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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee

901 Commerce #750

Nashville, Tennessee 37203

(615) 244-2355

Herb Hollinger, Vice President

Fax (615) 742-8919

CompuServe ID# 70420,17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522

DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232

NASHVILLE 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300

RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151

WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

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EDITORS' NOTE: Baptist Press today carries stories on the two announced nominees for president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla., and Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala. The SBC president will be elected during the SBC annual meeting, June 14-16, in Orlando. The stories, by their respective state Baptist papers, here appear in alphabetical order of the nominees' names.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

R conciliation possible,
Jim Henry says of SBC

By Jack Brymer

Baptist Press
5/16/94

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Avoiding denominational politics and the term inerrancy, Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla., has offered himself as a candidate for Southern Baptist Convention president, setting forth four "presidential principles" that would guide his efforts.

Henry, in an interview with the Florida Baptist Witness newsjournal, offered an assessment of the state of the SBC and, asked if there is hope for reconciliation in the beleaguered convention, declared emphatically, "If I didn't, I certainly would not be available and doing everything I can to help us move ahead."

In his March 27 announcement that he would be a nominee for president of the SBC, he said he would not have a structured campaign but would "trust the Holy Spirit to speak to the hearts and minds of my brothers and sisters in Christ as they choose their leadership for the near future."

Since that time, he said he has refused all speaking engagements which might promote his candidacy and is adamant the decision to offer himself is strictly his own and not the result of any group.

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Henry has been mentioned for several years as a potential presidential candidate and for good reasons. His church has led the SBC in Cooperative Program giving the last three years. Last year, the church forwarded 14 percent (\$894,805) of its undesignated gifts of \$6.85 million to national and international missions causes through the Cooperative Program.

A former trustee of the Foreign Mission Board (1978-88), Henry has promoted personal involvement in missions as well. During the last 10 years, the Orlando church has sent out 12 career missionaries, another eight in full-time Christian service and eight more as journeymen or International Service Corps (ISC) volunteers.

Henry said several factors entered into his decision to allow his name to be presented this year. First, some of the people who approached him made a "significant difference in my praying that was different than in years past."

Second, he said that before he did not feel he was ready or prepared to handle the task.

Most important of all, however, he said he made it a matter of lengthy prayer this time.

"The Lord confirmed to me in my heart and in my walk with him that I should be nominated," Henry explained. Since then, he said he has been affirmed by his church and received "nearly unanimous" support from the people who encouraged him to seek the office.

"So those factors all kind of worked together, but the main one was in my quiet time that I got the green light from the Lord," he said. After his announcement, Henry acknowledged he received some calls asking him to reconsider or run later. He rejected any notion, however, that it was an organized effort. When asked if there were pressure not to run, he replied: "Not very much. Again I say, they were very gracious and gentle and no threat at all. They just asked me to prayerfully consider delaying it."

In the first of four "presidential principles," Henry said he would be "uncompromising on the high view of Scripture as stated in our Baptist Faith and Message Statement and Peace Committee Report and adopted and affirmed by SBC messengers and as established in our Baptist heritage."

Asked if that means inerrancy, Henry replied "yes," but said other words could be used as well.

"For some, inerrancy has become a bad word, so to speak, but I don't necessarily think it is," he said. "I think what we are looking for and have said we want to continue is our historic Baptist commitment to Scripture as fully trustworthy and authoritative. You can use the words infallible, inerrant or high view of Scripture -- however you want to say it."

Henry's second "presidential principle" is to be "unapologetic of our historic focus on missions and evangelism and its strong support through the Cooperative Program."

Asked if that excludes the Baptist moderates' Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Henry responded: "If the CBF wants to give money to SBC causes without any strings attached, to me that's no problem. Now, if it had strings attached, then I would (have a problem). I would not receive them."

In his third "presidential principle" Henry said he would be "unselfish in including all whose hearts beat with our denomination in expanding the window of opportunity for service and input."

Asked if that would include "moderates" and members of the CBF in the convention, Henry said it would under certain conditions.

"Well, I think there's a heartbeat with us which would go back to my first principle," he said. He defined the "heartbeat" as the direction the convention took in 1979 toward a high view of Scripture. "If their heart beats with us in that, then the window of opportunity is open," he said. "That's our family. There's a union and a unity in that."

Of CBF, he also said, "My feeling about the CBF is its basically a denomination right now. They've done everything but said that. And so I don't think that there is going to be a return to the major body of the SBC. That's my gut feeling."

