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July 16, 1993

93-115

- NASHVILLE -- Harold C. Bennett facing prostate cancer surgery.
- TENNESSEE -- Southern Baptist agencies, workers respond to Midwest flood disaster.
- IOWA -- Missionary uses pick-up truck for mini disaster relief unit.
- MOSCOW -- Religious leaders blast Russian law banning missionaries; Yeltsin to sign?
- VIRGINIA -- Baptist leaders urge protest of new Russia religion law.
- ATLANTA -- HMB expresses support for Marine chaplain.
- TEXAS -- Baptists mobilize volunteers for Olympic Festival '93.
- ATLANTA -- Fiction is in at Christian book show.
- NEW MEXICO -- 'Informal dignity' describes traditional worship style.
- NEW MEXICO -- Liturgy aids congregation, worship leader declares.
- NEW MEXICO -- 'Blended' worship combines traditional, contemporary.
- NEW MEXICO -- Musician says praise, worship lead to God.
- NEW MEXICO -- 'Seeker' worship style targets the unchurched.
- ALABAMA -- GA members to meet 'Buffy Bookworm.'
- NASHVILLE -- Correction.

Harold C. Bennett facing  
prostate cancer surgery

Baptist Press  
7/16/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Harold C. Bennett, president emeritus of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, will undergo surgery for prostate cancer July 27 at Baptist Hospital in Nashville.

Bennett, in a letter to friends, explained in "some physical examinations and tests, the doctor has discovered that I have cancer of the prostate and must have a radical prostatectomy," or removal of the prostate gland.

"Phyllis (his wife) and I are requesting that you pray for us," Bennett wrote. "We are grateful for your concern and thank you for your spiritual support."

Bennett, 68, led the Executive Committee from 1979 until his retirement in 1992. He was elected as a Baptist World Alliance vice president in 1990 and is chairman of both BWA's personnel committee and program committee for the August 1995 Baptist World Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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EDITORS' NOTE: This story updates the (BP) story titled "Brotherhood responds to disaster with water purification unit," dated 7/13/93.

Southern Baptist agencies, workers  
respond to Midwest flood disaster By Steve Barber

Baptist Press  
7/16/93

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist agencies and volunteers have responded quickly to the flood emergency in the American Midwest in recent days, but the full extent of needs in the area is likely to grow and won't be known until the waters begin to recede.

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The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission announced July 13 it would spend \$25,000 in unbudgeted funds for a water purification unit to assist residents of Des Moines, Iowa, whose water system has been contaminated by floodwaters since July 11. This unit and an identical one, purchased with Home Mission Board disaster relief funds, were trucked to Des Moines by Texas Baptist Men volunteers arriving July 15.

Each unit, manufactured by Global Waters Technology in Dallas, can purify up to 50,000 gallons of water every 24 hours. Eddie Pettit of the Brotherhood Commission staff in Memphis arrived in Des Moines to supervise their placement. One site was confirmed at the Cornerstone Baptist Church in Ankeny, Iowa, about 10 miles north of downtown Des Moines.

In the meantime, disaster relief feeding units owned by state Southern Baptist conventions in Missouri and Illinois have been active since the July 4 weekend in flood-stricken areas of their respective states.

As of July 15, the Illinois unit remained at its original location in Pleasant Hill, Ill., on the Mississippi River south of Quincy. The unit was serving about 4,100 meals per day, delivered over a wide area by emergency vehicles. A total of more than 33,000 meals had been served by the Illinoisans since the July 4 opening.

Missouri Baptist Convention volunteers have been serving about 8,000 meals per day at Edmundson Road Baptist Church in St. Louis, about 700 meals per day at First Baptist Church of Winfield north of St. Louis and about 150 per day at First Baptist Church of Weston near Kansas City.

According to Jim Furgerson, disaster relief coordinator at the Brotherhood Commission, the response to the flooding in the Midwest is just beginning and has yet to reach the scope of the Southern Baptist involvement in the wake of Hurricane Andrew last year.

"The Red Cross tells us that about 250,000 meals have been served from all sources since this flood emergency began," Furgerson said. "Some of our units in south Florida were serving 150,000 each day" at the peak of the response to Andrew.

The American Red Cross also said July 15 that 22,000 dwelling units had been destroyed or severely damaged; this compares to more than 50,000 homes lost in Florida.

Furgerson added the number of Southern Baptists involved in the response is likely to grow. State convention Brotherhood offices in Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee are recruiting volunteers to meet needs that will arise when the waters recede, including additional feeding and "mud-out" work.

Those who wish to make donations for purchase of the water purification units and initial relief may send contributions, designated for water purification, to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104, (901) 272-2461.

Gifts for disaster relief are also being received by the Home Mission Board, 1350 Spring St. N.W., Atlanta, GA 30367-5601, or the missions divisions of state Baptist conventions in the affected areas.

Prospective volunteers for relief efforts should call their state convention Brotherhood director or the Home Mission Board at 1-800-HMB-VOLS.

