



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

BUREAUS

ATLANTA 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 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

May 11, 1993

93-79

MISSISSIPPI -- Videotape deepens mystery of pastor's disappearance.
CINCINNATI -- Urban ministry visits ignite North American Baptist leaders.
ATLANTA -- Chaplaincy leader calls Russia more organized despite inflation.
NASHVILLE -- Despite grim stats, there is hope for families, says Home Life editor.
ATLANTA -- Closed captioned videos now available from HMB.

Videotape deepens mystery
of pastor's disappearance

By William H. Perkins Jr.

Baptist Press
5/11/93

YAZOO CITY, Miss. (BP)--A security camera videotape from Alabama has provided one of the only clues in the disappearance of Jim Everett, 41, pastor of Southside Baptist Church in Yazoo City, Miss.

Everett has been missing since he left home on the morning of April 27 to visit his mother in a Meridian, Miss., nursing home.

His wife, Janet, said authorities traced a credit card purchase on the day of his disappearance to a Tuscaloosa, Ala., store that has a videotape security system. There was also another transaction in Montgomery, Ala., later that afternoon.

"It appears from the Tuscaloosa videotape that he is alone, and that he is not being forced," Mrs. Everett said. "We are confident now that he was not abducted. I initially feared that he had fallen asleep at the wheel or picked up a hitchhiker to witness to him, as he sometimes did."

Mrs. Everett said she suspects her husband may have suffered a physical or medical problem.

"There are some indications of this in the past -- family history and subtle hints. I am concerned for his safety; if he is unable to think clearly, someone may take advantage of him," she said.

Everett left his home at 9 a.m. April 27, driving a red 1991 Geo Prizm with Mississippi license plate number 1FEN200. The car's windshield has a 12-inch horizontal crack on the left side at driver's eye level.

His height is 5'11" and his weight is 200 pounds. He has blue eyes and brown hair with heavy graying. His driver's license lists his full name, James W. Everett, but he goes by "Jim" or "Jimmy."

Everett, son of a Baptist minister, was born in Belzoni, Miss. He graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1981 and he also holds a doctorate from a Florida seminary.

In addition to his pastorate at Southside, he has been at Oak Park Baptist Church in New Orleans; Tinsley and Ogden Baptist churches in Yazoo County, Miss.; Skyview, Westhaven and Bennington Park Baptist churches in Memphis, Tenn.; and Bentonia (Miss.) Baptist Church.

--more--

"Please continue to pray for Jim's safety and protection and that God will place the right people in his path who will recognize he needs assistance," Mrs. Everett said. "I am deeply grateful for the support of Christian friends from all over; that is where my strength has come from."

She also made a plea to fellow Baptists and Christians to post copies of this article at truck stops, service stations, restaurants, and other places so people can be on the lookout for her husband.

Anyone with information on the whereabouts of Jim Everett should contact detectives John Abel or Wade Woods of the Yazoo City Police Department at (601) 746-1131.

--30--

Urban ministry visits ignite
North American Baptist leaders

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press
5/11/93

CINCINNATI (BP)--An afternoon visit to several urban ministries in greater Cincinnati, most of them Baptist, stirred the May 2-4 meeting of the North American Baptist Fellowship.

More than 50 NABF denominational leaders saw and heard Cincinnati-area pastors and lay people speak with passion about their commitment to the city and ministries to the homeless, children, addicts and students during the NABF meeting in Cincinnati around the theme, "Reclaiming the Cities."

The NABF is one of six regional fellowships of the Baptist World Alliance.

The visits prompted pledges among the denominational leaders to minister together in the cities.

The NABF leaders also elected Harold C. Bennett, former president-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, as their president the next two years. He replaces Richard Coffin, general secretary of the Canadian Baptist Federation.

But it was the visits to different city ministries that moved the attendees.

At every visit, NABF leaders heard of the gospel's power to change lives broken by social ills magnified in the cities -- and of how God provides the finances and people necessary to make these life-giving ministries work.

"We have the answer to solve the problem of homelessness," declared Carol Crabtree, director of God's Shelter House, a private shelter for homeless families.

