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May 25, 1993

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Jerry Rankin nominated as next
Foreign Mission Board president By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
5/25/93

BEDFORD, Texas (BP)--A search committee seeking a president for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board reached into the ranks of its overseas administrators and has unanimously nominated Jerry A. Rankin.

Rankin, 51, a 23-year veteran of missions from Mississippi, has served as the board's area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific since 1987.

Board trustees will vote on Rankin at a called meeting June 14 in Houston, Joel Gregory, chairman of the 15-member trustee search committee, announced May 25. The trustee session, set for 2 p.m. at a location to be named, precedes the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 15-17.

If elected by the required 75 percent majority of trustees, Rankin would succeed R. Keith Parks, who retired as president Oct. 30, 1992. Parks departed earlier than planned, citing differences with trustees over his leadership role and the direction of missions.

FMB Executive Vice President Don Kammerdiener has served as interim president since Nov. 1, trying to maintain the morale of personnel as a series of staff and missionaries have departed and the board has cut 37 jobs in response to financial shortfalls.

Selection of Rankin ended 14 months of speculation about whom the committee would nominate to succeed Parks. Late last January it seemed near to nominating Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla. But Elliff declined the nomination.

Rumors persisted that the committee would work from a narrow list of names of candidates whose agenda is the denomination's conservative resurgence, not missions. Reports continued to circulate that little chance existed for election of a person inside the board with the kind of missions experience necessary to oversee the work of 3,900 missionaries in 129 countries.

But all along committee members insisted their only agenda was to "find the will of God."

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In nominating Rankin, whom trustee chairman John Jackson called "a dark horse," the committee opted for a candidate who has focused on missions over 23 years as a missionary and administrator.

Rankin and his wife, the former Bobbye Simmons, were appointed as missionaries to Indonesia in June 1970. He rose through the ranks to direct missions in Southern Asia and the Pacific. Based in Singapore, he oversees the work of 480 missionaries in 15 countries.

"If I'm elected," Rankin told Baptist Press, "it will affirm the priority of the board's missions agenda and hopefully encourage missionaries, staff and Southern Baptists about the future of foreign missions."

Rankin said he didn't anticipate his four interviews with the search committee would lead to his nomination -- and even declined to continue the process at one point. But he said he and many others had prayed all along that the next president would be someone with strong missions experience -- "someone who knows where we are and where we need to go."

He said he had expected that if the committee nominated someone inside the missions structure, it would be Kammerdiener, "who has done a good job" as interim president.

"I definitely affirm Don Kammerdiener and want him to remain as executive vice president if I'm elected," Rankin said. "He's a tremendous asset."

He echoed Gregory and Jackson in saying his nomination reflected "a spiritual process in seeking the will of the Lord" -- not a political one.

Gregory said Rankin was winnowed out of 80 original candidates, including 17 whom the committee ranked in its top two tiers of potential nominees and investigated extensively.

Finally, Gregory asked each committee member to rank the top four candidates and list anyone he or she could not support. Rankin "received by far and away the most first-place votes and no negative votes," Gregory said. "When we saw that, we voted to focus solely on him until there was a determination."

"Jerry Rankin was in the top five or six candidates all along, but not until the last did he rise to the top," said Jackson, who participated as an ex officio, non-voting member of the committee. "God put it together. Only in that way could Jerry have moved past board vice presidents and pastors and other leaders around the convention. It wasn't done with arm twisting. It came on a unanimous vote. God waited until the appropriate time and let him shine forth. We were able to see him as God's choice."

One trustee said Rankin's role as an "outside-insider" gave the committee the feeling he knows the board's internal affairs but still has an outsider's objective view. As area director, he operates in two worlds. He is a staff member and sits on the board's Global Strategy Group of key planners. But except for periodic stints in the Foreign Mission Board's home office in Richmond, Va., he lives and works overseas.

"Even though he's in the structure, he's in a healthy sense independent of the structure," Gregory said. "We questioned him carefully about independent judgment. We have no question he will take creative initiatives internally at the board and externally in the denomination and on the mission field."

