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August 15, 1994

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Christians 'take the heat'
as they stand for morality

By Clay Renick

Baptist Press
8/15/94

MORTON, Miss. (BP)--Roy Clark never expected bullet wounds as a pastor. He led a congregation in Brandon, Miss. But he also helped the community as an EMT.

One night he got a call. A man nearby was beating his wife. Clark activated the EMS system, picked up the woman and sent deputies after the husband.

The man spent a night in jail, and his wife decided to divorce. She could no longer take the abuse.

Clark had been preaching about spiritual warfare and had the man's son in his congregation. The case got complicated when the boy wanted to move in with the pastor and finish high school.

Clark agreed. He wanted to help the family. But the boy's father blamed Clark for their trouble.

"He decided at that point his biggest problem was me," Clark recalled. "In his mind as a drunk, he could easily see that I was minding his business."

Clark got a knock on the door one evening after prayer meeting. It was the boy's father.

The man took a step back, raised a .45-caliber pistol and fired.

"I knew I had been shot," said Clark. The impact threw him six feet into the kitchen. Bullet wounds went from his left hand to the back of his head.

Doctors didn't think he'd survive the night. Clark spent six weeks in the hospital and lost one third of his cerebellum.

His assailant got a 20-year sentence and will be up for parole after five. Clark will still be paying hospital bills -- after the man's release.

"I don't think it's enough time for what he did," Clark added. "But I have forgiven him.

"It's most definitely going to happen more and more," he said. "This is nothing more than a demonic onslaught towards churches in America."

Paul Griffin Jones shares a similar experience. He heads the Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. And he counts 64 death threats and 14 attempts on his life.

"That goes with the territory," he said. "All of us (in the ministry) face an ongoing criticism and threat to our security.."

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His department confronts moral issues like gambling, child abuse and drugs. And he believes the danger will increase as more Christians stand against moral problems.

"That cuts into people's pocketbook," he said. "They see the church as a threat to their livelihood."

One man forced him off the road after he gave a talk against incest. The car had \$4,000 in damage.

Another near-miss involved a gunman. An assailant fired 11 bullets into Jones's car. One 9-mm. slug missed him by four inches.

"There are a lot of ministers in this state that deal with this type of thing all the time," Jones added. "What we don't do is talk about these things. ... Hopefully, we believe it's going away."

But the opposition continues. And much of it is coming from homosexual activists.

"They're coming where ever you are," said John Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church in Richton, Miss. "These people do have a national agenda and they seem to be earnest about it."

Recently a lesbian group purchased 120 acres near Overt, Miss. It was an old hog farm, and they wanted to convert it to a retreat center for lesbians.

Allen and other Christians resisted the effort on moral grounds. They cited the group's plan to implement homosexual curriculum in the schools and even lower barriers for sex with children.

"Their contention is that we are ignorant and intolerant and that they have come to help us," said Allen.

National media attention encouraged an investigation by the U.S. attorney general. Allen's group, meanwhile, has filed suit, claiming the camp is a commercial enterprise in a residential section.

"The opposition has taken on a religious and moral flavor," said Allen.

In Chicago, another Baptist church is struggling against homosexual activists. Earlier this year 100 protesters gathered in front of Armitage Baptist Church. They carried signs like "Fight the Christian Right" and "No Return to Backyard Butchers".

Members of the church had been active in the pro-life movement, and the homosexual activists wanted to commemorate the death of a Florida abortionist.

"We have come under attack repeatedly over a period of several years," said pastor Charles W. Lyons. "They attempted to take over one of our worship services; we have had our tires slashed; and our building has been vandalized."

"Christians have to wake up," he said. "There is a war going on. You may not like it, but the war may come to you anyhow."

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**Grandmother goes to jail
in stance against abortion**

**Baptist Press
8/15/94**

CHICAGO (BP)--Sue Bergquist knew the risk when she blocked the entrance to an abortion clinic. Seven of her own children are adopted. And several of those came from mothers who were encouraged to abort.

