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September 21, 1993

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Newspaper's spin kindles
discussion of 'Who's saved?'

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
9/21/93

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--A daily newspaper's spin on an Alabama Baptist news release -- and the controversy it sparked, reported nationally by the Associated Press -- has opened up discussion of the question of Christian salvation.

The first paragraph of a front-page article in The Birmingham (Ala.) News Sept. 5 declared: "More than 1.86 million people in Alabama, 46.1 percent of the state's population, will be damned to hell if they don't have a born-again experience professing Jesus Christ as their savior, according to a report by Southern Baptist researchers."

The article, which quoted several critics, including one who complained, "What did they get, a Xerox copy of the Lamb's Book of Life?" spawned controversy in Alabama, which prompted a Sept. 17 Associated Press story that was carried by CNN Headline News and newspapers and radio stations across the country.

The late-July Alabama Baptist State Convention news release that prompted The Birmingham News story, however, began: "How great is the need for Christian evangelism in a given county in Alabama? Statistics released by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board answer that question in terms of a county's total number of non-Christian residents, their percentage of its population and its score on an 'evangelism index.'"

David Reid, the Alabama convention's associate for public relations, first wrote a news story for the July 22 issue of The Alabama Baptist dealing with county-by-county statistics developed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, based in part on a survey of U.S. church membership coordinated by the Catholic Glenmary Research Center in Atlanta.

Then Reid circulated the story as a news release to 128 Alabama newspapers in late July. More than 30 used it, Reid said, but the Birmingham story by religion writer Greg Garrison was the only one to give it a different spin.

Reid said he feels the news story misrepresents Baptists as being harshly judgmental and that the story shows how a reporter's perspective influences the direction a story will take.

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"I think most Baptists and other Christians, having read the initial news release, would interpret the research as showing concern for lost people," Reid said. "The story was motivated by our desire to promote evangelism."

Reid said his news release did not mention any specific denomination except Southern Baptists and did not depict Baptists as the only "saved" people. He said the news release focused only on overall county populations.

The flap also "illustrates how the phenomenon of political correctness operates," Reid said. "It is not politically correct to say that Christianity -- a relationship with Jesus Christ -- is the only way to be rightly related to God.

"The gospel has a side to it that is offensive," Reid continued. "When people respond to Jesus by faith, he is the cornerstone. When people respond to Jesus in unbelief, he is a stumbling stone.

"And regardless of the misunderstanding and miscommunication surrounding this story, there still are a lot of people who just don't like to hear that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life."

Garrison, contacted by Baptist Press, said his story "never implied Baptists think they are the only ones going to heaven." He said his story "explained in detail that the Home Mission Board has formulas to estimate the number of born-again Christians based on different categories of church membership, such as more Methodists than Catholics are likely to be saved." (Despite the Alabama Baptist news release's use of the HMB study, the board itself has not publicly released the study or formula in question, according to HMB public relations director Martin King.)

"Although the news release did not mention specific denominations," Garrison said, "the accompanying statistical sheet drawn from the Home Mission Board study did, with columns of population statistics by religious groupings."

Garrison also said, "To say that one believes in evangelism to save souls and yet sidestep the issue of what happens to the unsaved or how they feel is not a full discussion of salvation. For a Baptist press release on a study of the saved and lost to sidestep the issue of damnation is fine, but I explored it more thoroughly - which touched a raw nerve among both saved and lost."

Said Reid, "There is a positive side to this, in that people are talking about what it means to be a Christian."

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'Coalition of Hope' urging
state Baptists to organize

By Bill Webb

Baptist Press
9/21/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--The "Coalition of Hope" coordinating workgroup articulated its vision to "call the Southern Baptist family together" to some 30 state convention leaders June 20 in Nashville then urged them to form study workgroups in each of their states.

The seven-member coordinating workgroup, formed in Houston on the eve of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June, is planning a "Convocation of Hope" sometime next spring to involve the 5 to 20 members of each state workgroup.

"We want to call on you to join our coalition," convener Rodney Osborn, an anesthesiologist from Peoria, Ill., told participants, including a number of state Baptist convention executive directors. Their help is needed, he said, if the fledgling movement is to fulfill its stated mission "to call Southern Baptists, at a critical moment of opportunity and challenge, to new levels of missions commitment and accountability in response to God's fresh call to world evangelism."