Henry's fourth "presidential principle" is to be "untiring in our effort to build trust and love in our family of faith." During the last 14 or 15 years, he said, some people -- both moderates and conservatives -- have labeled other people and this has led to misunderstandings and distrust. As a result, many have been pushed aside or ignored.

"Really, when you talk and listen and get to hearing each other, you find you're on the same page," he said. "Let's see if we cannot do some healing and some talking and focus on what our main business, on what God's program is through Southern Baptists. That's the feeling I'm getting."

Henry discounted claims that his election would impede or change the direction of the "conservative resurgence."

"If people are saying that, it's a surprise to me because I had not been considered an enemy (to the conservative cause) for 34 years," he said. "I'm a conservative and have been that ever since I've been in the ministry and so I haven't changed."

A member of the SBC Peace Committee, Henry said he felt the work of the committee was worthwhile for identifying and addressing some problems and concerns.

"We found that some of our institutions were drifting and that correction has been made and I feel like we're on a healthy track there," he said.

Henry acknowledged, however, that while the theological problems identified by the Peace Committee have been addressed, some of the political problems linger. Suggesting some of the political things had to be done to correct the convention's course, Henry said what he is hearing from Southern Baptists is that this is past and there is a hunger to see the SBC now move ahead.

Henry said he did not believe the SBC is divided beyond reconciliation.

"I know there are some serious divisions and you can't gloss over that," he said. Yet, "I'm hearing a real deep desire for reconciliation, for getting together and moving ahead. I hear a hunger for that. I may be misreading it, but I hear that hunger and to me that's a sign of hope. There's discouragement, but not despair."

As to the future, Henry said he sees the SBC on the verge of either a slow disintegration or on the edge of a fresh, bold new reach into the future.

"I think God has used us," he said, describing the SBC as the strongest denomination in the country. "The talent and resources of our lay people and in our institutions is unbelievable. If it can be recaptured, I think it (SBC) will live. If not, then I think we will die a slow death."

Henry said he believes there is a way to overcome the losses and retain the gains of the past decade of controversy in the SBC.

The losses, he said, are some fragmentation and a loss of trust at some levels. "I've been guilty and I guess everybody probably has, if they are honest, of labeling people and maybe not being fair which has created distrust," he said. "To me, that is a loss of camaraderie and a sense of oneness and warm fellowship."

The "prime gain" of the decade, he said, was to re-establish or see that the SBC stand by the historic stand of its Baptist forefathers on the Scriptures.

"That, to me, was the main purpose of the movement," he said. "That's what I understood it to be and that was my biggest concern in it and, I think, for most Southern Baptists. I think that has been established for this generation."

"OK, that battle is won. Let's move ahead," he said. "I think we'll see a lot of people come back and an upkick in the Cooperative Program. I think we'll reach to a new excitement again as Southern Baptists. That's my dream and prayer."

A native of Tennessee, Henry graduated from Georgetown College and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Jeanette, have three married children.

After his ordination in 1960, Henry served churches in Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee before moving to Orlando in 1977 as pastor of First Baptist. He has held numerous associational, state and national positions. In addition to his service on the Foreign Mission Board and SBC Peace Committee, he has been president of the SBC Pastors' Conference (1981), trustee of the Baptist Sunday School Board (1969-75), chairman of the SBC Spiritual Awakening Task Force (1991) and co-chair of the Reach the World SBC Task Force Committee (1993).

A popular preacher, he has spoken on numerous college, university and seminary campuses as well as state and national conventions. His writings include two books: "Heartwarmers" and "The Pastor's Wedding Manual."

Average Sunday school attendance during the last five years at the Orlando church is 3,800. During the same period, baptisms have averaged 333 each year. In 1985, the church moved from downtown to its present location which is valued at \$42.8 million and is debt-free.

The church established a Center for Pregnancy in 1986 which emphasizes constructive alternatives to problem pregnancies and stresses alternatives to abortion. Since the center's inception, the gospel has been presented 7,796 times with 1,046 professions of faith. Of the 1,354 babies born, 272 of them would have been aborted if the mother had not come to the center, according to church officials.

Also, the church established a VIM (Very Important Ministers) program in 1982 which is a temporary paid staff position to help terminated ministers begin to rebuild their shattered careers.

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**Wolfe takes conservative heart
into SBC presidential election** By Mark Baggett

Baptist Press
5/16/94

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)--At heart, he's a Wolfe who loves his flock.