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Missionary uses pick-up truck  
for mini disaster relief unit

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
7/16/93

DES MOINES, Iowa (BP)--With a 200-gallon water tank, the state missions director in Iowa turned his pick-up into a mini disaster relief unit.

Richard Lamborn lives about 35 miles from the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship office. When floodwaters closed the Des Moines water treatment plant, Lamborn's community allowed people to fill water tanks from fire hydrants.

Lamborn, a home missionary, bought a 200-gallon tank and loaded it into his pick-up. Every day on his way to the office, he fills the tank at a fire hydrant. Throughout the day, people from the community fill water jugs from the tank as it sits in the parking lot at the state fellowship office.

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Lamborn's reaction to the lack of drinking water in Des Moines addressed the most dangerous flood-related situation in Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

State and associational directors of missions reported the only damage to church buildings and pastors' homes was water in basements. C.J. Langton, director of missions for Minnesota's Pioneer and Western associations, said the associations' bookkeeper had water in her basement for more than five weeks.

David Sundeen, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Marshall, Minn., said his community has had three floods since May. Though the downpours backed up the city's storm sewers, Sundeen said the floods were "really mild" compared damage reported in other parts of the country.

In Iowa, most people had housing and food during the flood because they had enough warning to evacuate, Lamborn said. But the lack of clean water was inconvenient as well as dangerous.

Restaurants in the Des Moines area closed because workers could not wash their hands as they prepared food, said Wanda Spencer, wife of Bill Spencer, director of missions for Des Moines' Metro Baptist Association.

Authorities predict Des Moines residents will have to wait at least 30 days for safe drinking water in their homes, she said. Although water should be running to households before then, it will be at least a month before officials can guarantee its safety.

Two water purification units, and people to train volunteers to run the units, arrived in Des Moines July 15, Lamborn said. The units were donated by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission and the Home Mission Board.

Lamborn said providing fresh water will be good public relations for Iowa Southern Baptists. "It will let people know we're here and that we care."

When the flood water recedes, volunteers will be needed to clean mud out of homes and churches, Lamborn said. People can contact their state Brotherhood office or the Home Mission Board at 1-800-HMB-VOLS to volunteer.

The Arkansas Baptist Convention, which has a partnership program with the Iowa Fellowship, and other state conventions, associations and churches already have offered assistance, Lamborn said.

Iowa residents are tired from fighting the flood but their spirits are beginning to perk up as they believe the major crisis is over, Lamborn said.

"Native Iowans think an optimistic attitude and hard work will solve anything," Lamborn said.

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Religious leaders blast Russian law  
banning missionaries; Yeltsin to sign?

Baptist Press  
7/16/93

By Martha Skelton & Erich Bridges

MOSCOW (BP)--A crescendo of criticism and warnings about a return to a totalitarian past is rising in Moscow after the July 14 vote by the Russian parliament of a law that would restrict or ban foreign mission work in Russia.

The law sets up a dramatic conflict between Russian Orthodox and hard-line nationalist forces on the one hand and, on the other hand, democratic legislators, human rights and religious liberty groups, Protestants and other religious groups.

The question is, which side will Russian President Boris Yeltsin join?

Yeltsin must sign the measure within 14 days for it to become law. A spokesman indicated July 15 he may do so.

The July 14 vote amends Russia's historic Freedom of Conscience legislation enacted in October 1990, which marked the end of seven decades of religious repression. It forbade government interference in religious activities.

The revised measure would allow foreigners "to carry on activities as individual religious workers" only if they are affiliated with a Russian religious organization. It requires other foreign representatives of religion, as well as Russian citizens appointed under the authority of a foreign religious organization, to receive a special "accreditation."

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The law decrees "independent activities of foreign religious organizations, their representations, and individual religious workers ... including religious-missionary, publishing, and advertising-propaganda activities, are not permitted on the territory of the Russian Federation."

The organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Russia -- now numbering about 20 -- received "legal person" status earlier this year, clearing the way for missionaries to buy and sell property, hire people and bring supplies into the country. The Russian government currently recognizes it as a nonprofit religious organization.

Whether that recognition strengthens Southern Baptist missionaries' position in regard to the new law is in question, said attorney Lauren Homer, who filed for their legal status. But even if that status is negated, the missionaries may still call on their affiliation with the Russian Baptist union, although some legal adjustments might have to be made in that relationship, Homer said.

Evangelical leaders in Russia are calling for Christians in other countries to ask their legislators to notify Yeltsin of their concern. Leaders of six Protestant groups, including Baptists, signed a petition to Yeltsin July 15 protesting the law's passage.

"We appeal to our brothers and sisters in Christ at this critical time to immediately respond with prayer and expressions of protest to key Russian leaders," said Alexander Firisiuk in a statement released July 16. Firisiuk is general secretary of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.

Two U. S.-based international Baptist organizations, the Baptist World Alliance and the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, have been among the first to join Firisiuk in his plea -- urging contact with media, U. S. congressmen (such as Senator Richard Lugar, who has expressed opposition to the law), and other key opinion leaders.