A card was distributed to those in attendance to register commitments to forming state-level workgroups, but no tally was announced at the meeting.

Workgroup members repeatedly voiced their commitment to Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program as the financial channel for undergirding that imperative and lamented declines in CP and other missions giving percentages in SBC churches in recent years.

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They suggested state workgroups involve leaders from state conventions, local associations and churches, and include pastors and laity, men and women, ethnics and other minorities. Those workgroups would research Cooperative Program giving levels and trends in their states, including missions giving of the churches of their elected leaders at both the SBC and state levels.

The coordinating workgroup plans to compile that research and use the findings as the basis for dialogue during the Convocation of Hope, still to be scheduled.

Osborn said elected SBC leaders and agency heads would be invited either to attend or send representatives to the Convocation of Hope and participate in open dialogue.

"Admittedly, we all come to this meeting with our own baggage; we bring preconceived notions and agendas," said coordinating workgroup member Quinn Pugh, executive director of New York Baptists.

"Some, no doubt, have judged that the Coalition of Hope workgroup (members) are seeking to oppose persons or programs," he said. "Let it be known that we are not here to protest, but in support of new levels of commitment in response to God's fresh call to evangelism. Let it then be known that if there is opposition it is apathy, intransigence, intimidation, arrogance, exclusiveness and faithlessness that we oppose, not persons or programs."

"We have no authority -- none -- in the Southern Baptist family," Osborn acknowledged. Still, he said the workgroup hopes it may be allowed to report its findings and conclusions during the SBC annual meeting next June in Orlando, Fla.

Workgroup members said they had discussed two research documents, the "Calling the Family Together" report by former Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder that formed the basis for the Houston dialogue and the results of six 1992 CP dialogues sponsored by the SBC Executive Committee.

The coordinating workgroup received Elder's research and recommendations as information when it met in Chicago to adopt its vision and missions statements and objectives in June, Osborn said. However, the workgroup "did not endorse the report."

Elder's report charted a decline in SBC missions giving while the report on the CP dialogues identified four areas of concern regarding the health of the Cooperative Program.

Missouri Baptist Convention President Rodney Travis cited those four areas as matters begging the attention of the Coalition of Hope workgroups.

They involve the current trust level among Southern Baptists, the relationship between SBC and state convention leaders, the need to re-examine the definition and structure of CP and the need for education about CP.

In addition to Osborn, Pugh, Elder and Travis, coordinating workgroup members include Joe Baker, president-elect of Ohio Baptists; Richard Maples, president of Texas Baptists; and Cecil Sims, executive director of the Northwest Baptist Convention.

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Revival in America is near,
say speakers at Ridgecrest

By Keith Hinson

Baptist Press
9/21/93

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--America may soon experience a great revival and spiritual awakening, according to speakers at a launch meeting for "Fresh Encounter" resources held Sept. 13-15 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

The conference was one of two major launches for the workbooks and videotapes on revival and spiritual awakening produced by the Baptist Sunday School Board. An earlier meeting was held at First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas.

"I am very, very convinced that God has begun movement of revival and that we're seeing things happen ... that we have not seen in our lifetime," said Henry Blackaby, co-author of the material and director for prayer and spiritual awakening for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

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"Everywhere I look -- at home, on the campuses, with high school students, with volunteers, in the agencies (of the Southern Baptist Convention) and around the world -- I am seeing an increasing crescendo of the mighty, mighty working of God toward revival," Blackaby said at the meeting where 1,079 people from 22 states registered.

Claude V. King, co-author with Blackaby, agreed. "Revival's coming. ... We're already seeing that God is getting the attention of his people, and your very presence here is an indication that God is at work reviving his people in our day."

Avery Willis, director of the BSSB discipleship and family adult department, said: "I've been operating for a number of years on the premise that God has already promised revival, in fact for at least 15 years. (God) gave me a promise back when he told us to come back from the mission field.

"I'm operating out of the principle that God is going to do this worldwide. ... It's not just in the United States," said Willis, who appears with Blackaby on the two "Fresh Encounter" videotapes. Willis recently was nominated to become senior overseas vice president for the Foreign Mission Board.

