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October 22, 1993

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**Baptists help build
the new South Africa**

By Donald D. Martin

**Baptist Press
10/22/93**

SOWETO, South Africa (BP)--South Africa needs jobs as much as it needs peace, say Southern Baptist missionaries working in the black townships near Johannesburg.

Unemployment among South African blacks exceeds 50 percent in many areas. Joblessness tops 70 percent in squatter camps clinging to black townships like Soweto, Southern Baptist missionary Ron Lomax said in a telephone interview.

Lomax, from Fredericktown, Mo., directs the Thusong Baptist Center just outside Soweto. Thusong -- or "place of hope" -- focuses on helping people escape that hopeless situation.

Most violence in South Africa can be tied to the political struggles of forming a multiracial government. But part of the turmoil stems from the bleak economic conditions of many blacks, said Nelson Mandela, head of the African National Congress, when he spoke to the United Nations in September.

Mandela asked the world community to lift economic sanctions against South Africa because they have brought the country to the edge of economic disaster. He then asked other countries to join him and President F.W. de Klerk in building a new South Africa.

Lomax and other missionaries have been careful not to take sides in South Africa's political struggles. Yet they can't overlook the needs of the communities they serve.

"We were already working with our convention churches in these communities and saw that education was one of South Africa's biggest needs," Lomax said.

"In our churches so many people were unemployed that they couldn't take care of their pastors. They had nothing to give. The churches were having trouble getting anything established in the (squatter) camps. They didn't have money to support themselves, much less other churches in the camps."

Such needs prompted missionaries working in the Johannesburg area to launch the Thusong training project in 1992, with support of human needs funds from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The center feeds hundreds of people a month, teaches people in squatter camps job skills to help them become self-sufficient and ministers to their spiritual needs.

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About 1 million people live in squatter camps that surround townships, Lomax estimated. They can't afford to pay rent in the townships. Families move to open land on the outskirts of townships and scrounge together bits of plastic, bricks, cardboard -- even reeds packed with mud -- and build small shacks. Lomax has seen a 9-by-9-foot hut house 10 adults at night.

"Most people in squatter camps move to cities from rural areas," he said. "They come to this area and soon find they aren't qualified to do anything. So we've come in to help by offering vocational training."

The Thusong center, situated on 50 acres of land, teaches five-week courses on sewing, candle making, masonry, mechanics, typing and welding. Over the last two years it has trained more than 1,000 students.

"This is a ministry where we see results," Lomax said. "In some ministries, you work and work and don't see anything happening for some time. But in a project like this, you see progress every day."

The results have extended to church planting as well.

Several students who became Christians during the center's morning devotional time helped start the Protea Baptist Church in a nearby community. The church now attracts about 150 people each Sunday.

Such successes don't make operating the center easy, Lomax added.

"It's easy to get burned out doing a social ministry because every time you turn around, someone wants something and you get tired of it after awhile," he admitted.

"But when you have guys come to you after devotion and say, 'I heard what you said and I want to know more about this Jesus you're talking about,' that makes it worthwhile every time."

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(BP) photo (vertical) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available on SBCNet Newsroom.

South African Baptist body
urges lifting of sanctions

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press
10/22/93

WASHINGTON (BP)--Saying the transformation of South Africa from apartheid to democracy has reached "an irreversible stage," the black Baptist Convention of Southern Africa has called on the international community to lift all sanctions against the country, encouraging "massive reinvestment" toward the development of their country.

"It is our firm belief that this action will facilitate the process toward lasting democracy," Vincent M. Jones, acting general secretary of the convention, wrote in a letter to the Baptist World Alliance.

The convention, made up of more than 35,000 Baptists, is one of two BWA member bodies from South Africa. The largely white Baptist Union of Southern Africa, with more than 34,000 members, is the other.

"We are convinced that South Africa is surely moving closer to a democratic dispensation that will allow those formerly discriminated against to have a say in the running of their country," Jones wrote.

In calling for sanctions to be lifted and for reinvestment, the convention singled out the American Baptist Churches USA "who stood with us in our struggle against the evils of apartheid."

"The sons and daughters of South Africa are longing for justice and peace, and lasting solutions to the problems of our country," Jones wrote. "We trust the way you stood in solidarity with us in our struggle against the forces of apartheid, you will do likewise for the call of investment towards the reconstruction of South Africa."

Jones praised all involved in South African constitutional talks for their achievement in agreeing on a transitional government and an election date of April 27, 1994.

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Jones also praised the South African Parliament for passing legislation establishing a transitional executive council.