"The implications (of the law) are dire for non-Russian groups trying to work with us within our country," Firisiuk warned. "If this law is implemented, it will be impossible for any foreign missionary organization to work here. The law uses the same language and methods of the old Soviet law. The difference is we can protest freely, and this we must do.

"Other implications affect local believers. It practically forbids our relations with outside groups. It isolates us. This law was adopted under pressure from the Russian Orthodox Church. There is no guarantee that tomorrow local church activities will not face similar legislative restrictions."

Baptist leader Alexander Ivanovich told the Moscow Tribune the Orthodox church and Parliament are "discriminating directly against the Protestant church. We remember that while Russia was a totalitarian state, the Protestant church was (persecuted). And now the Russian Orthodox Church, which has a communist infrastructure, doesn't allow for tolerance of any other religious group."

Sergei Kovalyov, chairman of the Parliament's human rights committee, seemed to agree. "In the best case, the amendment was not well thought out," he told a Moscow newspaper. "In the worst case, it is an attempt by the Russian Orthodox Church, which has a centuries-long history as the state church, to once again gain a monopoly for itself in the country."

If Yeltsin signs the law, Russian religious groups can appeal to the Constitutional Court -- similar to the U.S. Supreme Court. Probable grounds for the appeal would be the law's violation of the current Russian constitution, adopted in 1990, and the proposed Yeltsin constitution not yet adopted, according to Anita Deyneka of the Christian Resource Center in Moscow, an evangelical public affairs agency.

Firisiuk, however, said the Constitutional Court "offers us little hope of justice."

Ironically, the 1990 constitution insuring religious freedom was adopted during the last days of communist rule. The new law, which could reverse advances in religious freedom, was passed under a more democratic government.

In recent months Russian Orthodox leaders have harshly criticized the access to radio and television given to evangelicals and the many evangelical ministries now operating in Russia.

Some Orthodox and nationalist forces have tried to blame the economic, political and moral struggles now shaking the country on such outside influences. They call for Russia to return to its traditional Orthodox roots.

"We feel that the (foreign) missionaries are richer than the Russian Orthodox Church, so it's easier for the missionaries to spread their propaganda. That's not fair," said Illya Konstantinov of the conservative National Salvation Front in an interview with the Moscow Tribune. These missionaries, he alleged, are trying to destroy traditional Russian culture and the leading role of the Orthodox church.

Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexy supported the measure, saying it "met the hopes and needs of the Orthodox clergy ... and opened new perspectives for serving the church in contemporary Russian society." He urged lawmakers last year to "adopt legislative measures preventing the creation in Russia of a network of quite well-to-do religious organizations."

But Orthodox priest Gleb Yakunin, a member of Parliament and former human rights dissident, told participants at a June seminar on the proposed law that Russia's bloodless transition to democracy "indicates that Western Christians who cared prayed for Russia." He called the new law "an attempt to reinstate the Iron Curtain."

Heinrich Mikhailov, a spokesman for President Yeltsin attending the seminar, said it was too early to speak of a government attitude toward religion.

"The president wishes to cooperate with all religious denominations," he said. "A number of denominations have doubled (in size) in the past year." He assured listeners that the executive branch of government wants no involvement in the internal affairs of churches.

But Yeltsin is likely to sign the law, according to another presidential spokesman quoted by the Moscow Times.

Yeltsin's supporters in parliament said they would ask him not to sign the law because it discriminates against foreigners and contradicts international human rights accords signed by Russia, reported the Times. But Yeltsin spokesman Anatoly Krasikov said he saw "no reason" for the president to oppose the measure.

In a meeting with Yeltsin in April, religious leaders of many denominations expressed concern about "illegal activity of foreign churches and preachers," Krasikov said. "They come with lots of money and tourist visas, they buy up air time and rent huge halls."

"In general, the president agreed that it was necessary to regulate the activity of churches," Krasikov concluded.

A legislator who helped draft the law told the Times that punishment for violating it might include fines or short jail sentences. The law would affect American Christian evangelists such as Jimmy Swaggart and Pat Robertson and religious groups such as the Mormons and Hare Krishnas, said the legislator, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

By the end of June, Mikhailov said, about 50 foreign religious groups -- mostly Christian -- had registered with the government to obtain legal status. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board is one of those groups. However, more than 1,000 mission organizations reportedly operate in Russia.

Groups previously registered might be required to re-register, Yakunin warned. He said a four-month period could follow Yeltsin's signing of the law before enforcement begins.

If groups are required to re-register, "it could mean that every new church, denomination and parachurch organization now in Russia can be closed down ... subjecting hundreds of U.S. citizens to potential arrest or deportation for violation of this law," said a statement issued by Gammon and Grange, a U.S. law firm that has helped some groups, including the Foreign Mission Board, gain legal status in Russia.

The law also discriminates against other major Russian religious groups, including Roman Catholics and Armenian Apostolic clergy, said the statements, which could lead to "serious ethnic and religious tensions at a most inopportune time."

The major Moscow newspaper Izvestia also strongly condemned the measure, saying it was aimed against the very organizations that had long campaigned for the rights of believers persecuted by the Soviet regime. Baptists are among such groups.