Roy Edgemon, director of the BSSB discipleship and family development division, said he is seeing a great deal of pain in the lives of Christians today, including pastors and other church staff members.

"I see the agony. ... Everywhere I go, everywhere I turn, people are hurting. ... I don't think you can have (a spiritual awakening) unless there is that raw pain ... when you reach down, and there's nothing else to reach for, and you can't find anything else. ... We need desperately the touch of God in our land as we've never needed it in our history. This is the time for it," Edgemon said.

Spiritual leaders are a primary factor in revival coming to churches, Blackaby said.

"Obedience is the key to experiencing God. It often begins with the leadership. We have discovered that when revival begins from the bottom up to the leadership, then revival is often experience-centered, very divisive and short-lived. When revival comes from the leadership to the people, it is always Word-centered, very deep and long-lasting," Blackaby said.

A variety of church leaders attended the conference, including pastors, other church staff, directors of missions, deacons, other lay leaders and their spouses.

On Tuesday evening, Willis led participants in a service titled "Responding to God." He invited the group to share something they had learned from God during the event. Numerous people came to the four microphones in Ridgecrest's Spilman Auditorium and shared prayer requests and confessed personal sins.

One pastor confessed to the group he had been preaching the sermons of others, not his own. "Because of the fear I didn't have what it took to be the man God wanted me to be, I preached other men's messages," he said. "I have used other men's programs. I have used other men's words. ... And I have cheated my people (and) myself. I don't want to leave this place without the power of God in my life."

Willis asked the pastor to lead a prayer for himself and for other pastors doing the same thing.

A church staffer said the ministers at his church were caught up in a "tangled web of unforgiveness and deep sea of resentment toward each other." Willis asked him to kneel at the front, inviting anyone who had been through a similar situation to pray with him. Several men came and knelt.

A woman in tears said, "I was 37 before I got saved. I raised my two girls the best I knew how, but it wasn't right. One has gone to be with God, but I have another child whom I need to get reconciled with."

A few minutes later, a pastor's wife tearfully asked the group to pray for her grown son who has been out of church for five years.

"My prayer is for our children," she said, "who were dedicated to the Lord before they were born ... and now they're out of church and away from the Lord. They don't belong to Satan; they belong to the Lord."

Willis asked anyone in the audience with children in a similar situation to stand. He called on Marilyn Blackaby, Henry Blackaby's wife, to pray for the dozen or so parents who stood.

"I pray that you would draw them back to you," she asked God, "and I pray that you would give us some visible signs that you're working in their lives."

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Blackaby: God's discipline
different than Satan's attacks

By Keith Hinson

Baptist Press
9/21/93

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Christians experiencing stress in their personal or professional lives mistakenly may believe they're experiencing spiritual warfare when they really are "under the discipline of God," Henry Blackaby told participants in a national launch of materials on revival and spiritual awakening.

Blackaby, director for prayer and spiritual awakening for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and co-author of "Fresh Encounter" resources produced by the Baptist Sunday School Board, spoke at the three-day conference Sept. 13-15 at the Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

"God does not have a formula or litmus paper," Blackaby said during a panel discussion. "You say, 'Is there a formula?' No, there's a relationship. I've found the closer I walk with God, the more that I'm able to understand when God is displeased with me."

He emphasized the importance of knowing the difference between divine discipline and spiritual warfare. "If you misread the discipline of God and call it spiritual warfare," Blackaby said, "God doesn't have a chance in the world of bringing you back. If every negative and painful thing that comes into your life, if you interpret it as spiritual warfare, God doesn't have a chance in the world of disciplining you."

Blackaby noted Jewish religious leaders of the New Testament who had attributed Jesus' work to Satan and that Jesus had linked their sin with blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

"If you're in the middle of the activity of God and attribute it to Satan, that is a most serious thing to do," Blackaby said. "Would it be important for you to know the difference between Satan's activity and God's discipline? You'd better carefully understand that."

Blackaby advised the group to derive their definition of spiritual warfare from the Bible, not from contemporary Christian fiction or from experience.

The Bible may surprise many Christians who study it to learn how Satan does his work, Blackaby said. Satan's strategy is "to get God's people to do good things at the expense of disobedience to God's best."