The constitutional talks primarily involve F.W. de Klerk, South Africa's president and head of the Nationalist Party, and Nelson Mandela, head of the African National Congress.

Both men were recent recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize.

While the BWA, with a policy of respecting the sovereignty of each of its 170 member bodies, could not call for sanctions, it has been a leader in speaking out against apartheid in South Africa and against attacks on Baptists who were harassed and imprisoned. The BWA also congratulated Mandela on his release from prison in February 1990 and de Klerk for releasing him.

When the black South African convention, reflecting the political realities of the country, decided to break from the Baptist union to which its 125-plus churches belonged, the BWA accepted the convention into its membership at its general council meeting in the Bahamas in 1988.

"Acceptance into the BWA has given us a feeling of self-worth and human dignity towards which we had been painfully striving," said Gideon Makhanya, who was convention general secretary at the time.

During the BWA's general council meeting last August in Harare, Zimbabwe, Baptist leaders from around the world approved a resolution on South Africa calling for a non-South African peace-keeping force to ensure nothing is done to subvert the 1994 elections.

They also called for "education for democracy programs among the peoples of South Africa" and asked BWA member bodies and their mission agencies to consider ways to support those programs in partnership with both the Baptist convention and Baptist union of South Africa.

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Millsaps bridges politics
to spiritual concerns

By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press
10/22/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Bryant Millsaps is convinced many Christian men default on their spiritual responsibility.

"The role of men is distinctive in the church, the community and the country," Millsaps, Tennessee's former secretary of state, stated. "That role depends on men taking a stand to accomplish the biblical role of husband, father and leader."

Millsaps, a member of Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, was involved in state government and politics 15 years prior to his defeat after a three-year term as secretary of state. (In Tennessee, election to the office is by the majority political party in the Senate and House of Representatives.)

Millsaps recalls with pride a tenure which helped restore public and legislative confidence in a key department. Of special importance to Millsaps, however, was the ability to return to private life without fear he had embarrassed his wife and children because of any actions he took in public office.

Prior to assuming office following the unexpected death of Tennessee's secretary of state in the middle of a term, he was chief clerk for the Tennessee House of Representatives for seven years and, previously, assistant chief clerk and assistant to the speaker of the House of Representatives.

Within six months after taking office, Millsaps had appointed an advisory commission on ethics to guide employees in the daily performance of their duties. The Tennessee Department of State changed in six months from low public confidence to the only department in the state which had an ethics policy in force.

As he began to search for employment, the 46-year-old Millsaps balanced the disappointment of the re-election loss with the confidence of knowing he had contributed to public confidence in one part of state government.

Shortly before election as secretary of state, Millsaps said he experienced a significant spiritual enlightening, even though he was saved at the age of 8 in a Baptist church in Daisey, Tenn.

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"I didn't have Jesus as Lord of my life until I was almost 40," he said. "Consequently, throughout my term as secretary of state, I was more focused on what I could do with the skills and talents God had given me. That included my life at home, at work or wherever I was.

"After losing the election, I took some time to rethink what I really wanted to do with my life," Millsaps explained. "Through prayer and Bible study, the idea of service to God emerged to me.

"That's when In His Service Ministries evolved," he continued. "I talked with several pastors who shared a concern that men in local churches needed to hear a call to commitment from a 'real' man who had experienced similar trials in business and family. Men doubted, according to pastors, that the pastors could relate to their experiences.

"God in his infinite wisdom brought to a close my career in government and term as secretary of state for Tennessee," Millsaps said. "I have to remember who I serve. There is no tragedy in losing an election. But a tragedy was averted by not compromising my values.

"In political defeat, I experienced spiritual victory," he said. "Through a career defeat and being unemployed, I can teach other men how to cope."

Millsaps, who has a master of education degree in secondary school administration and a doctor of education degree in higher education administration, has led several seminars for men in local churches in an attempt to draw attention to the need for men to turn back to the responsibilities of home and family from job-related attentions which overwhelm matters of eternal importance.

Millsaps is convinced that men, for whatever the reason, are abdicating their responsibility to lead their families to church and in worship.

"Many men today are satisfied to let women set the spiritual tone for the family, which is opposite to the teaching of the Bible," he continued. "Men are giving up spiritual leadership to wives by default, which is loading women with more than they can carry.

"This is certainly not to negate the role of women in the church," he added quickly. "The role of women is honored, blessed and key. It is a statement to the worthiness and abilities of women that they do their best to raise the children when men give up their responsibilities."

It is imperative that men resume their responsibility, Millsaps said, to be role models who do their part confidently to let others see their daily witness, being what God has called them to be.