The Russian branch of the International Religious Liberty Association charged the law was drafted "without consultations with representatives of major ... religious organizations in Russia. Therefore those who will be directly affected by this law were neither able to express their opinion nor to prevent the deplorable mistake of the lawmakers.

"One does not have to be a prophet...to see how...the state body which is to accredit foreign representatives of religious organizations will find itself in the hands of those who want to establish in Russia the monopoly of one ideology. This will turn our society away from the path of building a state governed by just laws. Introduction of censorship on religious literature published abroad and the jamming of foreign mass media will be a logical consequence of the adoption of this law."

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#### Sidebar to Russian story

Baptist leaders urge protest  
of new Russia religion law

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7/16/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--People opposing a new law that would cripple religious liberty and human rights in Russia are being urged by Baptist leaders around the world to register their opposition.

Some suggested steps:

-- Call your U.S. senator and representative at (202) 224-3121 and ask them to join with Senator Richard Lugar's opposition by signing his letter to Russian President Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin must decide to whether to sign the law.

-- Call the White House at (202) 456-1111 and tell the operator you want President Bill Clinton to take action to persuade President Yeltsin to refuse to sign the bill into law -- or at least to have an impact on implementing regulation and enforcement.

-- Register support for Senator Lugar by sending a FAX message to (202) 224-7877 or telephoning his office at (202) 224-1290.

-- Send a FAX to Boris Yeltsin at 011-7-095-206-3961 or 011-7-095-206-3591.

-- Send a FAX to the Russian Embassy in Washington at (202) 347-5028.

-- Contact media and other key opinion leaders.

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HMB expresses support  
for Marine chaplain

By Martin King

Baptist Press  
7/16/93

ATLANTA (BP)--Directors of the Home Mission Board endorsed a resolution during their July board meeting commending the U.S. Marine Corps' head chaplain for his stand regarding biblical teachings on homosexuality.

The resolution was a response to criticism directed at Capt. Larry Ellis, a Southern Baptist chaplain, said Huey Perry, director of the HMB's chaplaincy division. The Home Mission Board is the endorsing agency for Southern Baptist military chaplains.

The resolution commends Ellis for his strong stand which "has encouraged and enabled chaplains of various faith groups and in all military services to stand tall in these days of challenge," and for his "spiritual integrity, courage and boldness."

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Ellis' office produced a position paper supporting the military's ban on homosexuals. The report received coverage by the New York Times drawing criticism from at least two members of Congress as well as the homosexual community and some chaplains in other military branches.

The resolution also expressed support and encouragement for all Southern Baptist chaplains "as they stand and speak the truth in all matters of faith."

In other business, the missions board appointed 42 new home missionaries, approved \$2.8 million in church loans for 22 Southern Baptist congregations and elected Jamie W. Cook and Carl D. Barrington to serve on the HMB staff in Atlanta.

Cook, a Georgia native and graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, will serve as director of information services at the board.

Barrington, elected as associate director of the mission service corps department, is a native of Oklahoma but has served on staff of churches in Texas as well as Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

The board also recognized the widow and family of a former board member who bequeathed more than \$200,000 to the Home Mission Board. Virginia Brannon was presented with a framed copy of a resolution of appreciation for her late husband, George, from the directors for dedicated service to the agency. Brannon, an Atlanta attorney and former member of the HMB board of directors, stipulated in his will that the funds be used for loans and to purchase Soul Winner's New Testaments for small Southern Baptist churches.

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David Winfrey contributed to this story.

**Baptists mobilize volunteers  
for Olympic Festival '93**

**Baptist Press  
7/16/93**

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--As tens of thousands of athletes and spectators converge on San Antonio for the U.S. Olympic Festival '93, July 23-Aug. 1, the 180 churches and missions of the San Antonio Baptist Association, along with 40 churches from other states, have united to create a Texas-size welcome and ministry.

With well over 1,000 volunteers enlisted as hospitality teams to serve in welcome centers, first-aid stations and various ministry areas near the 27 athletic competition sites, the Baptist association's "Lift the Light" summer ministry team will host their official kickoff salute to the festival with a youth celebration rally Monday, July 26, at 7 p.m. at First Baptist Church in San Antonio.

Rebecca Short, the association's summer ministries coordinator, has spent the past seven months developing and implementing the San Antonio sports ministry, which is another example of the rapidly expanding venue of sports evangelism for Southern Baptists. Similar efforts were developed for the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona and are planned for the 1996 games in Atlanta.

"This is truly a unique, large-scale ministry opportunity for us as San Antonio Baptists," Short said. "Our church members want to be able to extend a warm hand of friendship and fellowship to the many thousands who are coming to our city from all over the United States to be a part of the Olympic Festival."

In addition to hospitality teams at the five athletic housing sites and visitor welcome centers, plans also include a noticeable presence of 500 attendees at the opening ceremonies July 23 and various Christian artists performing at the Arneson River Theater at different times throughout the week and on river barges from 6-8 p.m., July 14-31. In conjunction with these activities, hundreds of sports clinics and Bible clubs will be held with inner-city youth.