Asked if he felt he would receive the necessary 75 percent of the vote, Rankin said, "It's been in the Lord's hands up to this point and that's where I need to leave it."

Gregory said he believes Rankin will be elected without problem. "The search committee and the trustee chairman highly commend and endorse Dr. Rankin," he said. "That group represents the full spectrum of the trustees. Dr. Rankin was elected unanimously by secret ballot. We feel that of all candidates he best fits the profile we adopted originally and Southern Baptists have commended."

Rankin said the search committee talked to him extensively about his beliefs. "They were satisfied about who I am doctrinally, theologically and denominationally, but I think that's enough to say about that. Now is the time to move ahead with a missions agenda -- making Jesus Christ known to a lost world."

Gregory said Rankin "expressed commitment to the inerrancy of the Scripture and demonstrated that he understands and will embrace pluralistic missions efforts of all Southern Baptists. We feel Dr. Rankin can spearhead a great movement among all Southern Baptists for global missions."

If elected, Rankin said he will spend a lot of time in dialogue and planning sessions with missionaries, staff, trustees and others before making any public comment about changes in direction for the Foreign Mission Board.

"My desire, more than anything else, is to provide spiritual leadership so that all of our resources and personnel will be in harmony with what God is doing and desires to do through us around the world," he said.

Rankin got his first view of missions as a summer missionary for the Home Mission Board in Vermont and New York in 1962 and as a summer missionary for the Foreign Mission Board in the Philippines in 1963.

After missionary appointment, he studied language in Bandung, Indonesia, served as a general evangelist in two other Indonesian locations, consulted in evangelism and church growth in India, served as associate to the area director for South and Southeast Asia and then administrator for mission work in India, and finally became area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific.

Before joining the Foreign Mission Board, he was pastor of Sadler (Texas) Baptist Church from 1967-70 and was Baptist Student Union director, 1968-70, and Bible instructor, 1969-70, at Grayson County College in Denison, Texas.

Earlier, he worked through high school and college as a sports writer for the Jackson (Miss.) Daily News-Clarion Ledger, 1956-63, and served at various times as interim pastor of Harrisville (Miss.) Baptist Church, summer youth director of First Baptist Church in Columbus, Ga., pastor of Montpelier (Miss.) Baptist Church and youth director and associate pastor of Sagamore Hill Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

Rankin, a native of Tupelo, Miss., grew up in Clinton, Miss., where he received the bachelor of arts degree from Mississippi College, a Baptist school, in 1964. He received the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Mississippi College.

If elected, he would become the second board chief executive named Rankin. The late M. Theron Rankin, a former missionary to China whom Jerry Rankin thinks may be a distant relative, served as what was then called executive secretary from 1945-53.

Mrs. Rankin, a native of Mobile, Ala., received the bachelor of science degree from Mississippi College in 1966. She attended Southwestern seminary.

She has been a summer missionary for the Home Mission Board in Hawaii, a teacher in the public schools of Fort Worth, Texas, and Arlington, Texas, and a church and home worker during her missionary career.

Both Rankins were selected for the Mississippi College Hall of Fame, an honor accorded each year to four graduates on the basis of academics, service and leadership.

The Rankins have two grown children, Lori 24, and Russell, 23.

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(BP) photos (one mug shot and one candid shot cropped both horizontally and vertically) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines available on SBCNet Newsroom.

Brotherhood Commission receives
Red Cross 'Good Neighbor' award By Steve Barber

Baptist Press
5/25/93

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission has been named the recipient of the 1993 American Red Cross Good Neighbor Award in recognition of its efforts in hurricane disaster relief during the year.

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The Good Neighbor Award is presented annually to an individual or organization outside the American Red Cross making "a significant humanitarian contribution to the local, national, or international community" in support of the ARC.

James D. Williams, president of the Brotherhood Commission, accepted the award in Nashville May 23 at the 68th American Red Cross National Convention.

"In accepting the award, I do so on behalf of all Southern Baptists, and especially our state convention disaster relief units," Williams said. "And I thank God for our volunteers and their commitment to share 'a cup of cold water in the Savior's name.'"