"I am called to be a pastor," says Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama. "I see my role to equip the saints, and I devote my energies to discipling and enabling Christians."

Wolfe's attitude -- what his friends say is a sincere, self-effacing, conciliatory spirit -- and his loyalty to the conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention have placed as a consensus choice among most of the "conservative leadership" and past presidents for the SBC presidency this year.

Certainly, Wolfe, 56, has paid his dues. Before 1979, he was active in the network of conservatives. Since 1987, he has been an influential member of the SBC Executive Committee, this year becoming its chairman.

At the same time, his church has grown dramatically since he came as pastor in 1972, to a membership of 9,000, an average worship attendance of 2,600 and a budget of \$4.27 million.

He is a popular revival and pastors conference preacher and has produced a cottage industry of vocational ministers out of his church. One estimate places the number of Wolfe-mentored vocational ministers at over 100, including 12 pastors in Alabama and at least 15 more in other states. John Turner, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lucedale, Miss., and one of his proteges, says Wolfe "has a heart for preachers."

But although Wolfe was a predictable choice in February, when he announced that friends had convinced him to let his name be nominated, another conservative pastor and friend, Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist in Orlando, announced his candidacy on Palm Sunday.

Does Henry's candidacy signal a division within the ranks of SBC leaders?

"I don't think there's any split," says Wolfe. "In Indianapolis (at the 1992 SBC annual meeting), Nelson Price, a high-profile conservative pastor, ran against (current president) Ed Young. It's happened before. Here's a man, Jim Henry, who feels compelled to run.

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"His candidacy wasn't a surprise. I knew he was considering it and praying about it. In fact, about a month before he announced, we had lunch in Atlanta. I told him I was praying for him and for him to find God's will."

Whatever the election results, Wolfe says he is "at peace" about his decision to run, which came after many years of being a "possible candidate" and after conservative leaders across the country told him they were excited about the possibility that he would run.

The two candidates are similar theologically and their churches have been models of church growth, but Wolfe acknowledges a difference in Cooperative Program giving. Henry's church gives approximately 13 percent of its undesignated receipts, a figure that Wolfe compliments. Wolfe's church gives approximately 5 percent presently.

According to the Uniform Record published by the Alabama Baptist State Convention for September 1993 (the latest records), Cottage Hill gave \$199,681 of its undesignated gifts of \$4.217 million, or 4.7 percent, up from 4.5 percent the previous year and 4.2 percent the year before that.

"Before I was ever a candidate, Morris Chapman (SBC Executive Committee president) had challenged all of us to increase our Cooperative Program gifts," Wolfe recounts. "I made a commitment to increase our giving by one-half percent per year.

"And I would say this by way of explanation and not as an excuse: We went into a new worship center in 1989 and paid \$9 million cash for it. For the next three years, we have held our budget the same, but we have doubled our Cooperative Program gifts in the last three years."

Wolfe says he is satisfied with the progress of the conservative movement, believing a theological course change has taken place.

"I think that while certain people disagreed with this, the issue has always been the inerrancy of Scripture, although a lot of issues have gathered around that one," he says.

"The conservative leadership now feels that what we have prayed and hoped for is now a reality. Southeastern Seminary, for example, has turned to conservative leadership; Southern Seminary, under Al Mohler, will certainly take a conservative direction. The Christian Life Commission, as another example, has taken conservative political positions, especially on the abortion issue. We have upheld and confirmed the high view of Scripture."

Wolfe admits, however, the firing of Russell Dilday at Southwestern Seminary has done some damage to SBC leadership.

"I have nothing whatsoever to say critically about Russell Dilday," says Wolfe, a 1967 Southwestern master of divinity graduate. "He did a fine job in many areas. But having been in a position where I have made decisions on the basis of information not known to the general public and then was criticized for those decisions, I can't criticize the trustees. I just have to trust them to have made the right decision.

"I do believe his firing has caused some people to ask why it was done and why it was done the way it was done, and to some degree, it will hurt us in the sense that it may produce a backlash."

But Wolfe says he doesn't think Dilday's firing will be a significant factor in the election, nor does he believe the SBC leadership has overreacted to the threat of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an organization of moderate Baptists, which some Southwestern trustees named as a factor in the firing.