"We give them love, and appeal to their self-esteem and sense of responsibility, but most of all, we give them Jesus," said Crabtree, a member of Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Cincinnati. "He has the power to change anyone.

"I wouldn't waste my time in any ministry that doesn't work," Crabtree added. "Jesus works."

Randy, an abused boy abandoned by his alcoholic father and twice deserted by his addicted mother, was among those at God's Shelter House.

"Jesus now lives in my life," Randy said, "and I love all my work at church, but I still need to learn not to hate my mother for what she did."

"Jesus changed my alcoholic life," said Donald Girdler, night supervisor at the interdenominational City Gospel Mission for homeless men. "Now I want to tell others about him, and this is why I serve here."

Marge and Larry Gardner have served more than 25 years as directors of Cincinnati Baptist Center, helping children and young people and operating a soup kitchen.

"It was Marge who felt God's leading to serve soup to the hungry people along Mulberry Street," said Gardner, who praised his wife for a faith that God would supply the finances.

"We did not have any extra money" when his wife told him she had ordered \$825 worth of soup materials to begin serving soup in a month's time, Gardner recounted.

--more--

"But God sent the money from a totally unexpected source," Gardner said, when a woman who helped them at the center slipped a check for \$850 in Mrs. Gardner's pocket without even knowing their plans.

"Before, when I tried to talk to the men on the street about Jesus, they wouldn't listen, but once we started serving soup, I could talk to them about Jesus Christ," Gardner said.

"God has called me to serve him here and this is the happiest place in the world for me," he said.

Gary Favors, rescued from being another inner-city casualty and the first of the young people helped by the Baptist Center to graduate from college, spoke to the NABF about his faith in Christ and how the Gardners had helped him.

"I want so much to give back to the inner city what I got from the center," said Favors, now a third-grade teacher.

The practical experiences of city ministry gave a new urgency to the calls of several NABF speakers who spoke about the city.

"We need to focus on the cities because that's where the people are," said keynote speaker W. Jere Allen, executive director/minister of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, who listed this as one of several reasons why Baptists should focus on the cities.

Allen described the cities as "the locus of influence in the United States." Speaking about leaders in the press, arts and entertainment and political worlds, Allen said, "We have to give our time trying to influence the influencers."

The intensity of social ills, poverty, crime and poor education, among others, and "the sheer complexity of trying to minister there" also were reasons Allen gave for focusing on the cities.

Allen pleaded with Baptists to come together in ministry to the cities.

"Jesus wept over the cities," Allen said. "Perhaps through our tears together, Baptists together can focus on the cities."

"If the cities are to be reached for Christ, it is because Christians have an inward sense of obligation to God and others," said Orlando Yates, pastor of Union Baptist Church in Cincinnati where the NABF met.

"It is Christ who makes the difference in the city," Yates said. "The greatest service that can be rendered to a person, whoever they are, is to help them to know Jesus Christ."

--30--

Chaplaincy leader calls Russia
more organized despite inflation

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
5/11/93

ATLANTA (BP)--A year after his first trip to Russia, Bill Donovan returned to find a better system of food distribution, skyrocketing inflation and a search for stability.

The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's director of institutional and business chaplaincy made both trips to introduce Russian Christians to chaplaincy. He and Huey Perry, HMB chaplaincy director, made their most recent trip in April.

Their visit coincided with the public referendum on Russian President Boris Yelstin. Russians do not want to go back to the fear and suspicion that dominated their lives but they would like the security of knowing they had jobs and food, Donovan said.

Compared to last year, "Things are much better organized now. There's more food and more consumer goods, and less frantic black market activity," Donovan said.

However, the currency exchange rate peaked at 120 rubles to a dollar during Donovan's trip last year. On his recent trip, the exchange rate reached 800 rubles to a dollar.

"Russians live in a very unstable environment, and the gospel offers an anchor in the midst of their storm," Donovan said.

--more--

Although the underground church remained strong during communist rule, Donovan said many Russians have not been exposed to the gospel. They have a "blank slate" about religious teachings, he said. "What we call a leap of faith is much greater for them than for us."

Donovan and Perry addressed students in the Bible school and seminary at New Life Mission in St. Petersburg. Students who feel called to chaplaincy ministries will receive additional training, they reported.

