

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

(BP)

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

March 17, 1993

93-48

ATLANTA -- News advisory regarding HMB action on Freemasonry.
WASHINGTON -- BWA commission to propose declaration against racism.
TEXAS -- Omar Pachecano elected president of Hispanic Baptist Seminary.
KENTUCKY -- SBC examined as case study for denominational future.
KENTUCKY -- America's post-denominational age still evolving, speakers observe.
ATLANTA -- Bearden: 'deaf Billy Graham' with 4 decades of influence; photo.
VIRGINIA -- FMB leaders, missionaries address myths about appointment of singles; photos.
SOUTH CAROLINA -- Patsy Cline role gives Baptist woman new witness.
NEW ORLEANS -- Lewis: Missions is not just something to study about; photo.

***** Advisory from Baptist Press *****

ATLANTA (BP)--Directors of the Home Mission Board approved a report on Freemasonry March 17 which recommends "consistent with our denomination's deep conviction regarding the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church, membership in the Masonic Order be a matter of personal conscience."

Full stories on the Home Mission Board's directors meeting will appear in Baptist Press March 18.

The HMB Freemasonry report acknowledges that "many tenants and teachings of Freemasonry are not compatible with Christianity and Southern Baptist doctrine, while others are compatible." The motion to approve the report was passed with only one vote in opposition.

Larry Lewis, HMB president, announced during the board session that Gary Leazer, director of the interfaith witness department, has requested to be relieved of managerial responsibilities for that department. He has been reassigned to a field staff position in the department.

The board also approved a motion to affirm the resolution of "Concern and Commitment" on the Woman's Missionary Union as approved by the SBC Executive Committee last month in Nashville.

Brad Allen, pastor from Duncan, Okla., was elected chairman of the board.

(The Atlanta Bureau is express mailing copies of the Study of Freemasonry and the Report on Freemasonry to state Baptist papers today and tomorrow.)

**BWA commission to propose
declaration against racism**

By Wendy Ryan

**Baptist Press
3/17/93**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist World Alliance's Special Commission on Baptists Against Racism (BAR) will present a major emphasis during the BWA general council meeting Aug. 3-5 in Harare, Zimbabwe.

The BAR emphasis will include a theological discussions on racism, which commission leaders hope will culminate with a declaration against racism.

--more--

"The Special Commission on Baptists Against Racism is one of the most important new missions of the BWA," says Knud Wumpelmann, BWA president.

Members of the BAR core committee, whose honorary chairman is former President Jimmy Carter, met in Washington in early March to fine tune the commission's purpose statement and a proposed declaration, which was not released.

"If any denomination should speak out against racism it's Baptists," said Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary. "Baptists are one of the most representative denominations in the world."

After the general council meeting, Lotz said the BWA will prepare materials targeting racism for its member bodies and encourage them to prepare their own materials to take action.

While some changes were made in the BAR purpose statement, the basic message remained the same.

"Racism is sin and idolatry for it elevates race to the highest value which should be reserved only for God," the statement says. It is "a rejection of the essential dignity of all people, and in opposition to the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ."

The statement says the BWA "opposes all forms of racism, overt or covert," and "will speak out against and actively oppose any forms of racism and any attitudes that suggest worth or merit in one group of persons, ethnic or otherwise, over against another."

The commission, which is expected to continue after its original concluding date of July 1993, is mandated to "address the causes of racism, the biblical and theological issues raised by racism and ways in which Baptists can help overcome the evils of racism."

--30--

Omar Pachecano elected president
of Hispanic Baptist Seminary

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press
3/17/93

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Omar H. Pachecano of El Paso, Texas, has been elected president of Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary by the Baptist General Convention of Texas' State Missions Commission.

He will become president-elect April 1, succeeding Joshua Grijalva who retires May 31.

Pachecano, director of missions for El Paso Baptist Association since 1988, was nominated by a presidential search committee and approved in a mail ballot announced March 11.

Pachecano has long been associated with Hispanic Seminary, having served on the school's board of trustees and as chairman of that board.

A graduate of Dallas Baptist University, Pachecano has been selected to receive the school's distinguished alumnus award in November.