"I am in touch with the conservative leadership and I know that they do not feel that the CBF is a serious threat to the SBC," Wolfe says. "I believe the people in the CBF are people who are going in that direction out of conviction. I don't judge them. But while I do not agree with that direction, I respect their rights as Christians to do that. However, I do not see CBF as a major threat. This year, our Cooperative Program is up 1.5 percent from last year, Lottie Moon offering is up, for the first time we will have more than 4,000 foreign missionaries. While we are aware of the CBF, there is no paranoia about it."

Wolfe's race with Henry will not be his first taste of competition. He was an all-state football star in Rock Hill, S.C., good enough to go to the University of South Carolina on a football scholarship. But after two years on the gridiron, he was injured and forced to turn his interests to coaching. He was a head coach in basketball and assistant coach in football at Lexington High School in Rock Hill.

He retains his love for sports today, his energies channeled into golf and into Alabama Crimson Tide football, a loyalty Wolfe admits with a laugh may not be politically correct in all circles.

But he came out of his playing days with a calling, and a gift, to preach, and he says he received the foundation he needed at First Baptist Church in Rock Hill. "There, I had godly laymen and laywomen and pastors lead me to the Lord." But his greatest spiritual influence was his mother, Margaret Wolfe, who died in 1993, "a real saint of the Lord" to Wolfe and his five sisters and one brother.

While almost all of his siblings were going into teaching, Wolfe prepared for the ministry, entering Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., at a time when Wolfe says "it had a liberal bent. It was Bultmannian in philosophy and the students were reading Paul Tillich primarily. It was not a good experience."

So, after dropping out of Southeastern and pastoring for three years, Wolfe entered Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and studied under the "wonderful" influences of Roy Fish, Virtus Gideon and Cal Guy.

Besides his troubled year at Southeastern, Wolfe has had one other experience in the ministry that approached a crisis. In 1979, after seven years at Cottage Hill, he went to the First Baptist Church of Lubbock, Texas, in December 1979. Shortly after arriving in Lubbock, he could feel something was wrong.

"After three months, even though the people there were loving and gracious and the church was growing, I realized that I wasn't supposed to be there, that I'd missed the Lord's will on it," Wolfe recounts. "At the same time, one of the members of the pulpit committee at Cottage Hill called me and said they weren't getting anywhere. I told the committee I would consider going back, but only if they were unanimous in seeking God's will."

Wolfe returned to Cottage Hill in June 1980, "a painful decision for the church in Lubbock and for me," and was accepted back by Cottage Hill by a 1,620-20 vote.

Today, he and his church are fixtures in Mobile, a decisive political force in the city and, with his proteges in ministry, an influential figure among state Baptists.

He and Anne, his wife of 37 years, have contributed one vocational minister of their own: son Mark, 35, who has a doctorate from Southwestern and is director of an adult unit with Rapha Christian Counseling. Son Jeffrey, 32, works with Scott Paper Company in Mobile, and Fred and Anne Wolfe have five grandchildren.

Whether he wins or loses on June 14, Wolfe will have plenty to do at home in Mobile. He is preaching through the Book of Ecclesiastes on Sunday nights and through the Gospel of Mark on Wednesday nights. Undoubtedly, he will return to the themes that have marked his sermons for years, particularly the Lordship of Christ.

One of his own sermons on the subject, based on Romans 14, was modeled after the most powerful sermon he ever heard -- by Stephen Olford, former pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in New York City and later director of Encounter Ministries. "That sermon moved me," says Wolfe. "It gave me a new understanding of what it means to be a Christian."

He also names Bertha Smith, a former missionary to China and Taiwan who died in 1988, just a few months short of her 100th birthday, as an influence.

"Their emphasis," Wolfe says, "is on total surrender to Christ and on the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit. I believe proper teaching and emphasis needs to be placed there."

Wolfe's amiable disposition, his encouragement of young pastors and his avoidance of flammable rhetoric -- these qualities sometimes hide his zeal and passion for the conservative cause. Preaching at last year's SBC Pastors' Conference in Houston, he warned pastors of "lukewarmness." The answer, he says, is the preeminence of Christ.

"I am thankful for the conservative resurgence," he said in his sermon. "I make no apologies as one who is privileged to be on the inside with the leaders God has used to bring God back to this denomination. And I can tell you that they know who the head is. The desire of our hearts these days is not to please the press, but it is the desire to please him."

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Japanese looking inward
as economic boom goes bust

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
5/16/94

TOKYO (BP)--That thunderclap from the east you may be hearing is Japan's boom going bust.