Bergquist had been arrested 30 times -- for sitting in front of abortion clinics and praying.

"We've heard the suction machines going," the grandmother recounted. "It's horrendous to think of what they're doing."

This time, the judge didn't agree. He said she was a repeat criminal with no respect for people's property.

He put Bergquist in jail for a week. So she took her Bible. And she witnessed to other inmates.

One woman decided to become a Christian through the effort.

"We do not scream at people," said Charles Lyons, her pastor at Armitage Baptist Church in Chicago. "We do not attack clinics. We do not attack people."

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Bergquist said she has given considerable thought to her stance. She and others just sit in front of clinic doors and pray. It gives sidewalk counselors a chance to talk with girls who try and enter the clinic.

"It does buy time," Bergquist added.

And the method worked at her last arrest. One woman decided against abortion and kept her baby.

Someday, Bergquist said she hopes, "You have to have laws to protect the innocent."

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24 positions eliminated at BSSB
in Bible teaching-reaching division

Baptist Press
8/15/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Twenty-four positions in the Baptist Sunday School Board's Bible teaching-reaching division position have been deleted as part of ongoing restructuring of the church growth group.

The decisions followed a July 18 announcement that reducing operating expenses and reordering priorities would require the elimination of 24-30 positions from the 224 jobs in the division.

Billie Pate, associate division director, said the restructuring resulted in redesign of a number of positions and minor organizational changes. The net reduction included two management, 15 professional and seven support staff jobs. Eight of the deleted positions were vacant.

Nine affected employees will take early retirement, two will transfer to other positions in the church growth group and the remainder will receive severance pay based on years of service along with outplacement assistance.

Among those taking early retirement are Art Burcham, director of the general leadership department, a 26-year employee; Tom Lee, an 18-year employee and growth consultant; James Berthelot, lead adult consultant, 14 years; and Ruth Ann Hill, adult consultant, 10 years. The retirements of two other managers were announced in July.

Mike Fink, coordinator of biblical studies development in the ministry-development coordination department, and Morlee Maynard, manager of the preschool ministry development section, will transfer to positions in the church growth group coordination section. Fink will become curriculum, editorial and resource coordination specialist while Maynard will assume responsibility for ministry/systems coordination.

Pate said the staff reductions are part of evaluations in process in five areas: re-evaluating work and identifying priorities including products, allocating resources to priorities, refining the organization to focus on priorities, clarifying and moving accountability lower into the organization and focusing attention on church and people needs in a more efficient manner.

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Draper: BSSB restructuring
is nearing its completion

By John Loudat

Baptist Press
8/15/94

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (BP)--Admitting there has been a lot of anxiety among employees the past several months, the head of Southern Baptists' Sunday School Board said the extensive reorganization project is nearing completion.

BSSB President James T. Draper Jr. talked with the Baptist New Mexican newsjournal while in Albuquerque in late July for an annual meeting of representatives from Southern Baptist agencies discussing reaching America's major cities for Christ.

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The restructuring, Draper said, was initiated by a strategy planning process which began in the fall of 1991, shortly after his arrival at the board. The next February, 100 employees were organized into task forces and assigned to study the various aspects of the organization. They returned a couple months later with, according to Draper, "an incredible report -- in size and depth and complexity."

The recommendations for the restructuring and direction of the board, Draper said, were much more drastic than he and the new executive team would have come up with.

In spite of the fact the recommendations were employee-generated and there was a general understanding among employees they were for the best, the elimination of various positions has been a very difficult experience. Draper said there has been much anxiety associated with the reality "nobody's job is safe," and it has been painful to watch friends lose their jobs.

Draper emphasized the commitment of the board to move "with compassion and concern working with people whose lives are affected by (the reorganization)."