Before coming to the El Paso Association as associate director of missions in 1979, Pachecano was pastor of Pruitt Avenue Baptist Church in San Antonio and church starter for South San Antonio Mexican Baptist Church.

Previously, he was director of ethnic ministries for First Baptist Church in Plano, Texas; administrator and minister of education at South San Antonio Baptist Church; proprietor of N. Pachecano Concrete Contractor, Pacco Properties and American Maid Service, all of San Antonio; and personnel manager of N. Pachecano and Sons, Inc., San Antonio.

In denominational service he was twice president of the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas, in 1972 and 1979; vice chairman of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board trustees; a member of the BGCT executive board; and vice moderator of the San Antonio Baptist Association. Currently, he is a trustee of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

He is married to the former Tony Huriega. They have four children.

--more--

Pachecano, who served on the Hispanic Task Force which developed Vision 2000 for reaching ethnics in Texas, said he is committed to Texas Baptists and to the Vision 2000 plan for reaching Hispanics for Christ.

"I'm especially concerned about reaching that lower economic tier where most Hispanics reside in our metro areas and which is where Southern Baptists have been through the ages," Pachecano said.

"I owe everything I am to God and Texas Baptists. If anyone had told me when I was pouring concrete for the first building of Hispanic Baptist Seminary that I would one day be its president, I never would have believed them."

James Semple, Texas Baptists' missions commission director and search committee chairman, noted Pachecano comes from a pioneer Southern Baptist family. First Mexican Baptist Church of Dallas was born in the living room of Pachecano's grandmother.

"Omar is both bilingual and bicultural and is a consensus leader who knows how to bring people together," Semple said. "He has earned the respect of both Anglo and Hispanic Baptists in Texas."

BGCT Executive Director William M. Pinson Jr., said Pachecano "brings an unusually wide experience and insight to the task of providing practical training geared toward the local church as he helps train leaders to more effectively reach 4 million Hispanics for Christ.

"The Hispanic Task Force had leadership development as one of the top priorities, and the Hispanic Seminary is a key to that leadership development," Pinson said.

Rudy Sanchez, president of the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas, said, "God has led us to one of our most visible and practical Texas Baptist leaders who brings to the task a great heritage and a lifetime of Christian service."

--30--

SBC examined as case study
for denominational future

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
3/17/93

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Schism within the Southern Baptist Convention is similar to transitions in most American religious denominations, speakers said at a conference on "The American Denominational Future."

However, one pastor supportive of the SBC's new conservative leadership countered that only a "statistically insignificant" number of churches are moving away from the SBC, which he said remains in excellent health despite the declines of other religious bodies.

The March 12-13 conference at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary was funded by the Lilly Endowment and focused on the SBC -- America's largest Protestant denomination -- as a case study.

The program featured a variety of perspectives on the SBC's past, present and future -- including representatives of the convention's moderate and conservative wings as well as non-Baptist observers.

Yet all speakers agreed the SBC is significantly different today than it was in 1979. Whether that change is a sign of denominational breakup or merely transition drew different assessments.

"While something called the Southern Baptist Convention continues to exist, it is only a shell" of what it used to be, said Bill Leonard, a church historian and chairman of the religion department at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

Leonard advised SBC moderates who are waiting for the pendulum to swing back the other way to quit waiting. "The pendulum fell off in 1985," he said. "It was in all the papers."

Leonard suggested the SBC is losing coherence because it has lost its "denominational center." He described the previous center as a tolerant majority which held together a variety of diverse factions on either side.

"The denominational center was willing to tolerate ... extremes so long as they did not threaten institutional stability," he explained.

--more--

This unity through toleration -- the "genius" of the SBC -- was achieved initially through southern identity, but ultimately through a programmatic approach to doing church, Leonard suggested. The centrist programming developed by the SBC was general enough to cover a variety of Baptists yet flexible enough to allow for some differences, he said.

In Leonard's assessment, this center was lost when one faction -- "fundamentalists" -- moved to replace programming with a uniform theology as the denominational center.

Conservatives have not been able to create a new center based on their strict theology, leaving a host of subgroups trying to create a new center, he said.

Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, challenged Leonard's assessment during a pastors' panel later in the conference.