But it may also signal a new boost for Christianity in Japan as change moves people to look inward, rather than outward to material things.

The Japanese economy, once the undisputed champion of the world, is on the ropes -- pummeled by competition, recession, a falling stock market and a rising yen. A trade war threatened by the United States could knock it out.

The Japanese also seem to be tiring of the crushing 12-hour workdays that created the nation's postwar economic juggernaut -- but made them strangers to their own families. And they express more cynicism about their leaders with each new scandal in a parade of political turmoil and corruption.

Meanwhile, relations with the United States, Japan's largest economic partner, continue to fray over restricted Japanese markets and growing trade deficits. A full-scale trade war probably won't erupt, most observers predict, because both countries have too much to lose. But mutual resentment simmers. Many Japanese also recoil in horror as they watch news reports of Japanese tourists and students gunned down on American's mean streets.

Americans, who have struggled with social and political upheaval for decades, can understand what the Japanese now face -- up to a point. Unlike the open, pluralistic free-for-all of a society Americans know, Japanese have long been accustomed to tradition, authority, consensus and stability.

That's changing, and the change is painful.

"Japan is evolving -- with a generation gap, changing values and lifestyles, an aging population, and an elite whose moral authority is declining," observed World Press Review. "The Japanese, generally absorbed in the harsh daily struggle to make ends meet, find these developments disconcerting. ... A vague sense of foreboding (has) left them with a sense that they are in the trough of a wave, with their horizon blocked."

But the change also may be opening a door for Christianity -- long viewed as a foreign religion and embraced by less than 2 percent of Japan's 125 million people.

Southern Baptist missionaries in Japan have concentrated anew on evangelism and church starting since 1988. Almost 50 churches have been born since then -- a big number considering the history of church growth in Japan. Southern Baptist missions began in Japan in 1889 and was interrupted by the World War II era. The Japan Baptist Convention, formed in 1947, counted 266 churches with about 33,600 members last year.

"Something is happening that indicates we're beginning to make some inroads into Japanese society," said missionary Ed Jordan.

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"Christianity is still looked at as a religion of foreigners, but it's also beginning to offer some answers to people looking at the questions of life. We may see some really big changes in the next 10 years if the economy continues to be where it's at and forces people to look inward rather than outward. The material things people shot for aren't providing the long-term satisfaction they were told they would."

Billy Graham's four-day evangelistic crusade at the Tokyo Dome this year attracted big crowds, including 43,000 one night -- the largest Christian gathering in Japanese history. It followed a successful Japanese-led crusade in Osaka last year.

Asked about the surprising response, Graham commented that Japanese may be discovering "materialism does not satisfy the inner longing of the heart."

Southern Baptist missionary Jim Russell in Tokyo worked in the Graham crusade. The manager of Tokyo Dome, he recalled, kept asking throughout preparations for the crusade meetings, "You really think you're going to fill this thing up with people coming to hear about God?"

"We all kept saying, 'Absolutely,'" Russell said. "Then, when we had 43,000 people in it, the manager told us we had twice as many people as they have for their pro baseball games there."

The crusade witnessed public spiritual commitments by about 12,000 people.

"What was so interesting was that 43 percent of those were men," Russell observed. "That's very significant. For so long you've heard that men aren't interested, not reachable. I think a lot of Japanese men are burning out. They even have a term for dying because of overwork. It's taking a toll on them. There's a hunger. Japan is receptive."

Another economic factor contributes to change and insecurity -- layoffs. The concept of the Japanese company as a demanding yet all-providing "mother" is slowly crumbling.

"We're seeing a move away from lifetime employment, and it's causing real problems and concerns" for middle-aged and older Japanese, said Jordan. "The younger people see that and say: 'There's got to be something else other than working yourself to death 50 to 70 hours a week with a company.'"

Missionaries also see more problems in Japanese families. Russell told of two people who prayed to receive Christ as Savior. One was a man whose wife left him with two children; the other, a woman in the same situation.

A woman in Russell's church runs a Christian kindergarten with more than 100 kids. "Most come from troubled homes," Russell said. "You see a greater number of families in trouble, and it's a window for ministry."

One woman recently appeared outside the church and stood there for the entire worship service. Russell's wife, Dale, finally spotted her and went out to invite her inside. The woman had never been inside a Christian church.

