

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Hollman, Vice President
(615) 742-8919
CompuServe 70420,17

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522, CompuServe 70420,250
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232, CompuServe 70420,115
NASHVILLE Linda Lawson, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300, CompuServe 70420,57
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151, CompuServe 70420,72
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223, CompuServe 71173,316

August 16, 1994

94-136

WASHINGTON--Mitchell, Gephardt bills to add abortion clinics, pro-lifers say.
ALBANIA--Albanian blitz nets believers in former communist stronghold; photos.
MISSOURI--K.C. church severs ties after 10-month associational conflict.
INDIA--Missionary surgeon in India gets medical license extension.
MONTANA--First-Person: A typical (?) day in the life of an ESL teacher.
KENTUCKY--Murder victim, alleged attacker both members of same church.
NEW MEXICO--Assimilation skills are essential to attracting, keeping new members; list.
NEW MEXICO--Keys to empowered communication can help pastors unlock audiences.
OHIO--Church planters needed in Ohio at free church site, elsewhere; photo.
DALLAS--Annuity Board trustee Herman J. Smith dies.

Mitchell, Gephardt bills to add
abortion clinics, pro-lifers say By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
8/16/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--New abortion clinics will be established in potentially hundreds of communities throughout the country if the health care bills sponsored by the congressional Democratic leadership are passed as written, pro-life organizations say.

The expansion of such services will produce an increase in the number of abortions, abortion opponents and some proponents say.

If either of the bills sponsored by the majority leaders, Sen. George Mitchell, D.-Maine, and Rep. Richard Gephardt, D.-Mo., is approved without an abortion-exclusion amendment and signed by President Bill Clinton, health care services -- including abortion -- will be required to be available to all persons covered throughout a service region, the National Right to Life Committee says. The bills also provide funds to establish health care facilities in areas where they are not available, according to an analysis by the country's largest pro-life organization.

The prime targets for the founding of new abortion clinics would be 105 metropolitan areas which reported either no abortions or fewer than 50 abortions in 1992, the NRLC says. The organization bases its prediction on a recently released survey by The Alan Guttmacher Institute, an affiliate of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Among the metropolitan areas underserved by abortion providers, The AGI said in a May/June report, are Decatur, Ala.; Fort Smith, Ark.; Ocala, Fla.; Athens, Ga.; Springfield, Ill.; Evansville, Ind.; Owensboro, Ky.; Alexandria, La.; Biloxi, Miss.; Joplin, Mo.; Burlington, N.C.; Enid, Okla.; Anderson, S.C.; Jackson, Tenn.; Lynchburg, Va.; and Wheeling, W.Va. According to the institute, Texas has 13 metro areas, more than any other state, reporting no abortions in 1992: Abilene; Amarillo; Brazoria; Bryan; Galveston; Longview; Midland; San Angelo; Sherman; Tyler; Victoria; Waco; and Wichita Falls.

Among the 105 abortion-scarce metropolitan areas, 91 reported no abortions in '92.

--more--

The legislation also would enable the federal government to expand abortion services in rural areas as well, the NRLC says. Among non-metropolitan counties, 94 percent have no abortion services. Even these rural counties, however, could be the sites of new abortion clinic networks at the direction of the executive and judicial branches, the NRLC claims.

Overall, only 16 percent of the country's 3,100 counties have abortion services, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

The Mitchell and Gephardt bills are, in effect, a "mandate for health plans to create many hundreds of new abortion clinics in communities where they currently do not exist," said Douglas Johnson, the NRLC's federal legislative director.

The definition of a metropolitan area used by the Guttmacher Institute is that of the Office of Management and Budget: "a county containing a central city with a population of 50,000 or more, along with any contiguous counties with close economic ties to the central county."

Under the bills proposed by Mitchell and Gephardt, every American would fund abortion through taxes and insurance premiums, the NRLC, Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and other pro-life advocates contend. The Clinton plan, which was set aside for the Democratic leaders' alternatives, also included abortion services and a similar clinic mandate, they say.

The National Abortion Federation, a professional membership organization for abortion providers, disagrees with the NRLC's prediction the health care bills will mandate more abortion clinics.

"For our membership, it would be great if that assertion would be true, but it's not," said Donna Singletary, NAF's director of government relations. The bills will require health plans to "offer referrals to qualified providers of all types of services," including to a "qualified abortion provider," she said.