At most, the SBC might lose 600 of its 38,000 churches due to distaste for leadership changes, Sutton said, calling that number "statistically insignificant."

"Relatively few people are scrambling for a new center," he said.

What has happened in the SBC in the past 14 years is merely a course correction, Sutton said. "The leading center was out of place with the real center."

The "conservative resurgence," as it is identified by its supporters, merely brought the SBC's leadership back in line with the conservative theology of the people in the pew, he explained.

Such a clash was inevitable, according to David Dockery, dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

Dockery said the SBC entered the second half of the 20th century divided between "progressives" in leadership and "traditionalists" in the pews.

William O'Brien, director of the Global Center at Samford University, traced a similar problem to 1925. In that year, Southern Baptists adopted the Cooperative Program unified budget and the convention's first statement of faith, he noted.

Those events represented two polarities, O'Brien said, a "what" and a "how." The problem is that some Southern Baptists have been trying to preserve one of those ideals, while others have been trying to preserve the other.

In his estimation, however, "we don't need one, we need both."

Sociologist Nancy Ammerman of Emory University concurred a perception among grass-roots people the denomination was not functioning well fueled the recent changes. Such an anti-establishment campaign was helped by the fact "fundamentalists have never been enamored of bureaucracy," she said.

Yet the SBC, like most American denominations, had evolved into a bureaucratic structure where career professionals managed an array of agencies and institutions. These bureaucrats were perceived to be less spiritual than a few well-known pastors whom she described as "popular spiritual leaders" who dominated annual meetings.

While some speakers suggested popular theology has replaced scholarly theology in the SBC, Dockery said he believes schools like Southern Seminary must continue to raise the level of theological education in the churches.

The problem, he suggested, comes when well-educated leadership attempts to lead without serving the churches where a more popular theology exists. Conservatives "are not calling for schools to mirror churches but to listen to them," he said.

--30--

America's post-denominational age
still evolving, speakers observe By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
3/17/93

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--The American church has entered a "post-denominational" age, but what that era will look like remains to be seen, speakers said during a conference on "The American Denominational Future" in Louisville, Ky.

--more--

A variety of speakers described American religious denominations as in transition between old and new forms.

"The signs are very clear ... denominations seem to be losing their direction," said Russell Richey, associate dean for academic programs at Duke Divinity School.

However, declaring denominationalism dead might be premature, Richey said, because the concept of denominations has nearly died four times before but lived on in new forms.

Richey and other speakers described a variety of changes facing American denominations. Prominent among the changes is decreasing denominational loyalty.

"There was a day when if a denominational publishing house offered a program, we just took it and did it," noted D.L. Lowrie, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lubbock, Texas, and former executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. "There was no competition.

"But today, every agency of our Southern Baptist Convention has a competitor," he added, noting the options available to local churches are increasing rapidly.

Further, many denominations have lost the common purpose around which diverse people united in the first place, Richey said. "Denominations are losing their adhesive factor."

Other reasons speakers cited to explain the decline in American denominationalism included:

- an erosion of regional cultural uniformity, such as the South exerted on the Southern Baptist Convention for 100 years after the Civil War.
- the influence of para-church groups.
- campaigns of conservative forces within denominations against bureaucratic functions.
- the rise of megachurches, which function as denominations unto themselves.
- the denominational shift toward "regulatory agencies" which focus on rule-making, indicting and forcing adherence.
- the change in America from a rural-based society to an urban-based society.
- greater abilities to communicate among churches, nations and people.
- the desire of modern churchgoers to support local missions causes they can see and do themselves rather than sending money for someone else to do missions somewhere else.
- the fact that in modern society denominations and their churches must struggle to achieve the statistical successes that came so easily in the 1950s and '60s.

A likely alternative to denominationalism is an entrepreneurial model, where congregations shop for options, said Jim Brown, executive director of the general assembly council of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Or churches might affiliate through "functional associations" rather than geographic associations, said William O'Brien, director of the Global Center at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School.

Churches of like mind and interests, whether located near each other or not, might cooperate on the specific areas they share in common, he explained. Although unthinkable a few years ago, such affiliations are possible today due to better communications and travel options, he said.