"She said, 'Is it OK?' She didn't know," Russell recalled. "She was very troubled. I counseled her about (problems with) her husband. We visited her, and she prayed to receive Christ. That kind of thing is more prevalent."

Even some older people -- traditionally most resistant to a "foreign" gospel -- seem more open.

"Perhaps it's the economy," said Faye Pearson, area director for Southern Baptist missions in east Asia. "Older people have worked hard all their lives. They're looking at the fall of their economy and don't have anywhere else to turn."

One Japanese pastor, Pearson said, had told his 82-year-old aunt about Christ for years. She was like "a stone wall," and he finally gave up.

But the elderly woman attended the Osaka evangelistic crusade with him and other family members last year. When the invitation time came, one relative told the pastor, who was on the end of the row where they sat, that the aunt wanted to go forward. Skeptical, he didn't move, but the relative kept nudging him. He finally stepped aside, and the aunt walked forward.

He accompanied her, still suspicious of what was unfolding. Down front, all the spiritual counsors were busy, so he had to share the gospel with her himself one more time.

"For the first time, it seemed as though she really heard what he said. It was as though a veil fell from her eyes, and this 82-year-old Japanese lady stood with tears rolling down her cheeks, and she believed," Pearson related.

"The next morning she kept walking around his house saying, 'All things are new, all things are new.'"

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

Ministry to Chinese lepers
touches college's volunteers

By Odette Brewer

Baptist Press
5/16/94

JEFFERSON CITY, Tenn. (BP)--"As we neared the village, the patients gathered on the hospital steps, applauding with maimed hands and shouting their expressions of joy at our arrival," recounted campus minister Jim Wilson at Carson-Newman College.

The patients were lepers, the village was in China, the "we" a volunteer team from the Jefferson City, Tenn., college.

That was but one of the stirring experiences of a team of 22 students and staff in a ground-breaking ministry in the Taihe Leprosy Village of Guangzhou, China.

In November 1993 the college's Baptist Student Union received a request from the Southern Baptist aid organization Cooperative Services International to travel to China in the spring and work in a leprosy village.

While many teams had been allowed into the country to teach English, the Chinese government had not given permission for a ministry team to assist in the work with leprosy patients since the late 1940s.

Leprosy is a word that has planted deep-seated fear in the hearts of men and women for thousands of years. It would have been all too easy to "pass by on the other side of the street" and escape the realities of a suffering world, but the Carson-Newman team determined to face its own fears and misunderstandings and show love to a group starved for compassionate human contact.

China has had an endemic history of leprosy, or Hansen's disease, for more than 2,000 years.

The disease has been stigmatized as hereditary and incurable or a punishment from God. Multi-drug therapy means leprosy patients are no longer contagious but, spurred by such visible signs of the disease as the loss of hands and feet, sores, and eyes that no longer blink, society still fears them much as AIDS patients are feared in the United States. Even some of the doctors and nurses who work with the patients are hesitant to touch them.

"These were people who had been stigmatized, rejected and cut off from their society. They had come to appreciate, in a meaningful way, the presence of a human being," said team member Patrick Leland.

Upon the volunteer team's arrival, they wasted no time in formal introduction, instead greeting each resident personally with the touch of God's love via a warm handshake.

Many of the patients pointed to the sky and then to their hearts, and it soon became apparent that 40 of the 114 village residents were Christians who had kept the faith through not only society's rejection of their disease but also through the persecution of their faith during China's 15 years of Christian suppression.

"In some ways, we felt like the prodigal son returning to be welcomed by the king," Wilson continued. "We, the Christian church, had been separated from these members of our own family by governmental laws but also by our own self-centered lifestyles."

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Those lifestyles, along with any misconceptions the group had about leprosy, were challenged and altered during the moving 10-day period when the team actually worked with the patients while doing construction work in their village. The stigma of leprosy melted away as each team member began to see the people behind the disease.

"We were ready for pain, sorrow and suffering, but instead we found beauty," recounted team member Amy Foote. "Their impairments were insignificant in our interactions."

"Yes, there was a language barrier, but there is no communication barrier with smiles, a gentle touch, games or music. Sometimes there were songs being sung in two different languages at the same time," said Barbara Shoemaker, a Carson-Newman staff member.

Leland told of a couple who invited some of the team into their apartment and offered them oranges to eat. When the group was leaving, the couple tried to offer them more oranges, which the group politely refused.