"He never tells you to give up the goal. He tells you to get there a different way than God has assigned," Blackaby said.

"We think of spiritual warfare as a deacon putting up his resistance against us," he said. But sometimes when pastors find opposition in their churches, it is because they fail to fulfill the pastoral role of "feeding the sheep," he said.

"They're trying their dead-level best to help you to feed them, and they're starving to death," Blackaby said. "And they've just said, 'Pastor, you'll have to leave, because we've got to find somebody who's going to feed us or we'll die.'"

"That's not spiritual warfare," Blackaby continued. "Don't take that as opposition. Take that as an expression of love."

Blackaby also urged the group to discern the difference between divine discipline, spiritual warfare and the natural consequences of sin. "I think we're disoriented to sin and its consequences," he said. "I can look at some of my people and tell them, 'This isn't Satan. This isn't the discipline of God. This is the consequence of your sin ... and what you need to do is repent.'"

"Satan may be involved, but he doesn't need to be," Blackaby said. "Sin will just carry its own consequences."

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"If you're in a constant way of life that says, 'Th one thing I fear in my life is that I would offend and hurt and dishonor my Lord,' you'll be OK. God will show you the difference," Blackaby said.

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'Experiencing God' reflects
Henry Blackaby's life message By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
9/21/93

ATLANTA (BP)--It's almost disappointing.

The man whose name is synonymous with spiritual awakening among Southern Baptists -- the man who helped add "solemn assembly" to their vocabulary -- never had a lightning bolt experience with God. No writing on the wall. No blinding light on the road to Damascus.

What people hear and read from Henry Blackaby are the convictions of a 58-year-old man who says he never doubted that God is real.

When Blackaby joined the Home Mission Board staff as a leader for spiritual awakening five years ago, the HMB president says he barely knew Blackaby.

"I had only been on a program with him one time before," recalls Larry Lewis. "But I did have a conviction that God had a man to bring us to our knees in prayer."

Now speaking engagements keep Blackaby out of town 25 days a month. One month's span took him to Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, Colorado, Illinois, North Carolina and twice to Texas.

Perhaps his greatest realm of influence is "Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God," the 13-week study material Blackaby co-wrote with Claude King, formerly of the Baptist Sunday School Board. Their second joint venture, "A Fresh Encounter," was released this summer for churches to use to prepare for revival.

In less than three years, the Sunday School Board sold 319,297 "Experiencing God" pupil books and 30,297 leaders' guides. More than 4,000 pupil books were on back order in July.

"Experiencing God" is Blackaby's life message, he says. "I just never put it down in a systematic way before."

Blackaby was born to Christian laypeople in Canada, which he calls one of the world's most pagan countries. Yet an experience in Canada shaped Blackaby's image of revival and his ongoing message.

After graduating from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., and being pastor of two California churches, Blackaby returned to Canada. In 1970 he accepted the call as pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Sask, a congregation of 10 members who had voted to disband. When Blackaby agreed to be their pastor, the people decided to attempt survival.

Blackaby joined other community pastors in prayer for revival. After two years, they witnessed a revival that lasted more than seven weeks. Thousands of lives were touched, and Blackaby was pastor of the once-dying congregation for 12 years.

Longing for Southern Baptists to experience revival like he witnessed in Sask makes Blackaby bold in his call for repentance, although he describes himself as very shy.

While Southern Baptists stress the infallibility of Scripture, Blackaby says one of his pet peeves is people who say they believe the Bible from cover to cover but do not reflect it in their lifestyle.

"One of the tragedies of today is that we're using the Bible as a reference book and using books of men for direction. The Bible is a practical guide for ministry, not a devotional book."

Unanswered questions are one of his favorite teaching tools.

"Southern Baptists are getting stronger numerically, but is our impact greater? Have we substituted our methods for the movement of God?"

"Israelites' enemies were afraid of the God of the Israelites. Are people afraid of the God of Southern Baptists?"

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Blackaby is perhaps best known for his admonition to spend enough time in prayer to know what God expects rather than asking God to bless man-made plans. "God doesn't say figure out what you can do and do it," he says.