The Brotherhood Commission produces training materials for Southern Baptist disaster volunteers and coordinates multi-state disaster responses of state convention-owned relief units from across the SBC.

After Hurricane Andrew came ashore in Florida Aug. 24 of last year, Southern Baptist volunteers prepared more than 2.5 million hot meals in Florida and more than 186,000 hot meals in Louisiana. Thousands of children were supervised at mobile emergency child care units.

The mobile units involved in response to Andrew came from 15 state conventions. Volunteers continue to come to south Florida from virtually every state.

After Hurricane Iniki struck Hawaii in September, kitchen equipment was shipped to allow more than 200 additional volunteers to serve 225,000 meals.

The response in the wake of Andrew and Iniki was one of 112 disaster responses by Southern Baptists during the last year, making the last 12 months the busiest in the denomination's history.

The Brotherhood Commission works in close coordination year-round with the American Red Cross in disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

Nominations for the Good Neighbor Award may be made either by a citizen or any Red Cross paid or volunteer staff member in any unit. A single national award recipient is selected by a committee of volunteers from the Red Cross and from outside the organization.

Meijer, Inc., of Lansing, Mich., a regional supermarket chain, won the award last year for its support of a local food bank. Other previous winners have included Sun Co. of Radnor, Pa., and the Mennonite Disaster Service.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Brotherhood Commission.

Southern Baptist personnel needs
critical in the Middle East By Mike Creswell

Baptist Press
5/25/93

NICOSIA, Cyprus (BP)--Are Southern Baptists afraid of the Middle East?

That's the question some are asking as missionary personnel needs in the area become critical. Of 58 individual positions requested in 1992, only three were filled, said Dale Thorne, the Foreign Mission Board's director for the Middle East and North Africa.

"I fear that we're retreating in a day when the opportunities for outreach are greater than ever before," Thorne declared.

Besides 55 unmet requests, two couples and two single missionaries have resigned and one couple transferred to Eastern Europe in 1992, adding to the list. In 1993 three couples and one single missionary already have announced resignations and one more couple will transfer to another area.

As of May, no new personnel have been appointed for the MENA area in 1993, Thorne said. "One single missionary and one couple are scheduled for appointment in August and October and one couple will transfer in. So for two years running we've experienced a net loss in personnel," he said.

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"The shortage of personnel severely restricts our ability to seize the new openings appearing in yet-unentered countries of the area, as well as in countries where we already have personnel. The planting of new congregations among unreached people groups depends on our placing personnel with marketable skills in limited-access countries," Thorne said.

Yemen is one country in which a lack of the right workers jeopardizes Southern Baptist presence. Southern Baptists, through the operation of a hospital, maintain a Christian presence in this solidly Muslim country.

"The continued existence of the hospital in Yemen will depend largely on our ability to appoint a sufficient number of doctors and nurses to staff the hospital," Thorne said.

As examples of personnel requests in the area, Thorne listed six of the top 15 requests:

1) field evangelist and teacher of English as a second language in Egypt; 2) a congregation planter among Russians in Tel Aviv, Israel; 3) physicians in obstetrics/gynecology and surgery specialties in Yemen; 4) teacher/administrator for an elementary school in Jordan; 5) trade evangelists and church planters for severely restricted access countries; 6) assistant hospital administrator in Yemen.

Thorne said all of the more than 50 people requested would be working in "World A" countries among unreached people groups who are among the most closed to the gospel in the world. Missiologists consider such closed countries and unreached people groups as "final frontier" in missions.

"I don't know why we're receiving so few new personnel," Thorne said. "The personnel consultants at the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond say when new candidates come to the list of our requests, they hurriedly turn on to other requests they feel will be easier. There seems to be a basic fear and ignorance of resident ministries in the Arab/Muslim world."

Thorne said he and other administrators will work with a newly organized task force set up at the board's office to determine how to educate and enlist more workers for the area.

Prayer support also is a major key to enlisting personnel for effective ministry in the region, Thorne said. "We're doing all we can to encourage and inform prayer partners for our ministries."