Post-denominational forms will be fashioned around niches rather than around the masses, said Nancy Ammerman, associate professor of sociology of religion at Emory University.

For example, rather than a denomination sponsoring "six mass-production seminaries," there might be demand for 20 or 30 smaller seminaries that focus on certain emphases, she said.

Ammerman spoke of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as a possible model of what future denominations will look like. But she said how the CBF defines itself in the coming months will determine its viability as a model.

Two conservative forces are vying to keep the CBF from becoming a new model, Ammerman said.

The first force is from people who want it to retain its identity as a caucus within the SBC, she explained. However, this course is "neither viable nor likely," she said, predicting the SBC's leadership might force the CBF to break away.

The second force is from people who want the CBF to recreate the "good ol' days" of the SBC, a model she called "SBC Jr."

If the CBF rejects those two options, Ammerman predicted, then it might:

- offer highly specialized and flexible services to churches.
- take advantage of computer technology.
- involve laypeople in designing church programming rather than developing programs and imposing them on laypeople.
- work in coalitions and networks with other religious bodies rather than trying to cover the religious waterfront alone.

--30--

**Bearden: 'deaf Billy Graham'
with 4 decades of influence**

By Nelson Romo

**Baptist Press
3/17/93**

ATLANTA (BP)--When Carter Bearden talks, people watch. For Carter Bearden speaks with his hands. He is deaf.

On April 1, Bearden will celebrate 44 years of service to Southern Baptists through the Home Mission Board. His eyes twinkle as he calls himself a true April fool for the Lord. His strong, sure hands trace stories of events that have shaped his life. He recounts his accomplishments casually, modestly.

But to those who see the Word of God through Bearden, his life and work are of unparalleled importance.

Walk into any of the 619 churches across the Southern Baptist Convention that minister to the deaf, or one of the 78 whose membership is predominantly deaf, and sign his name -- a C from shoulder to wrist.

Faces light up. This deacon, that Sunday school teacher, often the pastor became a Christian during one of Bearden's revivals. Bearden is known as the deaf Billy Graham.

His legend has been a long time making; his influence stretches more than four decades.

For example, while a student at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, Bearden traveled to Houston to sign-preach two Sunday services. One was at First Baptist Church, the other 30 miles away at First Baptist in Beaumont. James Fair was in the congregation at the Houston church that morning. He was so moved by Carter's preaching he decided to drive to Beaumont to hear more.

On the road, overwhelmed by emotion, Fair pulled over and prayed his profession of faith in Christ. At the service in Beaumont, he came forward to tell Bearden of his decision.

Today, 30 years later, Fair is a bivocational pastor working for a Houston newspaper while shepherding the deaf congregation in Beaumont where he made public his commitment.

Bearden's roots run deep among those who came before him in Southern Baptist work with the deaf. He became a Christian at Congress Avenue Baptist Church while attending the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin. The interpreter at the church was Miriam Johnson, daughter of J. W. Michaels, the first deaf man appointed as a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board missionary. Later, as a student at Baylor, he met Lillian Beard, an interpreter at First Baptist in Houston.

Miss Lillian -- as she is known among the deaf -- an interpreter for 68 years, fondly remembers Bearden coming to Houston to preach. Bearden brought his fiancée, Wanda Parker, a young deaf woman he had met at school, to stay with Miss Lillian and her husband. The four talked late into the evening about how God was moving among the deaf.

--more--

Attending college and seminary in the days before educational interpreters were available was difficult, but Bearden maintained high grades, even tutoring other students. Bill Tanner, now executive director of the Oklahoma Baptist Convention, once a schoolmate of Bearden's at Baylor and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, says, "If Carter didn't show up for the Greek tests, the rest of us had a chance. If he did, there was no curve. He's one of the smartest people I know."

While at Baylor, Bearden helped found the Texas Baptist Conference of the Deaf and was its first president.

Bearden's influence is felt across the globe. He has traveled to Korea, China and Russia. In May 1991, he preached at the Baptist church in St. Petersburg, Russia. For the first time in 200 years, the gospel was proclaimed to the deaf in their own language. When the invitation was given, half the deaf congregation of 75 came forward for prayer. Three made professions of faith.