More information about "Life the Light" ministries can be obtained by phoning (210) 525-9954.

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Fiction is in at  
Christian book show

By David Winfrey

ATLANTA (BP)--Once banished to a lone shelf in the back of Christian bookstores, fiction with Christian characters or themes is gaining greater acceptance by readers and publishers, say industry representatives at their annual trade show.

"Fiction is definitely the hottest thing there is," said Ron Beers, vice president for editorial at Tyndale House.

Westerns, romance novels and historical fiction dotted displays of major publishing houses at the Christian Booksellers Association's annual meeting July 12-15 in Atlanta. Better writing and proven success spawned new interest by publishers, said Beers and others.

"For so long, Christian fiction has been lacking in literary excellence," said Sandy Rigney, advertising and publicity manager for Moody Press. "Just now are we beginning to get manuscripts and authors that don't have some hidden agendas but are able to write a good story."

Described by some as a story with a Christian attitude, such fiction is not always about spiritual conversions, said Christine Anderson, marketing manager for Zondervan Publishing House.

"Christian consumers like to read things they can learn from but yet are clean," she said. "I don't think readers want to be clubbed over the head with a message."

Andy Le Peau, editorial director of InterVarsity Press, said more publishers are backing fiction because "success breeds imitation." Frank Peretti's "Prophet" sold almost 800,000 copies since its release last year.

"For the CBA market, there's only four or five (books) a year that get up to that number," said Dick Malone, vice president for product purchasing at Spring Arbor, a Christian book distributor.

Helped by Peretti, fiction grew to 9 percent of all Christian book sales in 1992 but dropped to 8 this year, Malone said. "I don't think the industry has caught up with the fact that there are more titles."

Big-name authors writing on spiritual growth or family matters continue to dominate this market where seven figure advances are not unusual, said Zondervan's Anderson. "It's always been the name game."

Other hot topics this year include personal finance and prophecy. "As the year 2000 approaches, (books on prophecy) are going to continue to prosper," said InterVarsity's Le Peau.

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'Informal dignity' describes  
traditional worship style

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
7/16/93

(Following is the first in a series on Southern Baptist worship styles.)

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Traditional Southern Baptist worship, as least as Bill James can describe it out of his experience, is "informal dignity."

James, minister of music at Wilshire Baptist Church of Dallas, further defined what some might feel is a contradictory description as "worship having some structure, but relaxed."

As leader of one in a series of classes during Church Music Leadership Conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, James talked about his perception of traditional worship and led in a demonstration worship service.

He contrasted services at his church with those of more liturgical worship styles as "retaining more of the older Baptist traditions in some measure, particularly in music." He acknowledged some common practices with his more liturgical counterparts.

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James said his thinking on traditional worship was affected significantly several years ago at Glorieta during a conference in which Bruce Leafblad of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary pointed to the model for worship in Isaiah 6:1-9.

Since that learning experience, James has held to seven elements of worship: revelation of God, adoration of God, confession, expiation and forgiveness, proclamation, dedication and a commission.

"Worship is communion with God," James told his fellow musicians and worship leaders. "We tend to sit and watch television, sit and watch movies, sit and watch sports, so we are inclined to sit and watch at church.

"But worship involves communion with God, so I try to lead the congregation to become involved and make every element of the service their own."

James said he believes worship is the most important activity of the church. "If people can worship well together, then every other program of the church will thrive," he declared.

To focus the worship leaders, as well as the congregation, on purposeful services, Wilshire Church has developed a mission statement for worship:

"The purpose of the worship ministry is to stimulate the gathered people of God to worship the God revealed in Scripture as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

"The pastoral and music ministries will utilize the diverse gifts of the congregation and the diverse traditions of Christian worship, giving leadership through prayer, praise and proclamation by rehearsing the drama of salvation centered in Christ to the end that God be honored and celebrated and the worshippers be enlightened and transformed."

James said to achieve their mission for worship, the church has established seven guidelines:

- 1) To balance and integrate God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the themes of worship.
- 2) To balance the moods of worship related to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- 3) To balance and integrate the traditions of worship related to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- 4) To use Scripture as the primary source of worship and preaching.
- 5) To use a wide variety of persons of diverse ages, genders and life experiences in worship.
- 6) To use a wide variety of musical offerings with diverse groups, individuals and instruments to provide a variety of musical styles.
- 7) To encourage the congregation to participate in worship enthusiastically and actively.

James emphasized music in worship is not entertainment.

The musicians "are not entertainment groups," he said. "Even music which might lend itself to the perception of entertainment, we try to present in a way that emphasizes the text and the message of the music."

Like more liturgical churches, James said his church celebrates Advent, Holy Week and other observances of the Christian calendar.

However, he said the church has never announced an intention to follow a calendar plan. "We have used what the worship committee has expressed an interest in doing," he said.

"We use 'The Baptist Hymnal, 1991' because of the traditional hymns, gospel hymns and some of the choruses. It is a valuable tool for us."