His challenge to "be on God's agenda" stems from one of the first stops on his spiritual journey. In his daily prayer time as a teen-ager, Blackaby came to the realization that "God is God, and I am not."

His lifelong commitment to daily communication with God results in a relationship that some envy and others question.

"He seeks the face of God, and that's a scary thing to a lot of people," says Esther Burroughs, Home Mission Board evangelism specialist for women. Burroughs grew up with Blackaby in Canada, where they each played basketball and sang in church music groups.

"In high school I wanted to be around him because I knew his walk with God, and it's the same today," Burroughs says.

People focused on structure can misunderstand Blackaby, says Howard Ramsey, recently retired director of personal evangelism for the Home Mission Board.

Ramsey and Blackaby became friends when Ramsey worked in the Northwest Baptist Convention and Blackaby served in Canada. While Southern Baptists operated on planning and programs, Blackaby operated on faith, Ramsey says. At the time, Canada received no financial support from the Home Mission Board.

"I saw him as someone deep in the Word who prayed about everything he did," Ramsey recounts. "He depended on God. We depended on the Southern Baptist Convention."

Blackaby is still depending on God. Taking the responsibility to lead Southern Baptists to repent and pray for revival "scared me half to death," Blackaby says, "but God told me, 'You cannot affect a convention. I can.'"

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

Henry Blackaby profile:

Title: Director of prayer and spiritual awakening, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board

Born: April 15, 1935, William's Lake, British Columbia, Canada

Education: Bachelor's degree in English from University of British Columbia, Vancouver,

Canada. Bachelor's of divinity and master's of theology from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. Honorary doctorate from Hardin Simmons University in Abilene, Texas

Family: Married to Marilyn for 33 years. She is an Oklahoma native whose family moved to California when she was 14. They met when Blackaby was the best man at Marilyn's sister's wedding. They have five children, four boys and one girl, all of whom are either in or studying for full-time Christian vocations.

Experience: Music and education director and later pastor of Broadway Baptist Church in San Pablo, Calif., 1958-1965; Pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Downey, Calif., 1965-70; Pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Saskatoon, Sask, Canada, 1970-82; President, Canadian Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972-79; Director of missions for Canada's Capilano Association, 1982-88; Home Mission Board special assistant for spiritual awakening, 1988-89; HMB director of prayer and spiritual awakening, 1989 to present

**Writer's faith in God
allows for a new start**

By Terri Lackey

NASHVILLE (BP)--Claude King's agonizing decision to quit his job and write about the sins of churches and God's pattern for revival came four years after God first spoke to him.

That was how long it took for King to realize God really was calling him to leave his job as editor of discipleship materials at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and go on to other work.

"You don't just go and quit your job unless you know God is telling you to," says King.

Ironically, King was co-writing with Henry Blackaby of the Home Mission Board the resource "Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God" when God first spoke to him in 1988 through a dream, "telling me that one day I would have to leave the Sunday School Board."

"I sensed God had spoken to me, but I didn't know the dream's meaning. I recorded the dream with the expectation that if it was to have meaning God would let me know when and would reveal what it meant," King says.

One year later to the day at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, King was inspired to tell a group of about 50 of his dream which included "a rapidly budding rod, three flashes of lightning and the words, 'The Sword of the Lord.'"

"When I told them of my dream, they begin to fall on their knees to pray. Many wept. They cried out to God for forgiveness. This affirmed my sense that the dream did have meaning."

Later that same day, King found the meaning to his dream in Ezekiel, chapters 7 and 21.

Those verses gave King "a strong sense that severe judgment from God was rapidly approaching our land. I also sensed that God was preparing me for a new calling to be a watchman to speak out against sin and to call people to repentance."

In July 1992, when King heard a message by Blackaby about God's remedial judgments on his people and the seven phases of God's pattern for revival and spiritual awakening, he began to get a sense of what God was calling him to do.

By October 1992, King understood he was to quit his job at the Sunday School Board and work to complete "Fresh Encounter," a seven-product series that challenges churches and individuals to get right with God.

The "Fresh Encounter" series comes in two parts, King says. The first is a six-week study detailing God's pattern for revival and spiritual awakening. The second outlines the sins of churches and what they can do to return to God.