Many of the layoffs have been accomplished by a better-than-expected response to the offer of early retirement packages. Since the board does not carry unemployment insurance, they have been providing severance pay and have paid the fee for an employment agency to help the former employee find a new job. Most of those who have wanted new jobs, Draper said, have been able to find them. Several, he added, were transferred to other positions at the board.

Draper said, "We never set out to reduce the number of employees by any particular number. We said, 'Let's find out how we can function the best. What can we do to be in the very best possible posture to do the job as economically as we can and keep the prices down for Southern Baptists?'"

While some further restructuring remains to be done, he continued, "as far as major changes, we feel like we're pretty well done with it."

Draper expressed confidence the project has enhanced, not reduced, the ability of the board to minister to the needs of its target group, Southern Baptists.

One example is literature production. Production of literature which used to take 48 months has been reduced to 12 to 15 months, and in some cases as little as six months.

Draper said Southern Baptists can expect to see a redesign of all the Sunday school material over the next few years. An extensive survey of the board's customers last year identified 26 different segments within nine types of churches. The focus of the literature will be narrowed to relate more specifically to the different groups within different kinds of churches.

The board will be trying to avoid, for example, the problem of a class of middle-age adults struggling with empty-nest syndrome studying the same lesson as young parents with children just starting school.

In the future, one class might have a lesson on "how to survive loneliness of the older years, while another might be studying how to survive the first grade," Draper said.

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Bryson: Worship preparation
more than dressing up on Sunday By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
8/15/94

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Southern Baptists need to return to their worship heritage and realize preparation for worship is more than getting dressed up for church, according to a national preaching and worship consultant.

The specialness of Sunday has been lost, Harold Bryson told participants in Bible Preaching Leadership Conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, Aug. 13-19.

Bryson, preaching and worship consultant at the Baptist Sunday School Board, said the secularization of Sunday has made it "no different from any other day in the marketplace and in the sports arena."

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And at some churches, he continued, "Sundays have become routine. We have lost the awe about Sunday. For many people it becomes a dreaded day. For those who lead church activities, it can be the hardest day of the week."

Bryson attributes part of the change in attitude to a lack of anticipation and personal preparation.

"We have created a spectator mentality," he declared. "The preacher is a performer, the minister of music is a performer and choir members are performers. We come to worship just like we go to concerts or other events -- to be entertained."

Just as Jesus went to the temple, Southern Baptists need to return to their worship heritage of the Jewish Sabbath by observing the traditions of preparation, participation and application.

Bryson said the tradition of the Jewish Sabbath includes three days of anticipating the Sabbath, observance of Sabbath as the central day of the week, followed by three days of reflection on the Sabbath message to one's life.

For Southern Baptists, preparation also needs to come among leaders and worshipers. Leaders not only need to prepare the worship service, he said, but also they need to prepare spiritually.

"We need to worship before we lead other people to worship," he declared. "It is a time to prepare to meet the Lord."

He said he believes worship leaders need to find ways to encourage people to study the next Sunday's Scripture passage and to prepare themselves for the coming worship experience.

While he acknowledged today's spectator mentality has led to expectations that preachers provide a better sermon than that of the previous Sunday and that they be better than televised preachers, he said worshipers need to heed the words of Jesus recorded in John 4 to "... worship in spirit and in truth." Bryson said while we focus on the historical manifestation of God, we also worship out of our individual experiences.

"Before there can be any participation, there has to be a realization of the presence of God," he said, adding some people have developed a mentality "God is more present in a large church than in a small one. Commuters seem to think God is more there (at the large church) than at their home community church.

"It only takes two of us to have a joint worship experience," he reminded conference participants. "Whenever I have a bad worship experience, it is because I am not recognizing the presence of God. We are living in the days of Jesus," he declared. "He is alive. He is here!"

Application of the Sunday message should extend beyond the invitation at the end of the sermon, Bryson continued.

"It isn't over when the benediction is said," he cautioned. "The Jews spend time discussing what they will do to put the Sabbath message into practice.