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Honeycutt reviews his record
during Southern's commencement

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press
5/25/93

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt told 253 graduates at the Louisville, Ky., school that his 11-year administration has been marked by fidelity to the institution's heritage.

"I want to drive down a stake historically where the record is written clearly about what these years have been like," said Honeycutt May 21 during the seminary's 171st commencement. Honeycutt, who will retire July 31, will be succeeded as president by Georgia Baptist editor R. Albert Mohler Jr.

The seminary, Honeycutt said, has maintained its legacy of both "intellectual honesty and spiritual piety" in faculty additions as well as curriculum.

"As an entering student 44 years ago," he said, "I first experienced such linking of faith to intellect and the realization that there is no fundamental conflict between the heart and mind, reason and faith, logic and emotions. Here I came to understand that Christ came to take away our sins, not our minds."

Yet Honeycutt said the seminary's commitment to free theological inquiry has remained rooted in the Abstract of Principles, the seminary's confessional document. "I want to set the record straight about my commitment to the Abstract of Principles and I don't want to read or hear of anyone saying this institution takes lightly its confessional commitments," he said.

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Honeycutt noted his commitment to the Abstract of Principles was tested during his first year in office. "When my good friend and former professor (Dale Moody) stood in my office and told me he would not support the Abstract of Principles, his teaching career concluded at the termination of his annual contract," Honeycutt recounted. Moody, who died last year, was at the time teaching theology as a senior professor. The Moody affair was the most painful episode of his presidency, Honeycutt said.

During his address, Honeycutt reviewed his political involvement on behalf of moderates in the Southern Baptist Convention controversy. "As president, I sought during the middle '80s to affirm Baptist principles in the face of a denominational political action group seeking to move the convention away from its heritage," he said.

Honeycutt gave the moderate effort his fullest support until deciding in 1986 the SBC political struggle had been won by conservatives, he said. "The movement in the SBC was always a sociological revolution and not a theological reformation. In actuality, it was a sociological revolution with theological overtones."

Those who now are in charge of the SBC ignore influential 20th century Southern Baptist theologians like E.Y. Mullins and W.T. Conner, Honeycutt said. "Calls to historical correctness fall on deaf ears when they fail to point us to historic Baptist theologians whose work shaped 20th century theology for Southern Baptists. Every generation must state its theology for itself or we relegate faith to the role of an antique relic which we admire on the shelf but which has little use in daily life."

In the midst of the SBC controversy, Honeycutt drew fire from conservatives for his support of women in ministry. During the commencement address, Honeycutt quoted from a pamphlet he wrote in 1984 on "Affirming Women in Ministry." In the pamphlet, Honeycutt declared his affirmation of women in ministry was consistent with the seminary's heritage of educating female students and was faithful to the seminary's dedication to the Bible. He added affirming women in ministry also was in keeping with the unique nature of calling to ministry, the Holy Spirit's "indiscriminate distribution of God's gifts" and the Southern Baptist tradition of local churches ordaining ministers and calling staff members.

Honeycutt acknowledged his agenda as president changed once he saw conservatives had a firm grip on the convention. "At that juncture I made a commitment to preserve as much of the wholeness of the seminary as possible," he said. "Damage control rather than victory became the top priority." Honeycutt then began to negotiate with trustees and agreed to add more theological conservatives to the faculty.

Some critics, he said, have accused him of abandoning the conflict because he lacked courage. "Such critics are poor assessors of personality and character," Honeycutt stated. "My judgments may be correct or incorrect; time will tell. Yet of this I have no doubt: I fear no person between heaven above and hades beneath, whatever contemporary (political/theological) label that person wears.

"What I do fear is pride which interferes with devotion; anger which runs out of control; petulance which withdraws from interaction; hostility which dominates judgment; and shortsightedness which distorts vision."

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Southern teaching award
goes to Molly Marshall

Baptist Press
5/25/93

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Faculty member Molly Marshall and seminary supporter Ernest Hogan, a retired business executive, were honored during Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's 171st commencement May 21.