"If there is an increase in abortion providers, that will be regulated solely by supply and demand," Singletary said. "If there is the need and that need needs to be answered, other clinics might sprout up."

Such a portrayal is off-base, Johnson countered.

"When they make these claims, they're simply avoiding the language in these bills," Johnson said. A mere referral does not suffice under the bills, but a plan must have a contractual relationship with an abortion provider, he said.

"The language in these bills creates a federal entitlement to receive an abortion in the local service area," Johnson said. "The entitlement will be enforced by well-funded legal defense funds (such as the ACLU and Planned Parenthood) in the courts."

The latest version of Mitchell's bill says each "plan through its provider network shall include a sufficient number, mix, and distribution of participating health care providers within the network to ensure that all network items and services are available and accessible to all enrollees throughout the health plan service area ... with reasonable promptness" and "within reasonable proximity to the residence of the enrollees."

Singletary's boss, NAF Executive Director Sylvia Stengle, questioned if the legislation would require more abortion providers but said "in the long run, with abortion in the health care plan ... we are going to see a growth in the numbers of providers," according to an Aug. 1 article in American Medical News.

There probably will be an increase in the number of abortions, Stengle told American Medical News, but she did not expect them to be "massively higher."

In a recent article for the NRLC newspaper, Johnson said the "number of abortions will increase sharply -- probably by hundreds of thousands per year."

According to the Guttmacher Institute study, 89 percent of the 1.53 million abortions in the United States in 1992 were done in abortion clinics or "other clinics," while only 7 percent were performed in hospitals.

The Senate Finance Committee, one of four congressional committees which approved health care bills, passed an amendment prohibiting a mandate for the expansion of abortion clinics. The amendment, introduced by Sen. John Danforth, R.-Mo., and approved 12-8, received the support of three pro-choice Democrats. Mitchell, who opposed the amendment in the committee, did not include it in his bill.

**Albanian blitz nets believers
in former communist stronghold** **By Jim Burton**

TIRANA, Albania (BP)--An international evangelical effort to bring the gospel to a former "forbidden country" has resulted in more than 2,300 Albanians registering decisions for Christ this summer.

Called "Project AERO, Albanian Evangelical Rural Outreach," the objective has been to show the "Jesus" film in the Tirana and Shkoder districts. More than 15,000 villagers in 175 villages have viewed the presentations.

"Project AERO is a model of how Great Commission Christians must work together in the future to reach difficult areas of the world," said James D. Williams, president of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

Begun as a shared vision of workers with Cooperative Services International and Campus Crusade for Christ in Albania, the scope of the project required support from other organizations.

Project AERO partners include:

-- Cooperative Services International, the aid arm of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va. About 16 workers, most committed to two-year International Service Corps assignments, participated in the initial blitz. They will carry much of the long-term follow-up load and church planting responsibilities.

-- Campus Crusade for Christ. Their student work in Tirana served as a catalyst for Project AERO. CCC has several young adults serving in Albania on two-year assignments.

-- Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission. The Memphis-based missions education organization recruited volunteers to cook meals and run the base camps where participants lived when they were not staying in villages.

-- Helimission. Based in Switzerland, Helimission provided a helicopter that transported volunteers to the remote villages.

-- Mission Aviation Fellowship. Based in Redlands, Calif., MAF has established a radio network for Christian workers in Albania. That network has been the lifeline for Project AERO.

Aside from these organizations, churches in the United States and Europe provided teams.

From both districts, volunteers were flown unannounced to the outskirts of rural villages. Teams would then unload equipment, walk into the village and ask permission of the village mayor to show the "Jesus" film.

While there were isolated incidences of resistance, most teams were warmly received. Team members typically were housed and fed by villagers.

After showing the film four nights, teams returned to their base camps for several days of rest and evaluation. They then returned to the villages to do followup and to explore the possibility of ongoing Bible studies and church starting.

Matt Harmon, a telecommunications major at Ohio University in Athens, was on a team that used donkeys to move film equipment between some villages. In one locale, 20-25 people held the first ever church service in the village on the last day of follow-up.

"A week before these people had never heard about Jesus and now they were gathered for a service," said Harmon, a Campus Crusade volunteer.