Russian hospitals and prisons are not willing to hire chaplains but are receptive to volunteers working with patients and inmates, Donovan said.

Another area of potential ministry is in multi-housing units, Donovan said, because virtually all city residents live in apartments.

Under communist rule, however, Russians did not trust people living in their apartment buildings, Donovan noted. Reluctance to talk to neighbors will be a difficult obstacle to overcome, he said.

--30--

Despite grim stats, there is hope
for families, says Home Life editor

Baptist Press
5/11/93

By Lonnie Wilkey

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Ward and June Cleaver and Ozzie and Harriet Nelson "family types" are fast becoming a vanishing breed.

And, while those TV families of the 1950s and '60s perhaps were "too" perfect, they did represent the ideal American model of a single-income family with a working dad, stay-at-home mom and children.

Statistics show, however, that today's family is far from the "ideal." In fact, says Charlie Warren, the family unit is generally unhealthy.

Warren, editor of Home Life magazine published by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, was interviewed in conjunction with the Christian Home emphasis observed in Southern Baptist churches between May 9 and June 20. He cites statistics which show "the family we have known in the past is no longer." Among those:

- Violent crimes have increased 560 percent since 1960.
- Illegitimate births have increased 400 percent in the past 30 years.
- The divorce rate has quadrupled and the percentage of children in single-parent homes has tripled since 1960.
- Only 15 percent of American households are single-income married couples with children under the age of 18.
- 1.6 million children in the United States today are the result of teen pregnancies.
- Half of today's children will not live with both of their parents during their teen years.
- Teen suicide has tripled in the last three decades, making it the third-leading cause of death among teens, behind traffic accidents and homicides.

"These are pretty alarming statistics," Warren admits.

By the year 2000 futurists predict 75 percent of all mothers will work outside the home and the traditional family will make up less than 4 percent of the U.S. population, he adds.

Warren calls families today the "not at home generation" and says it applies to Christian families as well as non-Christian families. Among churchgoers, he says, "Mom and Dad often are at church committee meetings during the week."

Warren says there are things churches and families can do to make families stronger.

At Home Life "we find out what's right about families and uplift biblical ideals for families."

He notes churches can take healthy families and help them become healthier through different programs and emphases. Those emphases should be year-round.

--more--

Something else families and churches must do to ensure healthy families is to emphasize sexual morality, Warren says. He notes statistics related to teen pregnancy are alarming because families have not done a good job of teaching morality.

He observes previous generations "did not teach sex education but they did teach morality."

"Now, families teach sex education but do not teach morality. It sends a message that sex outside marriage is OK. Christian families need to come down strong and say, 'It's not OK,'" he stresses.

The editor says the "most loving thing a parent can do for a child is to love his or her spouse."

"If children see a good relationship between the husband and the wife, it gives them a sense of security and well-being," Warren says.

Churches can take a lead in helping to strengthen marriages which, in turn, strengthen families, he says.

He cites materials produced by the Sunday School Board which churches can use, such as Covenant Marriage materials, Fall Festival of Marriage seminars and others. Churches can even have their own marriage seminars, Warren suggests. "We need to celebrate our healthy families. There are strong families; they are not all going down the tubes."

Churches also must adapt programs for the growing number of single-parent and blended families. "Do not condemn families who do not fit the traditional definition," he urges.

Despite the gloom and doom statistics, there is hope for the Christian family, Warren says. "I am seeing more and more emphasis on the family," he notes, predicting, "Churches will be on the cutting edge of society in helping families in their marriages and parenting skills."

--30--

Closed captioned videos
now available from HMB

Baptist Press
5/11/93

ATLANTA (BP)--Home missions videos are now available with closed caption encoding for the deaf and hearing impaired.

"MissionsUSA Video Magazine," produced by the Home Mission Board for 10 years, began the closed captioned editions with its spring issue this year.

An annual subscription to "MissionsUSA Video Magazine" costs \$30, which includes four quarterly issues and a special video during the week of prayer for home missions. Each video features several segments about mission work in the United States and its territories.

--30--

HOUSE MAIL



BAPTIST PRESS

901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

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

HOUSE MAIL