Worship leaders encourage each other to be "pew-friendly," he observed. "We try to think from the pew."

Though James is not sure his church fits everyone's definition of traditional Southern Baptist worship, he said Wilshire's style may be considered flexible.

"We are constantly learning and constantly trying to perfect a worship style that is effective for our people."

Church Music Leadership Conference was conducted by the Baptist Sunday School Board's church music ministries department.

Liturgy aids congregation,  
worship leader declares

By Charles Willis

(Following is the second in a series on Southern Baptist worship styles.)

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Liturgical worship has gotten an undeserved, bad reputation among some Southern Baptists, in Michael Marcades' estimation.

Marcades, minister of music and worship at Second Baptist Church of Lubbock, Texas, said he frequently finds Southern Baptists who believe liturgical worship is cold, stiff, formal and downright unevangelistic.

Since Marcades helps plan liturgical worship for his church, he said he knows neither the leaders nor the congregation aspire to those descriptions. Like other Southern Baptist churches, Second Baptist of Lubbock wants to be known as a warm, friendly church that puts people in a personal relationship with God, Marcades said.

Liturgical worship was one of several styles discussed and demonstrated for participants during Church Music Leadership Conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

While Marcades knows what is meaningful at his church, he agrees every church does not have to worship in the same way. He said he believes each worship planner should provide a worship style that "will help your people grow in faith."

To reach younger people, Marcades said he thinks Southern Baptists must "realize there is more than one way to worship. I hope Baptists will relax a little and realize that the gospel can be shared in different, effective ways and not be so hung up on the same (worship) experience everywhere."

The problem, as Marcades says he sees it, is many people have formed their impressions of liturgical worship from assumptions about some highly liturgical denominations or from a personal experience in another denomination in which they did not feel included.

The word liturgy means "the work of the people," Marcades said, and as it is practiced in his church, liturgical worship provides "lots of opportunity for people to interact during worship. It's not rigid. Our goal is just the opposite. The worshiper has to come with the intent of participating."

The liturgical approach, as Marcades sees it, is "a map that is fairly easily followed. At any given point in the service, I know where we are and where we are going. The service is not personality-centered.

"Everything that happens does not lead up to the preacher speaking for 25 minutes. Every element -- including responsive reading, silence, congregational singing, the use of simple symbols, among others -- is highly intentional and is an important part of worship."

And Marcades said liturgical worship does not necessarily mean the use of "boring music that nobody understands." He said he leads his church to use a variety of music that includes both works that "have been around forever" and compositions by persons who are still very much alive. He said he is determined that all music he chooses "be soundly based in Scripture, have a healthy theology and be long-lasting music."

Many liturgical congregations choose to observe the "church year," he said, including Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost.

"When Christmas comes, it's over for greeting card stores," Marcades observed. "For Christians, it's just beginning. That's why we observe the Festival of Christmas and Epiphany."

On the other hand, Marcades declines to give worship time to observance of some other holidays. "The Fourth of July is not related to our worship service." Observances of Mother's Day and Father's Day are done in the context of the Christian home, he said, and like Southern Baptist Convention emphases, "We fit them into our worship flow. We don't let it take over what we are doing."

Whatever worship style persons may prefer, Marcades said he is convinced that today, more than ever before, "people are looking for meaningful worship and meaningful Christian education."

For the variety of personal needs in worship styles, including the liturgical style, Marcades said he believes Southern Baptists are prepared to respond.

'Blended' worship combines  
traditional, contemporary

By Charles Willis

(Following is the third in a series on Southern Baptist worship styles.)

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Dennis Goskie says all worship leaders are called to minister to a particular group of people in a particular geographic area.

That is why he combines traditional and contemporary worship elements in a "blended" worship style. Also, he plans worship that is sensitive to "seekers" who may have been away from church for many years or who may never have entered a church before.

As minister of music and worship at First Baptist Church of Albuquerque, N.M., Goskie knows his church reaches diverse cultures and religious backgrounds. Among worshippers on any given Sunday may be persons of Hispanic, Asian, Native American (Zuni and Navajo), African-American and Anglo cultures. The congregation may include street people.

Some participants have grown up Southern Baptist, while others come from Catholic or Pentecostal traditions.

He said he strives to meet a wide range of worship needs to create what he hopes will be "a warm, but free worship" appealing both to the unchurched people and long-time church members.

Worship, Goskie said, includes nine elements:

- 1) recognizing and declaring the worth of God.
- 2) responding to the needs we have in communion with God.
- 3) acknowledging the presence of God.
- 4) rejoicing in the redeeming love of God.
- 5) celebrating the fellowship of God made possible by the work of Christ.
- 6) serving in the power of God, leading us to reach out and touch others in the name of Jesus Christ.
- 7) responding by thanksgiving in the assurance that we are eternally the children of God.
- 8) personal and corporate, intimate and holy.
- 9) an expression of what God has done in our lives all week.

Goskie leads participants to use worship elements that can make a variety of persons feel comfortable. In music, he uses hymns of doctrine and theology as well as choruses.