"You do not leave the presence of God when you go from the worship experience," he reminded worship leaders. "We need to take home something from church besides the bulletin."

Among applications he suggested are responding each day to God, celebrating what Christ has done and what he continues to do, practicing God's presence and sacrificing to the Lord.

Bible Preaching Leadership Conference was sponsored by the pastor-staff leadership department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

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Variety of methods needed
to avoid 'teaching rut'

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
8/15/94

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Ann Cannon knows about the world's worst teaching method.

It isn't lecturing or even reading the lesson from the book.

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"The worst method is the one you use every week and it can be something very creative. But no matter how great it is, your kids are going to get bored with it if you keep using it over and over.

"You've got to have some variety, change things up a little," Cannon, a Christian writer, conference leader, and youth worker at Wieuca Road Baptist Church in Atlanta, said. She led the seminar "How to Break Out of My Teaching Rut" for youth workers attending the Church Growth-Sunday School Leadership Conference Aug. 9-13 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Common "teaching ruts" identified in Cannon's session included: depending too much on one creative method, failing to get the youth to participate in the lesson, using the same teams or class groupings, keeping the same room arrangement and waiting until the last minute to prepare. Cannon said research has shown that the average youth worker spends only 17 minutes a week preparing to teach the Sunday school lesson.

"You've got to spend more time than that and you can't leave God out of the process," she said. "Your prayer life is also very important. You need to be praying for the lesson and for each class member by name."

Teachers interested in avoiding the "rut" must be willing to risk trying things that may be outside their comfort zone, such as drama, monologues or storytelling, Cannon said.

"You have to be willing to try things that you haven't tried before to help your kids learn, to help them know who Jesus Christ is," she said.

Another help is doing usual or normal activities in unusual ways. "Maybe during the lecture you could give them all some paper so they can doodle while you talk. This may sound strange, but it keeps them quiet and they often end up doodling what you're talking about in the lecture."

Being creative doesn't mean you have to go out and buy a lot of expensive materials, Cannon said. Everyday materials like writing paper and paper bags can be used in creative ways. Board games also can be adapted and used to reinforce scriptural truths, she said.

She suggested asking "easy questions that have hard answers."

"Remember, if it can be answered 'yes,' 'no,' or 'God,' it probably isn't a very good question. How and why questions are the best. Ask yourself, 'How can I get my kids to feel this lesson?'"

Cannon shared information containing a variety of creative teaching methods in several categories, such as:

-- Art: doodles, montage (words and pictures), collage (words, pictures, objects), Scripture verses or lesson truths in balloons, cartoons, masks (use cheap paper plates), sculpture (use pipe cleaners, yarn, styrofoam cups, aluminum foil, etc.), billboard/banner, bumper sticker/buttons, posters, road signs.

-- Drama: pantomime, monologue, skits, mock action, dialogue with God, radio-TV format (news, interviews, quiz show), charades, role playing, rap, person-on-street interviews, acting out a song.

-- Music: group singing, lyric writing, hymn reading, musical telegram, listening to Christian tapes/compact discs, watching music videos, playing "Name that Tune."

-- Games: Concentration, Password, agree/disagree, Simon Says, Trivial Pursuit, Bingo, Family Feud, word association, Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune, Who Am I?/What's My Line?, Pictionary (Win, Lose or Draw).

-- Pencil and Paper: poems, letter writing, word scrambles, news stories, headlines, want ads, acrostics, case studies, multiple choice, true/false, paraphrase, crossword puzzles, outline Scripture, memos, do's and don'ts, problem solving.

-- Verbal: brainstorming, discussion, informal debate, taking a poll, directed prayer, research and report, listening teams, testimony, reaction panel, storytelling, pro-con analysis, memorization.

Cannon is author of the recently released book, "Somethin's Cooking: 50 Easy-To-Do Youth Programs" which is available in Christian bookstores.