At the invitation of Russian Baptists, Bearden completed a second trip last year. He and a team of deaf and hearing ministers and laypersons witnessed to the deaf in schools, factories and government offices.

While the influence of Bearden's ministry has been felt across the globe, it is also closely personal. Both his sons are pastors of deaf congregations.

Carter's knowledge of the Bible, his sensitivity to the emotional and spiritual needs of people and his unique ability to communicate make him an exemplary witness, says Oscar Romo, HMB director of language church extension and Bearden's supervisor for nearly a quarter century.

--30--

Romo is a former intern of the HMB's MissionsUSA. (BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press.

FMB leaders, missionaries address
myths about appointment of singles

Baptist Press
3/17/93

By Mary E. Speidel

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Trapped in an underwater cave, Dean Ekberg had two minutes of air left in his scuba tank.

Ekberg and a diving partner had run into poor visibility while exploring a cave off the coast of Panama City, Fla. They got separated trying to find their way out; that was the last time Ekberg saw his friend alive.

After 30 unsuccessful attempts to get out, Ekberg realized his oxygen was almost gone. "Lord, I don't think it's my time yet," he prayed. "If there's anything you want me to do, I'll do it. Just get me out of this cave."

Today Ekberg, a geological engineer, is a Southern Baptist missionary and water resource specialist who finds and drills wells. After leaving Liberia because of civil war there in 1990, he took a temporary assignment in Ghana. He currently is on furlough in his hometown of Rockford, Ill.

Ekberg, 37, is one of 449 single adult missionaries of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. That figure represents about 11.5 percent of the latest total missionary count of 3,897.

Single adults make up about 34 percent of total Southern Baptists, according to a 1990 Sunday School Board survey. However, among some Southern Baptists "there's a persistent rumor that the Foreign Mission Board doesn't have any requests for singles or that we don't want singles," reported Jim Riddell, associate director of the board's personnel selection department.

The rumor isn't true, Riddell said, noting about 245 of the current 500 personnel requests for career missions are open to singles. The list includes opportunities for single men and women in all kinds of jobs -- evangelism, church planting, health care, agriculture and education, to name a few.

--more--

Other opportunities for singles are available through the board's International Service Corps, said Wendy Norvelle, director of the international service department. Positions with the corps, which accepts either singles or couples, range from four months to two years.

More than 240 of about 300 service corps requests published in March are open to singles. These include assignments through the journeyman program, a two-year opportunity for people, single or married, under age 30. Beginning in January 1994, the journeyman program will return to its original practice of accepting only never-married singles.

Single missionaries, such as Southern Baptists' beloved Lottie Moon, have been pioneers in the denomination's foreign mission efforts and will continue to play an important role. Today, single women make up more than 10 percent of Southern Baptists' foreign missionary force and single men make up about 1 percent.

Despite rumors to the contrary, opportunities exist for single men, but more single females enter the career appointment process than males, said Norvelle, who earlier worked in the personnel selection department.

At least four single men are assigned through Cooperative Services International, according to Lewis Myers, vice president for CSI, the Southern Baptist aid organization. The "flexibility factor" of the single lifestyle is "extremely helpful in our work," Myers said.

But CSI currently doesn't have a strategy in place specifically to recruit singles. "We're just trying to open the door for all types of people, single and married, to go (through CSI)," Myers said.

Other myths involve both the divorce issue and whether a single may marry after appointment.

Although the board will not appoint divorced people as career or associate missionaries, it will consider applications of divorced people for the International Service Corps, Norvelle said.

While single missionaries must resign if they marry, the board does not require them to promise never to marry in order to be appointed. Those who marry and resign may later apply as a couple for missionary service.

"When we talk to (candidates) about being single, we want to know their comfort level with that," she said. "Here in the United States singleness is a very accepted part of society. Overseas in many cultures, singleness is not understood at all, so someone has to be pretty comfortable with his or her own singleness in order to not get discouraged when questions come about that."

Couples going through the appointment process are questioned equally as much about their marriage, Norvelle said.

In addition, it's not necessary for singles to completely resolve issues of singleness before seeking career appointment or placement through the service corps, Norvelle said. "For most people, resolution is a one day at a time thing, not a lifetime thing," she said.

