went on to work with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

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Shea has stayed with the Graham organization since 1947. Hustad left the crusade team in 1967 to teach at Southern Seminary.

Shea, perhaps best known for his rendition of "How Great Thou Art," said he realizes the world of sacred music has changed dramatically during his lifetime. "I'd be foolish to try to change with it," he said.

However, Shea said he appreciates many modern aspects of music ministry. When asked for advice from contemporary singers, "I say to them, make sure they've got good words and let them hear it," he said.

Hustad, who has accompanied Shea off and on for the past 50 years, said most of the songs Shea sings were popular 30 to 50 years ago. "These are old, tired songs, but they come alive when he sings them."

The songs have impact, Hustad said, because Shea "is so word conscious. The word is the most important thing to him."

Shea admits some singers sacrifice words for a beautiful tone, but he uses vocal technique as a tool to frame the words. "We must get the message across," he explained. Motive also is important for aspiring Christian singers, Shea counseled, predicting those who get into the business only for fame soon will fall away.

"Go ye into all the world and sing the gospel is not to sell records," he said.

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Southern Baptists started  
1,027 new missions in 1991

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press  
2/24/92

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptists started 1,027 church-type missions last year, according to a report presented to a national conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Although the number of church-type missions started during 1991 was a slight increase over the number the previous year, it fell far short of the HMB goal of 1,500 new missions per year. In 1990 Southern Baptists started 1,201 church-type missions.

In 1991 Texas led the nation with 191 new congregations. Florida ranked second with 89 new missions and California was a close third with 87.

Other leading states in the number of new congregations included North Carolina, 71; Georgia, 69; Virginia, 40; Tennessee, 37; Alabama, 29; Mississippi, 28; Kentucky, 26; and Oklahoma, 25.

The report was based on statistics compiled from the annual "Uniform Church Letter" filled out by Southern Baptist churches and tabulated by the research services department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

David Bunch, HMB assistant vice president for church extension, said the statistics from the Uniform Church Letter differ from statistics compiled by state convention offices. But he noted that the variance between the two reports was not as wide this year as in years past.

Reports from state missions offices indicated there were 946 missions started last year.

According to the state missions offices, Texas reported 133 new missions; Florida, 119; and California, 112.

Bunch said the Home Mission Board is working with the research services department at the Sunday School Board to try to resolve the differences in the two reports.

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**HMB presents eight awards  
for church starting work**

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Eight people received awards for outstanding accomplishments in language missions and church starting during a leadership conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Dolores Thomas, a missionary in Maine for 30 years, received the Jack Redford Award for outstanding leadership in starting new churches.

Thomas, who took over her husband's work as a church starter following his death in 1976, has started nine churches in Maine. Before her husband's death, she helped start six other Southern Baptist churches in Maine.

Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis praised Thomas' work, saying God has given her an unusual gift and ability to plant a church and help it grow to be able to call a full-time pastor. The award is named for the late Jack Redford, former HMB director of church extension.

Seven other awards for outstanding achievement in language missions were presented during the conference by Oscar Romo, director of the HMB language church extension.

Charles Lee Williamson, director of missions for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, received the "Missions Mosaic" award for outstanding contributions to language missions work. It is the top award presented by the Home Mission Board for language missions work.

Minor Davidson, who retires in June as state missions director for the Baptist Convention of Maryland-Delaware, received the missions heritage award for putting the gospel message into the context of the people.

Five state Baptist convention leaders involved in language missions work were presented "Kaleidoscopic" awards.

Receiving the awards were Jerry St. John of South Carolina for starting language churches; Harold Hitt of the Northwest Baptist Convention for refugee resettlement; Eugene Bragg of Michigan for deaf work; Robert Nyberg of Colorado for leading language churches to become self-supporting; and James D. Black of Alaska for ethnic leadership development.

More than 350 state, local and national leaders involved in starting churches attended the leadership conference.