The Church Growth-Sunday School Leadership Conference was sponsored by the Bible teaching-reaching division of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

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Alaska Baptists report
13.3 percent CP gain

Baptist Press
8/15/94

SOLDOTNA, Alaska (BP)--The Alaska Baptist Convention met in annual session Aug. 9-10, 1994, at College Heights Baptist Church in Soldotna, Alaska.

The convention's 1995 Cooperative Program budget of \$574,204 was approved by 172 messengers present. The receipts are 13.3 percent ahead of last year's CP income. The percentage of the convention's CP designated for Southern Baptist Convention causes remains at 33 percent. A record Lottie Moon Offering for foreign missions was received this year, and messengers were given an optimistic report that the Annie Armstrong Offering for home missions also may be a record for the convention.

Elected as new president and vice president of the Alaska Baptist Convention, respectively, were Tim Clark, pastor of First Baptist Church in Palmer, and Bob Jones, pastor of Grandview Baptist Church in Anchorage. Dean Blankenship, pastor of Southeast Islands Ministries in Thorne, was elected second vice president.

Recognition was given to departing convention staff: J.D. Back is retiring the first of September as state missions director. He and wife, Virginia, will make their home in Oregon. Gordon Lantrip will be retiring in October as director of Alaska Baptist Family Services. He and wife, Shirley, will make their home in Illinois. Cloyd Sullins, director of evangelism/church growth, and his wife, Cecilia, leave Alaska at the end of August to assume a new position as evangelism director for the Oklahoma Baptist Convention.

Executive director Bill G. Duncan announced his retirement date of March 31, 1995, but he will leave Alaska the end of February, taking vacation time. He and his wife, Betty, will reside in Tucson, Ariz.

The convention is gearing up to begin its 50th anniversary celebration at next year's convention, to be held at First Baptist Church in Anchorage Aug. 8-9. The celebration will culminate with a Jubilee Celebration at the 1996 convention.

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Church hosts teen forums
on sex, relationships

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
8/15/94

BASKING RIDGE, N.J. (BP)--A New Jersey church has taken two of the toughest topics for teen-agers -- sex and relationships -- and turned them into outreach opportunities in their community.

Last year, Millington Baptist Church, a Conservative Baptist Association church, initiated a week-long summer camp for junior high school students titled, "Sex and Dating: What Are You Waiting For?"

The program included some material from the Southern Baptist "True Love Waits" campaign and was designed to help students resist pressures to become sexually active before marriage, says Glen Murphy, minister of discipleship and outreach.

Murphy said part of the camp's motivation came from seeing his daughter approach her teen years. "Some of it began through my own personal desires to reach peers of hers."

The church mailed invitations to the parents of every junior high school student in the town of about 19,000 residents, he said.

"There was a lot of incredible support from parents in town," Murphy says. "We hit a very raw nerve there among parents of kids who may not even be churched but were frightened about the road their kids were on."

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Sessions included talks with older teen-agers from a variety of backgrounds. Some had been sexually active and later regretted it, others discussed how they had remained chaste. Campers also met a single mother who discussed her responsibilities and difficulties.

This year, the summer program centered on teens' relationships with themselves, parents, friends, the opposite sex and God. Topics included communication, how to be treated more maturely by parents and resolving conflicts.

"Kids get into conflicts real easily, but they don't know how to get out of them," Murphy says.

The two programs will alternate yearly so seventh-graders and eighth-graders can attend both, Murphy said.

Attendance grew from about 35 last year to 55 this year, he said. "I think it will continue to grow. We're gaining a real positive reputation in the community for what we're doing here."

While Vacation Bible School often is targeted to young children, junior high school students are "kind of a forgotten age," Murphy said.

The program was offered in the morning its first year, but moved to the evening to appeal to those who are gaining the freedom of staying out later, he said. "Having it in the evening gave it a youthful appeal."

Those who attended last year's camp on sex were challenged to sign commitment cards pledging to abstain from sex until marriage. The cards, the size of a drivers license, were laminated and mailed back to those who made the commitment.