Some of the sins of churches, King says, include church splits, unethical financial decisions, treating staff members badly, lack of concern for members who have gone astray and not attending to the poor and needy.

King says he is secure in knowing he made the right decision when he left the Sunday School Board to edit the "Fresh Encounter" series.

In January 1993, a nonprofit organization from Texas, Laity Renewal Ministries, reactivated itself and hired King as executive director.

"The financial support they give allows me to devote my time to the assignments God has given," King says.

"I knew that if God called, he would provide. That's why it took me such a long time to make sure God was calling me."

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**HMB musician warns against
'performer-spectator' worship**

By Keith Hinson

Baptist Press
9/21/93

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--For many Christians today, the most important thing in a church service is what makes them feel good, rather than true worship, said Ron Owens, associate director for prayer and spiritual awakening at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

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Owens spoke to a meeting that was one of two major launches for "Fresh Encounter: God's Pattern for Revival and Spiritual Awakening," a series of workbooks and videotapes produced by the Baptist Sunday School Board. Owens is the composer of music for use with the materials.

"If there's an area that really needs to be touched by the Lord with revival, it's in the area of what worship is," Owens said. "There's a real disorientation on the part of our people today in regard to worship and particularly in our part of the world.

"How often have you heard somebody leave the service and say, 'Well, I didn't get much of that?'" Owens asked. "Well, who is supposed to get something out of worship? ... God is the one who is supposed to get something out of worship."

When people don't enjoy worship they may look for a new church, and "that's why we see a lot of church-hopping," Owens said.

He decried the "performer-spectator" mentality in many churches and said people often attend with little thought of what they can give in worship.

"We have spectators sitting out in the congregation and waiting to see what happens up on the stage," Owens said. "The people on the stage then perform for the people sitting out there in the pew."

It is not true worship that is taking place in the services of many American churches but rather praise and celebration -- and there is a difference, Owens said.

"A carnal Christian or an unbeliever can really enjoy most of our services and leave wanting to come back because they have experienced maybe an adrenalin high, which is misinterpreted. People said it was the Holy Spirit.

"I do not believe a carnal Christian or an unbeliever can enjoy a worship service," he said, citing the Welsh revival when drunk miners would come to an all-night service, intending to disrupt worship, but instead fall on their faces because God was present.

Owens asked the audience to think of God as standing to the side of many of today's church services, "waiting for us to worship him," while most of the service is spent singing to each other.

The lyrics of many church songs are not directed toward God but consist of Christians addressing each other, Owens noted. "You're not worshipping God together when you sing 'Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine,' in the true sense of worship. Worship is God-directed," he said. Though Christians need songs of admonition, praise and encouragement, Owens said, "when we talk to one another, that is not talking to God."

He noted many churches study musical trends in society, "as to what people like and what the 'in' thing is. We give people music that will make them feel good or what they will respond to.

"Nowhere are we told we are to adjust our worship services to accommodate the world out there," he said. "We think we have to appeal to the world through our worship services. We don't."

Both younger and older Christians often miss the meaning of true worship, Owens said. "Young people, worship isn't the kind of music that makes you feel good. Traditionalists, it isn't the kind of music that makes you feel good, but primarily true worship is what honors God," he said.

"It is not a cultural issue, it's not a taste issue in music that is most important," Owens said. "It is a heart issue. ... We do not have worship today, because we do not have worshippers in the pew. ... I think the bottom-line problem is so few of us have really ever experienced true worship."

Speaking to pastors in the audience, Owens said, "Pastor, once you're in a worship service, don't tell funny stories. We pop in and out of God's presence as if he were not a holy God. We are guilty of breaking the commandment of misusing God's name. ... We glibly sing about Jesus and God without any intent or without any thought of him being a holy God."

Owens echoed the need for revival among God's people, a call sounded by other conference speakers. He said when revival comes, "you're going to see a change in your worship."

His church, family flourished
as he understood shepherd's role By Keith Hinson

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--The job of a shepherd is to care for sheep -- a simple truth that didn't quite sink into one pastor's mind until he was "convicted by God," Lonnie Riley told a group at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

The Sept. 13-15 meeting was one of two major launches for "Fresh Encounter: God's Pattern for Revival and Spiritual Awakening" -- a series of workbooks and videotapes produced by the Baptist Sunday School Board. A total of 1,079 people from 22 states were registered for the conference.