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Marshall, associate professor of Christian theology at the Louisville, Ky., school, received the Findley B. and Louvenia Edge Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence. Marshall, who joined the seminary faculty in 1984, was the first female theology professor named to a teaching post at a Southern Baptist seminary. She holds degrees from Oklahoma Baptist University and Southern Seminary.

A committee composed of faculty, students and alumni selects the recipient of the Edge award each year. The award, which includes a cash gift of \$2,500, was established in 1991 through a gift from the Edges. Findley Edge is an emeritus professor of Christian education at the seminary.

Hogan of Boca Raton, Fla., received the George W. Norton Distinguished Service Award. The award, established in 1989 by a vote of seminary trustees, is presented in recognition of outstanding contributions to Southern Seminary by an individual outside the seminary community.

Hogan, who retired in 1978 as president of Peoples Security Life in Washington, has demonstrated his support of Southern Seminary by funding three endowed chairs of instruction and a major scholarship fund for students from his native state of West Virginia. He attends First Baptist Church of Boca Raton.

The Norton award is named for a prominent Louisville businessman and Southern Baptist layman who lived from 1814-1899. He served as the first chairman of the seminary's financial board and he also was the first treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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New Orleans Seminary graduates
inaugural baccalaureate class

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press
5/25/93

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Thirty baccalaureate graduates were among 202 students honored during New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's 75th annual spring commencement.

Twenty-two students received the bachelor of general studies degrees and eight received bachelor of arts degrees under the seminary's school of Christian training. The school, which offers associate and baccalaureate degrees, has undergone an accreditation inspection by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and its degrees are fully accredited under the institutional accreditation.

Landrum P. Leavell II, seminary president, told the seminary's 202 grads that, while a seminary commencement service marks the completion of one phase of ministerial preparation, "This is not a time to sit back and relax and bask in the glory of the achievement.

"This is the time to get to work. It's time to get busy doing full-time, for most of you, the work to which God has called you.

"I want to remind you," Leavell said, "that this is also a time to remember the contributions ... that have been made to your life and to your ministry, without which you would not be here today. ...

"This seminary has provided you with top-quality training, and this seminary is not a product of your hands or mine. We didn't dream of it; we didn't build it; and we've not kept it in existence for the last 75 years.

"God-fearing, generous, tithing, committed Southern Baptists worked and sacrificed that you and I might come to this day."

Leavell noted, "It would be the epitome of ingratitude if you would fail to keep this institution strong and viable through your personal financial support and contributions and by leading your churches to give generously to the Cooperative Program, which is the lifeblood of this seminary."

Also reminding graduates of the relatively low cost of their seminary education, Leavell said, "It has been made possible because Southern Baptists have believed in you ... and have said that those who come out of our churches, called of God, are our responsibility to train."

A commencement service is also a time to remember God's call, Leavell said.

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"I remind you today of the call of God. Only you can determine and interpret the specifics of God's call in your life, but there are some generalities that pertain to every God-called individual. The most obvious is that your call from God is for life. ...

"God doesn't change his mind," Leavell said. "God's not going to reverse the field on you.

"Another given is that whom God employs, God empowers. Don't ever worry about 'How can I?' If you're doing it in your own strength, you can't. If you're doing it in God's strength and God has led you to do it, you can. ...

"God may change the specifics of that call, but God's call to you is for life, and if you're not ready for that kind of commitment, you're not ready for ministry."

Leavell charged graduates to respond to the challenge. "Wherever you're called to serve, whatever God may be pointing you to do, the challenge today is awesome and indescribable. ... The Third-World countries are unbelievably open to the gospel." And while preachers are being invited to preach and give an invitation in the public schools of the former Soviet Union, in America preachers are not allowed in the front door, he said. "In our own nation we've lost our value system ... and human life is cheap. The challenge to the Christian gospel has never been greater in America. ...

"The perpetuity of our faith lies in your hands," Leavell said, "and your faithfulness, or lack of it, will determine the course that's taken by our denomination in our segment of the Baptist world."