"Many men have defaulted in their spiritual responsibilities by saying they will golf, fish or work in the yard while the wife assumes sole responsibility for taking the children to church. Others attend church regularly but live during the week like they have never heard the gospel."

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(BP) photo (mugshot) available upon request from (BP) central office in Nashville.

Students express dismay
over MBTS trustee actions

By Brenda J. Sanders

Baptist Press
10/22/93

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Expressions of dismay were aired during a student forum at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary two days after trustees voted against granting tenure to Wilburn T. Stancil, associate professor of Christian theology.

One hundred-twenty people, including students, faculty and staff, attended the two-hour forum Oct. 20 in the seminary chapel. Five Midwestern trustees rearranged their travel schedules to attend the forum, as well, and listened as 15 students stepped up to microphones to voice support for Stancil and dismay that he was not granted tenure. The students' expressions ranged from shock and anger to grief.

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Midwestern President Milton Ferguson convened the forum at the request of David Martin, president of the MBTS Student Body Association, and first-year trustee Joe McKinney of New Mexico, an alumnus of the seminary. The meeting was conducted under background rules, with direct attribution of quotes being allowed only when permission was granted by the participants.

In opening remarks, Martin told fellow students he had talked with McKinney after the tenure vote and felt the trustee "expressed a sincere hurt for what had happened." He said, "As we talked, he (McKinney) said to me that there should be a way to bridge the hurt and somehow for both sides to come closer together and try to understand each other."

The two found other members of the board and many in the student body agreed, and the forum was quickly scheduled. Trustees attending included McKinney, Kent Cochran and Stoney Shaw of Missouri, Dean Shields of Pennsylvania and Dennis Wood of Arizona.

Ferguson said the purpose of the forum was to allow students and trustees to "hear and understand" one another. "Not to force agreement," he said, "but to clarify and to identify where we do have common commitments and to understand where we do have differences."

During the forum, Martin addressed one of the reasons the trustees' instruction committee rejected Ferguson's tenure recommendation for Stancil: Committee members reported Stancil "rejects inerrancy as an appropriate model for understanding the nature of Scripture."

Martin said the seminary's bylaws list nine criteria for tenure and "inerrancy is not one of them. If you're going to deny a man tenure, then as our bylaws state it must be one of those nine criteria which are violated. ... I ask that the process that you follow be your stated process."

Joe Smith, a master of divinity student who attended the Oct. 18 evening session of the trustee meeting during which the tenure vote was taken, expressed frustration over the board's concerns for Stancil's views of baptism. He said he believed an address by Stancil about rebaptism "came out of Dr. Stancil's academic abilities."

"What is important to me for my education here is that my professors are personable and have integrity, honesty, compassion and openness to ideas," Smith said. "My brain is what's important at this place. ... This is the place for academia and I need openness."

Music student Rob Casebolt said, "I am angry and I am hurt, and I think those feelings permeate a large majority of the people at this institution."

Addressing another stated concern of trustees over Stancil's professional writings, Casebolt continued: "It seems to me that Dr. Stancil is being penalized for putting something in print that he firmly believed. Does that make all of us afraid to put our convictions to pen and paper?"

He added, "Am I being educated or am I being indoctrinated?"

Verna Quirin, a master of divinity student, addressed the five trustees: "The majority of the money that comes in here (as financial support for the seminary) comes through the Cooperative Program. ... We encourage our church to give to the Cooperative Program.

"However, when trustees disregard the feelings and the opinions of Dr. Ferguson and of other professors and students, these people will eventually disregard you and the people who appointed you to this board. They will do that the way Baptists have always done it, by keeping their money in their pockets," Quirin said. "The Cooperative Program receipts are already down around the convention. They will continue to go down as long as the people in the churches are unhappy with the leadership of this convention."

One student asked, "Does the board, or members of the board, have a secret or open political agenda that they're trying to push with decisions such as this tenure vote?"

All five of the trustees present responded to the question, with four denying they had an agenda and one stating: "I do. My agenda is that this institution have a clear and concise doctrinal and theological position. I think in many ways the vote Monday night and what we've been doing in the process the last 15 years has defined that. It didn't all happen in one meeting. It's been a process. ... Some would say that we are redefining what Southern Baptists are; others would say that we are returning to what we once were."

McKinney told students he spent hours preparing for the trustee meeting and said the vote against granting tenure to Stancil "was not a decision that was made blindly, but out of deep prayer and conviction. ... You have the idea that it was done in a spirit of anger or secret agenda or political manipulation, and that it wasn't 33 people who prayed and sought God, and hurt, and cried, and agonized."