"It has been a tremendous boost to my spiritual life to see people that are faithful to God's Word and going out, knowing their life is in danger, facing sickness and long hours without water," said Furman Torey, a school teacher from Birmingham, Ala. A Brotherhood Commission recruit, he supervised the base camp in Shkoder for about two weeks.

"I would like to be on the firing line, but I don't mind my role. My gift is serving people."

--more--

For more than 40 years Albania, a country the size of Maryland with 3.5 million people located between the former Yugoslavia and Greece, was under communist rule. In 1967, the government adopted an official policy of atheism, making it the "religion" in the country.

Then in 1991, there was a student-led revolt against communism that resembled the 1989 attempt by Chinese students in Beijing. However, the Albanian student movement was successful. Although communism fell, the country has struggled to decide its destiny.

Today, the country remains in chaos. Some even call it anarchy. Meanwhile, evangelicals find themselves in a race to fill a spiritual void in a country where 70 percent of the population claims to be Muslim.

"I feel like the country will close within three or four years," said one resident worker, citing a possible return to communism or the establishment of Albania as an Islamic republic.

The Muslim influence in Albania today appears to be only cultural. It dates from the Ottoman Empire when the Turks invaded and forced Islam on Albania. Today, although a small country, Albania is considered strategic as it is the only Islamic stronghold in Europe.

Project AERO will continue the next four summers. By then, organizers hope to have covered the entire country.

--30--

(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Brotherhood Commission.

K.C. church severs ties after
10-month associational conflict By Bob Terry

Baptist Press
8/16/94

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--A terse three-sentence statement by Broadway Baptist Church of Kansas City apparently brought to an end one of the most public conflicts between a Missouri Baptist church and its local Baptist association.

On Aug. 8, Broadway distributed a press release that stated, "After prayerful consideration and by vote of the church on Aug. 7, 1994, Broadway Baptist Church has chosen to no longer be a member of the Blue River-Kansas City Baptist Association."

The statement said, "We believe that it is in the best interests of our local Baptist association to avoid another round of controversy. Prolonging the debate about our membership in the association is also an unnecessary spiritual drain on our congregation and we desire to act with integrity with regard to who we are and how we have defined ourselves."

Morton Rose, executive director for Blue River-Kansas City Association, called the press release "a good statement." He agreed the decision was best for both parties.

The action by Broadway was the culmination of 10 months of controversy and conflict. In March, the association's credentials committee recommended dismissing the church from membership in the association. But that effort failed to gain the necessary two-thirds majority by three votes out of 401 cast in a special session of the association April 14.

At that time, the charges against Broadway were failure to promote harmony within the association and being uncooperative with the association. The charges grew out of a decision by the church to maintain its six-point statement of faith rather than endorse the Baptist Faith and Message as requested by the credentials committee.

The credentials committee had asked the church to endorse the Baptist Faith and Message statement of faith as a way of distancing itself from a doctrinal position of co-pastor Paul Smith called "ultimat reconciliation." That position holds everyone ultimately will be united with God in heaven.

--more--

They went back after the April 14 vote, the credentials committee attempted to renew discussions with Broadway but the church hesitated. "We believe a vote in a Baptist meeting is a real vote," Smith said. "We were prepared to live with the outcome of the April 14 vote whichever way it went. I do not understand why some leaders wanted to keep pursuing the issue and acting like we had not voted."

Broadway also was involved in another issue by that time -- homosexuality. That issue finally prompted the church to withdraw.

Smith, one of seven co-pastors of the church, explained the Broadway congregation spent six months studying homosexuality. He described the study as "a challenging and difficult process that involved strong feelings." He said the church lost about 20 percent of its participants during that time and he acknowledged differences between the church's co-pastors about homosexuality.

In the end, the church "agreed to disagree," Smith said. On July 12, about 80 percent of the those voting supported a resolution that stated, "We respectfully acknowledge that differences of opinion exist among Christians regarding the sinfulness or godliness of homosexual behavior. This acknowledgement is neither an affirmation nor a condemnation of homosexual behavior. It is a recognition of diversity, not a statement of judgment.

"While we understand that these different opinions are not easily reconciled by means of debate or democracy, we believe that a Jesus-based, Spirit-filled Christian community embracing diverse opinions can still feed, bless and heal its members."