Riley, pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Carlisle, Ohio, recalled a prayer time when God brought to his mind his responsibility as pastor and undershepherd. Riley said he felt God ask him if he had been caring for the sheep.

"I said, 'No, Lord, I really haven't been doing that. I've been trying to get new sheep,'" Riley said. "God taught me a wonderful lesson. He said, 'Lonnie, wholesome, healthy, happy, contented sheep always bear sheep.'

"I mean, does that sound novel too you?" Riley asked the audience, as many in the crowd chuckled. "It was to me, because I'd been trying to get all the sheep and take care of all the sheep, and I wasn't taking care of them nearly as well as I was trying to go get them."

Riley asked God for forgiveness of failing to "tend his sheep." Later on two occasions, he said, "seven people made professions of faith in our church, and both of those occasions, I knew only one of the seven people."

"Now our healthy sheep were out there getting sheep, and it wasn't any result of mine. It was God doing that," Riley said.

A turning point in Riley's life came in 1991 when he had been experiencing frustration and difficulties in ministry and had prepared his resignation and resume -- considering a return to a career as an engineer.

But while attending the 1991 annual meeting of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, Riley heard a sermon, "A Mighty Encounter with God," preached by Henry Blackaby, director for prayer and spiritual awakening at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and co-author of the "Fresh Encounter" materials.

"If God were to step on the stage of human history, would you recognize God?" Riley recalled as the theme of Blackaby's message. "And God confronted my own heart with this question: 'If God came to where you are and did something great, would you know it was God?' And I had to confess I wouldn't be quite sure whether it was God or not."

Riley said he wanted to see God do something in his life that no one but God could take credit for. After recommitment to God, Riley said he saw God begin to rearrange his family life.

His wife quit her job, but lost income was soon replaced. His mother-in-law came to live with them and enriched their lives. Riley's teen-age daughter started a Bible study at her high school, where 38 people attended the study in one semester. Riley's son rededicated his life.

Later, Riley said God brought to mind Jesus' words, "On this rock I will build my church," and Riley prayed, "Lord, would you forgive this pastor for trying to build your church? ... Forgive me for trying to do that which only you can do."

Riley said he saw God work in unexpected ways, as the church developed a ministry to Russian immigrants, a ministry to apartment residents and medical and dental services linked with personal evangelism for the area's homeless and transient population.

Sounding the conference theme of revival, Riley urged the group, "All we have to do is say, 'Lord, here are our lives. Will you take it and use it however you see fit? All we want to do is honor you ...

"Wherever God goes, walk with him, and you'll always walk in the right way," Riley said.

**HMB tentmaker program
not dead, officials say**

By David Winfrey

ATLANTA (BP)--The Foreign Mission Board's elimination of a tentmaker administrator position has confused some Southern Baptists to mistakenly believe the Home Mission Board's program by the same name was discontinued, directors said.

"Tentmaking is on the increase at the Home Mission Board," said Bob Mills, director of the HMB's Mission Service Corps, whose department oversees volunteers serving at least one year in home missions work.

Mills' office recently hired a new staff person to develop the tentmaker program. "We are going to continue to give it a high priority."

Home Mission Board tentmaking is for "people who sense the Lord leading in two vocations," Mills said. HMB tentmakers work in such home missions programs as church planting or Christian social ministry and receive at least some support through secular employment.

"It's their vocational skills that open the door for ministry," said Mike Riggins, associate director for Mission Service Corps. "For us in home missions, the (tentmaking) door is wide open and getting wider."

The HMB tentmaking program dates back at least 40 years, said Riggins, although for a time it was discontinued. It was revived in 1983 and about one-third of the current 1,730 Mission Service Corps volunteers are tentmakers.

Former pastor and Southwestern seminary official Carl Barrington was hired this summer to develop the HMB tentmaking program. Barrington said he will work with seminaries and colleges to encourage students to pursue another marketable skill in addition to theological training. "I hope to become, to some degree, an expert in vocational trends."