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(BP) photo of seminary president or group photo of first baccalaureate class available upon request from New Orleans Seminary's office of public relations.

Actions, not just words, mark
effective ministers, grads told By Cameron Crabtree

Baptist Press
5/25/93

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Action in ministry is more important than clever sermon outlines, a denominational executive told graduates of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

Seminary President William O. Crews awarded degrees to 75 graduates representing 20 states and seven countries. Golden Gate Seminary is one of six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries and the only SBC agency in the western United States.

Cecil Sims, executive director-treasurer of the Northwest Baptist Convention, was the May 21 commencement exercises' keynote speaker.

"People remember what you do in ministry a lot more than what you say," said Sims. "The message of your life is what counts."

The longtime Northwest Baptist leader said four things matter in ministry: quality, security, peace and victory.

"The quality of your ministry will be determined by your knowledge of and relationship to Jesus Christ," he said. Effectiveness in ministry grows out of a life that is closely identified with Christ, he added.

"The security of your ministry will be determined by your understanding and acceptance of Christ's assignment in service," Sims said.

At least one of two things is true when God calls people to a place of service, Sims noted. "God can do something through you in that place ... (or) he may be putting us there to polish us up; he may want to do something in you in that place."

Sims warned against looking for security in ministry apart from God. "(It) can't be found in the salary, the parsonage or the deacons," he said. "It comes in the call of God."

Peace in ministry, Sims said, "will be determined by your ability to prioritize God, self, family and task."

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Ministers too often get the priorities out of order, Sims observed. "There are times when the demands from different sides press in on us. ... don't confuse church with God ... don't confuse task with God.

"The victories of your ministry will be determined by your commitment to and perseverance in the task," Sims concluded. "When you hit the finish line of your ministry you can be sure the rewards of your ministry will be determined by heaven's records and God's mercies, not the opinions of your peers and denominational leaders."

During the ceremony at the Marin Veteran's Memorial Auditorium in San Rafael, Crews presented David and Faith Kim of Santa Ana, Calif., the Harold K. Graves Award for 1993. It is named in honor of the seminary's president emeritus and is given annually to persons who have demonstrated outstanding service and leadership to the seminary. Mrs. Kim, a Golden Gate doctor of ministries graduates, is director of the one of the seminary's Korean Ethnic Leadership Development centers in Los Angeles. Her husband is a physician.

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Church growth expert advises:

Open front door, close back door By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press

5/25/93

NEWARK, N.J. (BP)--Opening the front door and closing the back door are essential elements of church growth, claims Win Arn, founder and president of Church Growth, Inc., in Monrovia, Calif.

Opening the front door means using an array of methods to attract people to church, Arn told 300 people attending a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board school of evangelism and church growth. Closing the back door involves keeping new members from dropping out of church life.

The best recruiting tool is new Christians telling friends and family members about Christ, Arn said. A survey of 20,000 church members found more than 70 percent come to church because a friend or relative invited them. Walk-in visits, church programs, the pastor, a special need such as the death of a family member, Sunday school, unsolicited visitation and crusades or media events each accounted for less than 3 percent of reasons people were in church.

Biblical examples Arn cited of evangelism through relationships include Peter telling his brother Andrew about the Messiah, Jesus telling Zaccheus to share his new faith with his family and the response of Lydia and her household.

Churches should design outreach strategies around the principle that "God uses networks of people for the great growth of the church," Arn said. Leaders can help church members identify unreached people by asking members to list their friends who do not attend church.

When people become Christians, help them immediately share Christ with their non-Christian friends, Arn urged. "New converts know more non-Christians than church members," he said. "The longer you're in the church, the fewer friends you have in the world."

Yet making friends is an essential part of keeping new Christians involved in churches, Arn said. "Friends are the glue that holds people in a congregation."

Assimilating newcomers is the responsibility of the church, not the new member, Arn said. He noted he has yet to meet a person who joined a church with the intention of dropping out.