The decision "was not entered into frivolously," he said.

With tears in his eyes, Arizona trustee Wood told students he came to the trustee meeting prepared to vote affirming Stancil's tenure but changed his mind when the issue of rebaptism was raised.

"I'm just as upset about this as you are," Wood said. "All summer, my honest feeling was to resign and let somebody else worry about these problems. ... But God chose me to be a part of this board and he chose me to make a very difficult decision."

Wood expressed dismay that he had little time to get to know the students and faculty well and urged the audience to "help us change the system" so trustees could spend more time on campus. "We want to know your hearts," he said.

First-year student Rick Durham was the last student to address the forum. He urged his classmates to "leave our hurts behind."

"You'll not win anybody to Jesus Christ, you'll not build any church up and you'll not do Midwestern any good (by) pouting and leaving this place putting everyone down."

Durham said Stancil, in private counsel, recently had told him: "The most important thing we can do when we leave this campus is to win people to Jesus."

Durham admonished, "Let's not forget this as we leave. Our purpose is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ."

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Survey checking status, needs
of SBC ministers of education

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
10/22/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Helping their churches focus on education, learning how to manage their time and developing better communication skills are among the top needs of Southern Baptist ministers of education, according to preliminary reports from a nationwide survey being conducted by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Approximately 1,400 ministers of education across the Southern Baptist Convention agreed to participate in the survey which is being compiled by BSSB growth consultant Ron Pratt. More than 700 responses already have been received, Pratt said, adding several trends seem to be emerging.

One is that many more Southern Baptist churches have multiple worship services than multiple Sunday schools. That makes it likely that a growing number of unchurched persons are getting their first exposure to church life through worship.

"That doesn't mean (worship and Sunday school) are in competition. It's a partnership," Pratt told 36 ministers of education from 23 states attending an orientation conference Oct. 18-21 at the BSSB's Nashville headquarters. He encouraged them to work with their pastors and worship leaders to come up with strategies for funneling prospects attending worship services into Bible study classes.

"You don't have to do a people search; (prospects) are sitting right there in your worship service," Pratt said, adding identifying them often can be as easy as gleaning information from visitor cards. He also suggested leaders inform visitors about Bible study opportunities through bulletin inserts and comments made by the pastor direct from the pulpit.

Pratt said he initiated the nationwide survey "to get an idea where ministers of education are today and what their needs are." He expects to complete the process of tabulating and analyzing the responses by early next year.

In addition to demographics, the survey also includes questions about Sunday school enrollment and attendance; computer usage; salaries; relationships with pastors, other church staff and volunteers; weekly workers meetings; and several other topics.

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Piland lists 'irreducible minimums'
for effective education ministers

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
10/22/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--There is one thing no effective minister of education can do without -- a love for people.

That's what Harry Piland told a group of new ministers of education attending an orientation conference Oct. 18-21 at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.

"If you don't have that, I guarantee you, you won't be successful," Piland, director of the BSSB's church growth-Sunday school division, said. "How can we not love people and be like Christ?"

Piland admitted loving people is not always easy.

"Frankly, some people are not very easy to like, but when you let someone else determine how you respond to them, you are not living like Christ. ... You have to love people for what God can do through them. ... Never put anyone out of your circle of love and influence."

Piland shared with the conference attendees 10 other "irreducible minimums" for an effective minister of education.

First, he said, an effective minister must be one who is called by God.

"That is essential if you remain in this work," he said, adding "it will take you through the worst of disappointments, discouragements and doubts."

The effective minister must also have the capacity for hard work, Piland said.

"It plain takes work to do the job and it's not just about working smart, it's about working hard. That doesn't mean you don't take time for your family. You have to find a way to balance that, but you're not going to get things done by taking shortcuts all the time."

Piland said an effective minister of education also:

-- knows the job. "A person who knows the work is a person who is more apt to be followed."

-- focuses on the most important issues. "You can't do it all. If you try to, you won't have time to do what you were called to do."

-- exemplifies true leadership. "Some people can talk that talk, but they don't walk the walk. You have to have integrity."

-- uses common sense.

-- guards his or her spiritual devotional time. "If there is anything the adversary wants to get you out of, it is to get you out of (God's Word)," he said. "You let your spiritual life deteriorate and you will deteriorate."

-- delegates.

-- never gives up. "That doesn't mean don't try a new strategy, but you've got to finish the race."

-- is a believer. "There are a lot of doubters and pessimists out there, but you need to have enthusiasm. Be positive. Believe things can happen."

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