On a recent Sunday morning, the worship service at the Albuquerque church began with a prelude and continued with a baptismal service, pastoral welcome, chorus, baby dedication, traditional hymn, chorus, prayer, giving of tithes and offerings, choral anthem accompanied by a praise orchestra, another chorus, message on the pursuit of holiness, traditional hymn of response and a postlude.

"Our people raise their hands and shout," he said. "God says, 'Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.' We have no sacred cows. We have to listen to where our people are."

Visitors are invited to tear a brief survey form from a flap of the bulletin. Included with the request for personal information is a space to indicate how the person learned about the church, a space to indicate any decision made that Sunday, another to request information on any of a dozen topics and a space to list prayer requests. Members also use the form to request staff prayer or other actions.

Churches, like individuals, are in varied points of growth, Goskie observed.

"If the Holy Spirit leads us to a lost person on a Tuesday evening," he said, "why can't the Holy Spirit lead a lost person into our worship service on Sunday?"

"We hope they find the Christ who lives in our lives."

Musician says praise,  
worship lead to God

By Charles Willis

(Following is the fourth in a series on Southern Baptist worship styles.)

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--The launching pad for praise and worship is "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise," according to Michael Burt.

As minister of music for Houston's Champion Forest Baptist Church, Burt has helped plan church services using the praise and worship style for almost four years.

"Worship is meeting with God," Burt told church musicians during a series of classes on varied Southern Baptist worship styles at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center. He defined praise as "celebrating the work, the ways and the character of God. If we confuse praise with worship, we commit heresy," he said.

Burt said praise and worship are characterized in music as horizontal or vertical, with horizontal being believers talking about God to each other and vertical being songs addressed to God.

For Burt, music is a big part of the praise and worship style. Although his background is more in the liturgical and traditional forms of worship, Burt said God has placed him in the praise and worship style "for this season of my life."

He described praise and worship music as "more of a strong, rhythm-led accompaniment rather than traditional organ- or piano-led. During the music portion of a typical praise-and-worship service, Burt may lead the congregation in as many traditional hymns as he does choruses, though the tempo is upbeat and the accompaniment does not sound like it may in some other churches.

Burt said he is committed to using music that strengthens Christians and helps instruct new believers. He remains a supporter of using the hymnal in services.

"Let's don't ever throw that hymnal out the back door," he urged. "Those hymns of faith will out-last one-line songs.

"If music is not used to lead others to God's very throne room, the music is in vain," he said.

Burt said he does not believe in a service for a sanctuary of observers. The only observer, he said, should be God.

"Traditionally, God has been viewed as the prompter, the worship leaders have been the participants and the congregation was viewed as the audience," he continued. "The worship leaders should be the prompters, the congregation should be the participants and God should be the audience.

"Does the Bible say, 'Come before him and listen to others sing?' No. It says, 'Come before him and sing.'"

Burt said he sees his role in worship planning as "creating worship with music we can use to encourage one another and evangelize the world. We've got to focus on the tender and serious part of coming before God's throne," he declared.

Burt lists seven elements he said he believes characterize the praise and worship style:

- 1) expresses our praise to God.
- 2) is vertical, not only horizontal.
- 3) can often be sacrificial.
- 4) is a delivery system for Scripture.
- 5) involves everyone.
- 6) springs from the heart.
- 7) develops a praise and worship lifestyle.

Burt said his personal study of Old Testament worship has led him to advocate today's praise and worship style. But he issues a caution: Be careful not to praise "praise" or worship "worship"; this is idolatry.

"The only worship leader we have is God himself," Burt concluded. "When we meet with God and worship, the only thing that follows is obedience."

Church Music Leadership Conference was sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's church music ministries department.

'Seeker' worship style  
targets the unchurched

By Charles Willis

(Following is the last in a series on Southern Baptist worship styles.)

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--"Church for the unchurched" is how Mark Royce describes the worship style at Van Ness Community Church in Fresno, Calif.

Royce, bivocational music minister for the church, described for fellow musicians at Church Music Leadership Conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, the worship style some call "seeker-oriented."

While the church, a Southern Baptist congregation, will gladly include anyone who wants to worship with them, their target audience is people between 25 and 45 years old who probably have not been involved in church very much, Royce said.

"Some may have attended church as children but not as adults. Others may have come from another denominational background but have not felt completely satisfied with the experience," he said. "A lot of unchurched people are looking for something to give their children, so the real contact point is Sunday morning when they come in response to one of our mailings."

The Van Ness church sends postcards or brochures to a mailing list of 25,000 people twice a year, primarily to advertise a sermon series by pastor Steve Williams.

"We don't use a lot of 'churchy' language," Royce said, "and we describe our church as having a relaxed, comfortable environment. There is absolutely no concession to the fact that we believe Jesus Christ is Lord."

The church is a come-as-you-are kind of congregation. Royce describes the mix of people as "grandmothers in flowered dresses to accountants in suits to bicycle enthusiasts in shorts."

Visitors are provided proof of the message in the printed advertisements when they arrive.