To help new members become part of the congregation, churches can:

- give them a task appropriate for their spiritual gift.
- make sure they are in a small group where they will be missed if they are absent, such as choir or Sunday school.
- highlight new members in church publications.
- create opportunities to build friendships. This must go beyond the coffee hour before Sunday school or after worship, he said.
- start new groups with new roles and tasks.

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During the first few months of church membership, people ask themselves if the new friends they are making are better than their old friends, if they fit in, if the church meets their needs and if their contribution is needed. The answer to those questions, Arn said, determines whether the person becomes a regular attender or a drop-out.

Members who have assimilated well practice financial stewardship, identify with the goal of the church, feel like they are spiritually growing and reproduce new Christians, Arn said.

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Despite being counter-culture,
speaker says: 'This is our day' By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
5/25/93

NEWARK, N.J. (BP)--Although Christians today live in a "hostile environment," James Garlow said: "This is our day."

The Nazarene pastor of Metroplex Chapel in Fort Worth, Texas, said 1968 was a turning point of Christianity's place in American lifestyles. Before then, Christianity dominated culture and "the values we held were the values of society," Garlow said during a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board school of evangelism and church growth.

Until the late 1980s, Christians were among a number of subcultures that were equally accepted, he said. Now, Christianity is a counter-culture in the United States because its values are contrary to the values of society, he said.

Yet Garlow noted that "the church of Jesus Christ always does well in this kind of environment. The gospel is profoundly resilient."

Five things can be expected when Christianity no longer dominates a society's values, Garlow said:

1) Christians will spend more time in earnest prayer. It will not be a new fad or a "hot button" for a crisis.

2) Laity who are gifted for ministry will be better trained and equipped. The clergy will move over, the laity will move up and they all will move out into the world with God's message, Garlow predicted.

3) Churches will experience an identity crisis about whether their primary function is to love, confront or teach. Effective churches will have a balance of all three, he said.

4) Christians will become more focused. "They will learn the difference between action and accomplishment."

5) Christians will identify the enemy more clearly. Rather than fighting each other, Christians will learn to "get along with people in a way we never thought possible. Friendly fire is not an option in the '90s."

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Prayers in Indiana yield
'Hoosier heart' in pastor

By Jon Walker

Baptist Press
5/25/93

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--The last place Mike and Sharon Scarborough wanted to serve God was in Indiana.

"If hell ever fills up, God will use Indiana as the overflow room," Scarborough often joked.

Yet God gave Scarborough a "Hoosier heart" and called him to be a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board-sponsored (HMB) church planter in suburban Indianapolis.

How did someone who disliked Indiana end up joyfully serving the Lord there?

Cut to Mike's first year as a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.: "While there, I pastored a small, rural, southern Indiana church. We hated it so bad, we left and went back to Georgia, eventually coming to Southeastern to finish my seminary career," Scarborough says.

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The scene dissolves to a prayer warrior on his knees. Wesley Duewel, author of "Ablaze for God" and "Prevailing in Prayer," is praying his Indianapolis-based ministry will impact Southern Baptists.

Fast forward several years: Scarborough, having graduated from Southeastern, is asked to return to the seminary as dean of students and is later appointed alumni coordinator, with the responsibility to plan an alumni luncheon in Indianapolis during the 1992 Southern Baptist Convention.

"I was having my quiet time in the Indianapolis Hilton hotel," Scarborough says. "The drapes were open and I was overlooking the city. It was dark, there was no movement and few lights. As I prayed, and the city began to wake up, I had a phenomenal experience with the Lord; his presence was more real to me than it has ever been."

Scarborough says at that moment, "God gave me as much of his heart for those people as I could bear, and then he gave me more. I wept before the Lord for the people of Indiana."

Dissolve to Scarborough at his Southeastern office. A student walks in with no idea what Scarborough experienced in Indianapolis. He says there is a need for churches in Indiana and gives Scarborough the phone number of Carrol Fowler, missions director for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.

After the student leaves, Scarborough picks up the phone to share with Fowler his burden for Indiana.

"As I was dialing the number, I stopped," Scarborough remembers. "I hung up and told God defiantly, 'If you are in this, you are going to have to show me.'"