"Most of the time single candidates will say, 'I'd really like to be married, but God has not provided the right person,'" Riddell added.

That was the case for Sue Ellen Kidd Myers, 32, who sought appointment in 1990. Myers, an optometrist, said she had to come to terms with singleness before she was sure of God's call to career missions.

"I had a desire to be married and to have a family, but I had a stronger desire to be obedient to God," said Myers, from New Iberia, La. "I knew it was God's best for me to go ahead with my life and commit to his calling."

Throughout the appointment process, she said, "I never felt anything negative from the Foreign Mission Board about my singleness, maybe because I was confident of my call. From the beginning I was never going to let any person take away that call."

Myers was invited to attend a candidate conference at the board. A personnel request for an optometrist never came through, but Myers said God later "amazed" her by bringing a man into her life who shared her call to foreign missions. She and Allan Myers, son of Southern Baptist missionaries, were married in 1991; they were appointed missionaries to Nigeria in February.

Ekberg said he, too, had resolved his own singleness before he entered the appointment process. However, he was questioned heavily about his contentment with singleness during appointment interviews.

One board official said, "You realize you'll be out of commission for four years" if appointed, Ekberg related.

His response: "No, I won't be out of commission. I'll be in commission -- Christ's commission."

He offered advice to other singles considering Southern Baptist foreign missions: Consider trying volunteer missions first before going "cold turkey" for career appointment. Ekberg was a volunteer in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe before his appointment. "It helped me see how I could use my talents for the Lord," he said.

"If you know that God is calling you to do something, do it," Ekberg advised. "As you go through the process don't be discouraged when the board wants to find out how content you are with your singleness. Keep at it."

--30--

(BP) photos (three horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines available on SBCNet Newsroom.

**Patsy Cline role gives
Baptist woman new witness**

By Sue Harper Poss

**Baptist Press
3/17/93**

GREENVILLE, S.C. (BP)--Patsy Cline led the music and sang a solo at a recent Baptist women's dinner in Greenville, S.C., and entertained at a church's dinner theater in Greenwood.

And almost every Sunday -- when she's not at the Grand Ole Opry, that is -- she leads the choir and congregational singing at her own church, Berea Heights Baptist in Greenville, where she's also the interim Woman's Missionary Union director, a Sunday school teacher and children's choir leader.

Well, maybe it's not Patsy Cline who made her mark in country music more than 30 years ago and was killed in a plane crash in 1963.

But it is Greenville resident Kay Crowe Bayne, whose singing career took off when, at the last minute, she auditioned for the part of Patsy in a local theater production called "Always ... Patsy Cline."

Bayne's role in the highly successful production has earned for her a recognition which she had never gotten or desired in her 20 years of singing with her band called "Session." And she quickly decided that when people applaud and admire her, she wants to give them more than just a song.

What Bayne gives them, at every opportunity, is her Christian testimony and a comparison of her own life with that of a sometimes-raucous real-life Patsy Cline.

"Patsy was a good-hearted woman who was devoted to her family and friends and enjoyed entertaining, just like me," Bayne said. "But her idea of success was different from mine. I don't enjoy 'partying.' I've never been looking 'to make it.' The attention I've gotten from doing Patsy has been nice but it humbles me."

Kay Crowe grew up in Greenville where her family belonged to Poinsett Baptist Church, which later merged with Berea Heights. She became a Christian at age 10. It was her faith that helped her as a child and teen-ager endure kidney disease that resulted in several surgeries and removal of one kidney; that helped her forgive herself for aborting a pregnancy that placed her life in danger because of her kidney problems; and that helped her through the death of her father and illness of her mother just as she was beginning her first portrayals of Patsy Cline.

--more--

"My heart was very heavy during all of these times," Bayne said. "And even in all those difficult periods, I learned that God keeps his promise, that he's there just when you need him most."

A singer since her earliest years, Kay often performed on the spur of the moment, doing mostly country and gospel music. In 1974 she married her lifelong friend Danny Bayne.

Until last year, she had worked in an office at an automobile dealership during the day and sung her music at night and on weekends. Bayne quit her job last May not only to be free to travel doing the Patsy Cline show, but also to be available to speak to church and other groups during the weekdays.