"We work real hard to protect their anonymity, as much as they want it protected," Royce said. "There is no pressure. We don't identify visitors but try to make them welcome."

Contemporary and celebrative is the description Royce gives the music that visitors hear when they enter the auditorium of the junior high school where the congregation gathers. Up-tempo hymns in contemporary forms and choruses are paired with texts in the vernacular to make the message accessible, he continued.

Overhead projection of the words to hymns and choruses helps those who do not know the words and keeps people's heads up while they participate.

Drama or a video clip from a television program may be used to raise an issue to be dealt with in the service. A 30-minute message follows approximately 25 minutes of music and other worship activities.

Royce describes the sermon as "very conversational, very practical." As in other Southern Baptist churches, Royce said the message always has an evangelistic emphasis, the amount of that emphasis related directly to the sermon topic.

Baptisms, conducted in the private swimming pools of church members and at fitness center pools, come every couple of months, he said. People who request membership or baptism attend a class where Baptist doctrine, the church's affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention, tithing and baptism are discussed fully but informally, sometimes during a dessert event at the pastor's home.

Outside the church, members conduct outreach through non-threatening activities such as singles discussion groups, outings to sporting events or daytime groups for mothers with small children.

When the church was begun five years ago, founding members conducted a survey to determine why some people in their community do not attend church. Among the findings were unchurched people generally do not relate to church music, Royce said.

"Preaching was viewed as not understandable or not applicable to their lives. In order to reach these people, we had to give up what we were to meet them where they are," he said.

The absence of the Southern Baptist identification in the church's name is significant, Royce said, because of the erroneous perceptions some people have of Southern Baptists in some parts of the United States. For those in California who have a stereotype of Southern Baptists, it is the Hollywood portrayal of rigid fanatics, he observed.

"We're not ashamed of being Southern Baptist at all," he said. "But if we put Southern Baptist on the front of the church, there are a lot of people who won't find out how great we are. If we can get them in the door, we can help them get rid of the emotional baggage they may have against Baptists. We want to get them to a place where they can meet Jesus.

"Jesus gave up all that he was to come into our environment to bring us salvation," Royce continued. "A lot of unchurched persons find church a foreign environment. Some churches are not willing to give up who they are to make the unchurched feel comfortable.

"There's a lot of wonderful preaching going on for the saved, and that's great," he said. "It takes all different types of church personalities to reach all different kinds of people personalities. We've got a whole mission field of people in the United States who don't understand our (church) culture.

"What we are preaching and teaching at our church is no different from what is being preached and taught at any other Southern Baptist church," Royce maintained. "But you have to get people in the door before you can teach them those things.

"People are in various stages of readiness to accept Christ, but once they make that commitment, we don't just get them, dunk them and let them go. We have classes for every stage of growth," he continued.

In August, the church, now averaging 270 in attendance, will begin a midweek service oriented to believers, he added.

Royce said he hopes Southern Baptists who prefer other worship styles will support what Van Ness church and others like it are doing, even though it does not match their concept of they way church ought to be.

"We'll shed whatever we are perceived to be for the sake of Christ," he said.

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GA members to meet  
'Buffy Bookworm'

By Susan Doyle

Baptist Press  
7/16/93

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--As summer reading clubs wind down across the country, "Buffy Bookworm" will be ready to step in and take their places.

The Buffy Bookworm Reading Club for girls in elementary school will be introduced to members of Girls in Action this fall. Girls in Action is the missions organization sponsored by Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union for girls in grades one through six.

A reading club is not entirely new to members of GA, said Sylvia DeLoach, national Girls in Action specialist for WMU. An informal reading club was suggested once through member magazines.

"There was so much response from the girls and their leaders, the Buffy Bookworm Reading Club was formed," DeLoach said.

While the reading club is something fun and something the girls want, they will benefit from the club as they learn more about missions, she said.

Guidelines and reading options will be provided in the GA leader magazine, Aware, and the GA member magazine, Discovery. Brochures with suggested reading lists also will be available from state WMU offices.

"When the girls enroll, they'll receive a list of books graded by age," DeLoach said. "For example, we've chosen books so that they're not going to intimidate the first-grader."

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Members of the Buffy Bookworm Reading Club will be encouraged to choose a book from the suggested reading list, read the book, write the name of the book on the Buffy Bookworm Reading club form and get her GA leader to initial the title on the form. When girls complete the suggested number of books for their age levels, the forms can then be sent to the national WMU office.

First-graders will be asked to read four books. Girls in the second, third and fourth grades will read six books. Fifth-graders will read seven books while girls in the sixth grade will read eight.

Members of the reading club who complete their suggested levels will receive a certificate and a letter of congratulations from the editor of Discovery magazine. Members of the reading club also will receive a club newsletter.

"Girls this age like the idea of clubs," DeLoach said. "I think it's going to be a lot of fun. It's just the kind of thing I would have liked to do."

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Russian ban on missionaries might not affect FMB work," dated 7/15/93, please correct the date reference in the first paragraph to July 14, not June 14.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

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