While Foreign Mission Board officials eliminated its tentmaker administrative position, the board is still honoring commitments with 37 FMB tentmakers in nine countries, said Thurmon Bryant, vice president for mission personnel.

"The (Foreign Mission) Board will not have personnel to nurture a tentmaker program but will respond to inquiries by relating them appropriately to our missions and churches overseas," Bryant said.

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Mary Speidel of the Foreign Mission Board contributed to this story.

**Tentmaking open to seminary
grads, coordinator says**

By David Winfrey

**Baptist Press
9/21/93**

ATLANTA (BP)--Seminary students facing graduation without a job can get ministry experience through "tentmaking" with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, according to the director of that program.

Named after the profession the Apostle Paul practiced to support his ministry, "tentmakers" are missions workers who receive at least some of their support from secular employment.

"God has called so many more people into ministry than there are full-time ministry positions available," said Carl Barrington, associate director of the HMB Mission Service Corps department.

A survey in the late 1980s found 50 percent of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary students had no job waiting for them on graduation day, said Michael Morgan, associate director of church/minister relations.

Barrington, former director of church/minister relations at the seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, recalls the frustration of being unable to link all graduates with churches. "Many of them would not get called to a position of ministry for a long time."

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Tentmaking would have allowed those students to start ministries where they were needed instead of waiting for an opening where ministries already existed, he said. "They could have put down some roots -- maybe become a public school teacher, for example -- and started a church in a community that had no evangelical witness."

Tentmakers are assigned by the HMB Mission Service Corps to such programs as church starting, ministry or evangelism. The board offers national placement assistance, resources and training in the assigned HMB department and prayer support from the board's intercessory prayer phone line.

Barrington admitted tentmakers often face time constraints, and observers sometimes think the worker is waiting for a full-time ministry job. But tentmakers lessen the financial burden of a young church or ministry, he said.

They also show others it is possible to have a secular job and be active in ministry, he said. "Tentmaking ministry is one very real and legitimate means of doing ministry that will allow new churches to be started and existing churches and associations to be strengthened."

Tentmakers also are important to reaching people who would not be reached by a traditional pastor, he said.

"There are more and more people who will not respond to the witness of someone they perceive as just a paid religious worker out doing his or her job."

Barrington estimated more than half of all ministers will at sometime be "situationally bivocational," meaning they will be between churches or terminated. "It just makes sense to have something you can do to provide for your family even if you do not do that for a whole lifetime."

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Phoenix pastor Gary Young
dies after cancer relapse

Baptist Press
9/21/93

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--Gary Young, 57, pastor of the First Southern Baptist Church of Phoenix the past 19 years, died Sept. 20 in Phoenix. He was diagnosed with lymphoma 20 months ago but was pronounced in remission following chemotherapy. He suffered a relapse last month.

Young served on the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee from 1981-87 and focused many of his preaching engagements on the promotion of Sunday school in several states.

During his Executive Committee tenure, he was chairman of a special fact-finding committee charged with studying the convention's relationship with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Young presented the committee's report at the 1987 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. Several years later, the SBC ended its relationship with the BJC.

Young left the pastorate of his hometown church, First Baptist in Aurora, Mo., in 1974 to become pastor of the First Southern in Phoenix, the third pastor in the church's 72-year history. He previously served as pastor of churches in Missouri and Oklahoma and as associate pastor or youth director of churches in Texas and Oklahoma.

He also had taught homiletics and pastoral ministry courses at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix and led doctoral seminars on proclamation and worship for Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

He earned the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and the doctor of ministry degree from Golden Gate.

Survivors include his wife, Doris; daughter, Jima, of Orlando, Fla.; son, Jeff, of Phoenix, Ariz.; brother, Jack, a missionary to Brazil; and sisters, Ernestine Lawrence, of Columbia, Mo., and Miriam Perry, of Aurora, Mo. A memorial service will be held Sept. 24 at First Southern Baptist Church in Phoenix, where the family has requested that gifts be made to the Gary Young Scholarship Fund.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "CBF council appoints 6 new missionaries, cites growth," dated 9/17/93, please make the following corrections:

In the third paragraph, substitute "Asia" for the word "Indonesia."

The next to last paragraph, change the first sentence to read: "Stanley and Kay Parks will work in unnamed country in Asia."

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