"It was troublesome enough that these people who had so little had given so much," Leland said. "And then they insisted on giving more. In a moment that I will never forget, the woman reached into her bowl of oranges and began to stuff them into the pockets of my shirt, as many as they could hold. Never before had I experienced so much selflessness amidst so much disparity. It is one thing for Christ to show us the poor widow who gives everything she has. It is another thing if that poor widow is giving everything to you."

Another wall was broken down when the team invited several doctors at the village to go to church with them one Sunday morning. After the church service and a devotional time, one of the doctors, a man who was not even a Christian, requested that Bibles be given to the Christians in Taihe Village.

"They need that book; they need it for instruction," the doctor said.

As the group prepared to leave Taihe Village, they presented their new friends with Christian literature and several Chinese Bibles, the first Bibles many of the patients had ever had, as well as eggs, powdered milk and two pigs to provide much-needed protein to their diets.

Having gone to China seeking to minister to broken outcasts, the group was ministered to instead. "Even after years of seclusion, the patients welcomed us with smiles, open arms and laughter day after day. They made sure that we ate lunch on time and did not work too long. I could find no greed or demand in their appreciative faces," said team member Jennifer Elliott.

Team members said they returned with an understanding and a burden for those society brands as outcasts as well as an even greater willingness to serve. And service is what is still needed in China: Taihe Village is only one of 63 such villages for leprosy victims located throughout Guangdong Province.

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Brewer is assistant director of news & publications at Carson-Newman. (BP) photos available upon request from the college.

Clinic-access bill passes
Congress, goes to Clinton

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
5/16/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--Congress recently sent The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act to the White House.

FACE makes a federal offense of the blockading of abortion clinics, as well as threats against women seeking abortions, vandalism of abortion clinics and violence against clinic personnel. Pro-lifers, including many of those who oppose violence and who do not endorse the blockading of clinics, attacked FACE as a violation of free-speech rights. Pro-choice advocates supported it as necessary to protect abortion clinic workers and to ensure women have the right to obtain an abortion.

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Both the Senate and House of Representatives easily passed a compromise version from a conference committee of members of both houses. On May 12, the Senate passed the conference report 69-30. The House approved it May 5 by a 241-174 vote.

President Bill Clinton has promised to sign the legislation.

"This is a major victory for pro-abortion forces and a crushing defeat for pro-life dissent in America," said James A. Smith, director of government relations for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "The ramifications of this law will be tremendous and impact pro-life forces far beyond the 'rescue movement.'"

The Senate and House passed different versions of the FACE Act in November, but the conference committee did not approve a compromise until April 26. The conference report included amendments by pro-life supporters in the Senate which were not in the original House version.

The final bill includes a religious liberty amendment offered by Sen. Orrin Hatch, R.-Utah, which provides the same protections from violence and obstruction for those seeking to attend worship services as are guaranteed in the bill for those seeking to enter or working at abortion clinics. Homosexual and abortion rights activists have blocked entrance to some places of worship, disrupted services and vandalized buildings.

The bill also includes an amendment by Sen. Bob Smith, R.-N.H., reducing the maximum sentence for first-time offenders not using force or threat of force from one year to six months and for repeat offenders from three years to 18 months. It also reduces the maximum fine for first-time offenders not using force or threat of force from \$100,000 to \$10,000 and for repeat offenders from \$250,000 to \$25,000.

A concern of some opponents of FACE is it will result in the suppression of legal activities such as sidewalk counseling and picketing. Sponsors of the legislation deny it will apply to such activities.

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Co-chair resigns; Va. panel discusses budget options

By Michael Clingenpeel

Baptist Press
5/16/94

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A committee working to find ways Baptist moderates and conservatives in Virginia can cooperate spent its May 12 meeting struggling with giving options, and at the end received the resignation of its co-chairman.

At the conclusion of the meeting, co-chairman Tommy Taylor, pastor of London Bridge Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, shocked the committee of 19 pastors and one layman by announcing his resignation.

"My personal emotional tank is running dangerously low," said Taylor to the committee. "My heart is less and less in denominational negotiations and statesmanship. My heart is more and more in building a great church for (God's) glory.

"This is not reactionary to what happened or didn't happen today," explained Taylor, affirming the committee and its work. "I leave with no ill will for anyone or toward the process, and only with prayers and best wishes for the process to continue, and feel good that the Lord used me to get the process started."

The council accepted Taylor's resignation with regret and ended the meeting with prayers in his behalf.