Cut to Scarborough at the Raleigh airport, picking up Ron Owens, an employee of the HMB. Owens is coming to Southeastern to sing for a spring revival. On the way from the airport, Scarborough asks him if he sees God moving in any particular location.

"Let me tell you about Indiana," Owens replies. Scarborough's heart jumps.

The scene cuts to Southeastern. Scarborough is talking to Darrell Robinson, vice president for evangelism at the HMB. Scarborough, under conviction, asks if he knows anything about Indiana.

"Mike, I just came from Indianapolis," Robinson says. "In all my ministry, I have never seen a city as receptive to the gospel of Jesus Christ."

The scene dissolves to Sharon and Mike Scarborough with their heads bowed: "Sharon and I were praying together, crying," Scarborough says. "She didn't want to go to Indiana; I didn't want to go to Indiana. Yet God was stacking up all this evidence indicating he wanted us to go."

The story transitions to a scene involving Henry Blackaby, director of prayer and spiritual awakening at the HMB, and his associate, Claude King. Blackaby, touched by the work of prayer giant Wesley Duewel, begins to outline a discipleship program to be titled "Experiencing God." The study teaches Christians to look for where God is working and to join him in his plans, rather than focusing on what they can plan for God.

The scene changes to the Scarborroughs studying Experiencing God. Through it they are brought to a "crisis of belief" as God demands "radical adjustments" in their lives.

The next scene is Mike Scarborough reading a letter from Ron Owens, who is, ironically, Blackaby's assistant at the HMB. Owens closes with a postscript giving the name and phone number of Charles Sullivan, the new executive director of the Indiana Baptist convention.

"When I read that p.s., it was like I had been run over by a truck," Scarborough says. "I was very aware I had to do more than just let God show me what he wanted me to do."

The scene shifts to Scarborough's office, where he reluctantly calls Sullivan to share his burden for Indianapolis. After agreeing to pray for the Scarborroughs, Sullivan requests a resume from Mike. Scarborough sends an "unimpressive resume" with instructions for Sullivan not to share it with anyone unless he is "profoundly led by the Spirit to do so."

Fast forward several weeks: Scarborough is closing his office for Christmas. The phone rings. It is Carrol Fowler, director of missions in Indiana and the very man Scarborough had refused to call months earlier.

Fowler invites Mike and his wife to become church planters in Indiana.

The scene dissolves to Scarborough, sitting next to his fireplace: "I lamented before the Lord all the reasons why I shouldn't go to Indianapolis, and all of the sudden, I had the most profound impression. It was as if God branded on my brain these words -- I have given you a Hoosier heart. It was so immense, I said, 'Father, I trust you. If you give me a Hoosier heart, I gladly accept it.'"

Fast forward to the present: Scarborough, a Southern Baptist church planter, is pastor of Immanuel Fellowship in Carmel, Indiana, a suburb of Indianapolis.

The community, Scarborough says, is the "classic, textbook Baby Boomerville," with only 14 percent of the population over the age of 55. In an area with very little Southern Baptist witness, the church is using non-traditional approaches to outreach, such as Sunday school on Sunday nights in members' homes.

Scarborough says it is hard work but he and Sharon know God has them right where he wants them. "Sharon and I feel like we're on a raft on a raging river. We're holding on, being swept along at high speed, and God's the river. We're on a ride with God and I pray it never ends."

Scarborough requests prayer for his fellowship, that people in Indiana will be open to the gospel and God will provide the finances necessary for Immanuel Fellowship to maintain a strong community presence.

"God has laid on our hearts the need for strong churches in other suburbs of Indianapolis," Scarborough says. "I believe in the next 10 years we're going to have 20 churches on the north side of Indianapolis."

The last scene shifts to Scarborough entering the office of Wesley Duewel, the persistent prayer warrior. Scarborough wants to meet Duewel because of his influence on Henry Blackaby, author of *Experiencing God*. Duewel explains years ago he prayed his ministry would impact Southern Baptists. God has answered that prayer, in part, by putting a Hoosier heart in Mike and Sharon Scarborough.

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