Since she was young, she has sung in church every Sunday, either as a soloist or in the choir. She also has always made sure her pastor knew she was a country music singer and that while she sings at festivals, fairs, company parties and banquets of all types, she never sings in bars.

Bayne has never sought stardom and has always believed her talent is from God. From where else could it come, she says, because she's had no formal musical or voice training except in high school chorus groups. She doesn't play an instrument well. And even though she's interim music minister at Berea Heights, she says she doesn't really know how to lead others in singing.

In 1991, she saw an announcement that the Theater on the Green in Greenville was looking for someone to portray Patsy Cline in a two-person show scheduled as a fund-raiser for the theater. Husband Danny encouraged her to audition but she kept putting it off. Finally on the last day, she went. And she got the part, which requires only that she sing.

The production, detailing the rise to stardom of Patsy Cline as seen through the eyes of her friend Louise, was a huge success. It has played several times in Greenville and has also been taken on the road not only to places like the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, to Atlanta, to Minneapolis, to Michigan.

In becoming Patsy Cline, Kay Crowe says a new door of ministry opened for her. "The Lord has been using me," she said. "He has reinforced for me a lesson I taught in my Sunday school class a few months ago, that he doesn't always lead people into church-related ministries. I have had people come up to me after hearing me do Patsy and ask me to do programs in their churches, and that gives me an opportunity to share with them my testimony and the difference between me and Patsy."

--30--

Lewis: Missions is not just
something to study about

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press
3/17/93

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"The Great Commission was not given to us to memorize and to recite," said Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"The Great Commission was given to us by our Lord to do. Missions is not just something we study about ... ; missions is something we do," Lewis said, addressing students at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary during a recent HMB-sponsored home missions emphasis week.

"It bothers me that so many people keep telling God what they're going to do, ... telling God where they're going to go; ... and I hear Jesus say, 'You do not have that prerogative,'" Lewis said.

"We continue to graduate from our seminaries every year literally hundreds of students who have no assignment and no place to go, and yet I have on the wall of my office in Atlanta a map with 22,000 dots on it, ... places in the United States we have already targeted to begin new work, ... not by the year 2000, but right now."

However, when HMB personnel ask for people to go to Montana, Utah or Alaska, for instance, they too often hear such excuses as, "'Oh, well, not there. You see my family is all down here in Georgia' or 'I have a rheumatic condition. If I go up north ... , well, I just can't stand it,'" Lewis said.

--more--

"We now have (HMB) work in every state in the union," Lewis said, "but there are still 300 counties in America where we have no Southern Baptist church or witness."

"You may have to be bivocational," Lewis said. "God has never said one time in his word that he was going to supply your needs through a board. He did say he would supply your needs through the Lord."

"Missions is not crossing the seas," Lewis said. "Missions is seeing the cross."

Darrel Robinson, vice president of the HMB evangelism section, challenged students to realize although "the world is out there, the world is also here."

Navy chaplain Carla Cherry told of her experiences during the Persian Gulf aboard the USS Suribachi. "People are hungry to hear that someone cares," she said. "People want to be ministered to by someone who is sincere, "by someone who practices what they preach," she said.

In addition to speaking in the daily chapel hour, other representatives from the HMB spoke in more than 30 classes. Student reaction to the special emphasis was positive; 24 students completed first-time commitment cards for home missions service. Other seminary students who already had decided on home missions work renewed their commitment.

"Initially I felt called into foreign missions," said a student from North Carolina. "But about a year and a half ago, during another missions emphasis week, I began feeling the call to home missions. Today, I am strongly led to a bivocational ministry in the north," she said.

A student Tennessee said, "I have been struggling this whole semester with what God wants me to do after graduation in May. This week brought everything together and it's clear that God is calling me to home missions."

"This may be what God has saved me for," said a student from Mississippi. Still recovering from a severe car accident a few months ago, he said, "I don't know where God will send me, but I'll go."

--30--

(BP) photos available upon request from NOBTS office of public relations.

HOUSE MAIL



BAPTIST PRESS

901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

So. Baptist Library & Archives
901 Commerce
Nashville, TN 37203

HOUSE MAIL