For most of the session, the "Presidential Council on Cooperation" debated budget options where both camps could support the Baptist General Association of Virginia budget. In the end, the committee managed only to affirm the multiple-track approach used in the current budget.

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Co-chairmen Neal Jones, pastor of Columbia Baptist Church in Falls Church, Va., and Taylor described the meeting as "a relaxed atmosphere where people could talk to each other." They added there was "very candid discussion where everyone on the committee felt the freedom to speak."

The council previously agreed to let public comments about the meeting be made by Jones and Taylor.

Other issues surfaced during the six-hour meeting, but the budget process clearly emerged as most important to the 20-man group. Two years ago the BGA V adopted a budget that allows churches multiple tracks for making missions gifts beyond Virginia. Most Virginia Baptist churches have chosen an option that combines their world missions gifts to Southern Baptist Convention entities with other organizations favored by moderates, such as the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Center for Ethics.

A second option allows churches to give world missions gifts to SBC causes as decided by the SBC at its annual meeting. Churches favoring the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship can choose a third budget track which supports only CBF ministries. Any church can design its own plan for giving -- in effect a fourth giving option.

Moderates insist this multiple-track system allows Virginia Baptist churches freedom to determine their pattern of giving beyond their locality, a right they consider fits the self-determining polity of Baptist congregations.

Conservatives generally oppose the multiple-track system as excessively complex and a sign that Virginia Baptists want to distance themselves from the Southern Baptist family.

In the May 12 meeting, conservative committee members generally argued in favor of returning to the single-track budget as a sign of loyalty to the SBC. But in the end most committee members acknowledged it was not practical to return to a system without giving options.

The committee will meet next June 22.

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Two small-church pastors
honored for work by BSSB

Baptist Press
5/16/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Ricky Hughes of Rockingham, N.C., and David Howeth of East Helena, Mont., have been cited as "Outstanding Small-Church Pastors" for 1994, according to Charles Belt, consultant in the Baptist Sunday School Board's church leadership department.

Hughes, pastor of Cartledge Creek Baptist Church in Rockingham, was named "Outstanding Small-Church Pastor" for the East. Howeth, pastor of Canyon Ferry Road Baptist Church in East Helena was selected for the West.

Criteria for the award, which recognizes "noteworthy and meritorious achievement in pastoral ministry or denominational service," include above average tenure in the association or church, leadership in specific areas of growth, development of proclamation skills, pastoral ministries and involvement in the local association or the denomination.

Hughes, who has been at his present church three years, has led the church to develop a growth ministry concept, leading in outreach ministry and a discipleship program.

Under his leadership, the church has added 149 people, 91 by baptism. Cooperative Program giving has increased from 4 percent to 9 percent of undesignated funds. Gifts to Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong missions offerings have more than quadrupled during his tenure. Total missions giving has almost doubled.

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Worship attendance has climbed from an average of 101 to an average of 218 in three years. Sunday school attendance has increased from an average of 32 to 154. Hughes has been active in the Pee Dee Baptist Association, according to Wayne Tuttle, director of missions.

"He is a caring pastor to everyone in his community," Tuttle observed. "He has not just told his church to care for people, but he has demonstrated by his veryday life the way to do that."

Cartledge Creek church has begun a food bank and clothing ministry, nursing home ministry, prison ministry, singles ministry, youth ministry and a special education ministry, all during Hughes' pastorate.

Howeth has been pastor of Canyon Ferry Road church almost five years. He has led the church to grow from 82 members to 135. Sunday school enrollment has almost doubled, and more than 30 people have completed MasterLife training in the last two years.

According to Gordon Watson, director of missions for the Treasure State Baptist Association, Howeth has led the church to conduct worship services at a local nursing home, to minister through Backyard Bible Clubs in a trailer park and at a city park.

As missions development chairman for the association, Howeth is "one of the most missions conscious pastors in our state," Watson continued. "He not only talks missions, but does missions.

"He does not specialize or limit his interests to any one area," Watson observed. "However, if he has a major emphasis, it is his concern with meeting physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those with whom he has contact. He is a master discipler of Christians in his church."

As a part of their recognition, the two pastors will receive all-expense paid trips to Bible-Preaching-Leadership Conferences at the Sunday School Board's national conference centers this summer. Hughes will be at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, July 9-15, and Howeth will be at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, Aug. 13-19. Each pastor will be invited to bring the Monday evening message during worship service at the conference center.

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