"Our challenge was that you keep it until your wedding night and then you take a pair of scissors and cut it in half," he said. "We know for a fact that most of the kids are still carrying them in their wallets a year later."

More information about the camp program is available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to Millington Baptist Church, 520 King George Road, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920.

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She's taught for 5 decades
'because I love the children'

By Ferrell Foster

Baptist Press
8/15/94

CARMI, Ill. (BP)--Blanche Williams is 85 years old, and sometimes she wonders why God doesn't take her home to be with him. "I guess there's a purpose" is her answer.

Williams is the widow of a well-known Illinois Baptist and the mother of a Southern Baptist agency executive. Her husband, Otho, served several churches as pastor and in various statewide jobs. Her son, Jim, is president of the Brotherhood Commission.

"Otho was 51 when he died," Mrs. Williams said, recalling her husband's death in 1962. He was director of the Baptist Children's Home at the time, and Mrs. Williams said she wonders why Otho's time on earth ended so early when he had so much to give.

"He was an evangelist," she said. "He could draw the crowds." And whenever Otho went onto the grounds at the children's home, the children would flock to him, his widow recalled.

Noting her husband's influence, Mrs. Williams didn't seem to see her own so clearly. But this year she worked in what she believes to be her 55th Vacation Bible School.

She started in VBS work in the 1930s, when it first made its way into Saline Baptist Association in southern Illinois. Since then she has worked with children almost every year, sometimes in more than one VBS. And leaders at First Baptist Church in Carmi wanted her back this year.

"I don't hear too well and I don't see well," she said. "I feel like a misfit, but they wanted me to help in Bible school, and I couldn't say 'no.'"

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"I do it because I love to work with children," Mrs. Williams wants to use her talent, "what little I have, to direct children in the right direction."

And as she talks about children, the passion of her concern finds expression.

Many children today are "just not getting any help" growing up, Mrs. Williams said. "Parents, they're not home to direct their children. I don't think (the children) are getting the teaching in their homes that we used to."

And some kids live in "pathetic conditions," she stated. "If you see where the children are living ... you can see why they're disturbed children and starving for love."

But in the midst of the difficulties, there are tender moments. She told of a boy last year who rubbed her arms whenever she was close. One day they were talking about God's creation, and the boy told of his love for cucumbers.

A few days later, Mrs. Williams brought the boy a cucumber wrapped in a paper sack with instructions that he not open it until he got home. Now, a year later, "every time he comes, he grabs me and hugs me."

And a hug tells an 85-year-old woman that God still has a purpose for her life.

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One-on-one relationships
can help all women, prof says

By Susan Doyle

Baptist Press
9/15/94

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Wanting a wiser, more mature friend to follow is a natural feeling for women, said a women's leader recently.

"All of us look for models and will follow someone," said Rhonda Kelley, adjunct professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Kelley recently spoke to a group of minister's wives at a conference sponsored by Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

The desire to have a mentor is one which should be fostered and encouraged, Kelley said.

"Mentoring is not shoving unsolicited advice down someone's throat," she said. Mentoring is the process or act of advising or teaching, or guiding another in love.

However, Kelley said when Christian women get involved in mentoring relationships, spiritual mentoring requires more living by example than teaching.

Through mentoring, women can share a biblical perspective of life, model godly conduct and share life experiences and encouragement, Kelley said.

Encouragement given to a younger woman by an older woman who isn't her biological mother is especially meaningful. Kelley reminded the women that children don't always heed the advice their mothers give them.

"It means a lot to have a relationship not connected by genetics or biology," Kelley said. "Mentoring is a wonderful and natural way to bridge the generational gap."

She listed some of the things older women can teach younger women:

- unconditional love
- self-control
- prayer
- respect
- purity

"Mentoring is a reciprocal relationship where both individuals grow and learn from each other," she said.

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