The action made no reference to Broadway members' established ministries in the Kansas City homosexual community. But a month earlier, the seven co-pastors announced they would not officiate at same-sex unions or ceremonies and called for a moratorium on the subject of homosexuality.

Smith said the church's failure to condemn homosexuality went beyond what most Kansas City area Baptists would tolerate. In a letter to members, the co-pastors, together with the church's denominational relations committee and the church council, wrote, "Our friends in the association tell us the resolution we have just passed will produce a new and intensified round of controversy. ... They believe there would not be sufficient support among churches sympathetic to Broadway to prevent our being dismissed from the association."

The letter recommended voluntary withdrawal from the association and set in motion the steps that resulted in the Aug. 7 vote.

Meanwhile, the Blue River-Kansas City association acted to address the ongoing differences with Broadway. In a July 28 meeting of the association's executive board, Paul Brooks, pastor of First Baptist Church in Raytown, offered two amendments to the association bylaws. Both specified how a church could be denied membership in the association or dismissed from membership.

The first way was if the church "has acted in any manner to reject or refuse to affirm the Baptist Faith and Message as a confessional statement." The second was if a church "has officially in any manner affirmed, approved or endorsed homosexual behavior."

Rose said the amendments were approved with little dissent among the 103 board members present. The amendments were given to the association's bylaws committee with instructions to present them for a vote at the annual meeting Oct. 3-4.

After the vote to withdraw, Smith said, "We have tried to act with integrity. We did not want to prolong the controversy. It seemed inevitable that we would be dismissed from the association, and voluntary withdrawal gave us the best chance to avoid the negative reporting and false statements in the press."

Broadway remains in cooperation with the Missouri Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Missionary surgeon in India gets medical license extension

BANGALORE, India (BP)--Southern Baptists' only resident missionary in India, surgeon Rebekah Naylor, has received a two-year renewal of her license to practice medicine at the Baptist Hospital in Bangalore.

"Rebekah has just heard from the (government) Ministry of Health -- her license has been renewed for two years up to Oct. 23, 1996," reported Naylor's administrative assistant, Florence Charles, in an Aug. 12 message to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"Praise the Lord! All our prayers have been answered."

The license renewal was anything but a formality. Naylor's medical ministry in India has been held hostage to the renewal process for years.

Naylor, of Fort Worth, Texas, regained her medical license last November after India's health minister personally overruled the national medical council, which had denied her a license the month before.

The health minister also overruled the council's decision not to grant Naylor a license in 1991. The council's 1991 and 1993 decisions made it illegal for Naylor to practice medicine at the Baptist Hospital, where she has worked since 1973. The 143-bed hospital treats more than 74,000 patients a year. About half of them are too poor to pay their medical bills.

Despite the high-level intervention, the 1993 renewal was good for only one year, and the medical council told Naylor it would continue to deny future renewals. "I'm kind of on borrowed time," she said then.

She's still on borrowed time, but this time it's two full years -- a hopeful sign for the future.

Her continuing struggle to obtain governmental approval for her medical work is common in missions. In India, tight restrictions on licenses, work permits and visas have slashed the Southern Baptist missionary force from 18 in the 1980s to one -- Naylor.

Some missionaries work in India as itinerants, moving in and out of the country on a short-term basis, but Naylor is the only resident Southern Baptist missionary in the huge Asian nation. In other parts of Asia, visa restrictions have forced missionaries to radically alter ministries that took years to establish.

--30--

EDITORS' NOTE: Vicki Dauer knew only a few words of Spanish when she was hired as an LPN for a migrant farm worker mobile clinic five years ago. She ordered tapes on speaking Spanish, learned the language and, in response to a growing sense of call, taught her first English-as-a-Second-Language class in 1993. She now does ESL ministry through Hardin (Mont.) Baptist Church.

FIRST-PERSON

A typical (?) day in the
life of an ESL teacher

By Vicki Dauer

Baptist Press
8/16/94

HARDIN, Mont. (BP)--Sonia was almost nine months pregnant when I began teaching her English as a Second Language (ESL). Three weeks later, on March 31, I went to her house and was greeted by her brother-in-law and a friend who worked with her husband.

The friend said, "Sonia isn't here. She's having her baby! She's at the hospital."

"That's great!" I replied. "Tell her I'm still praying for her and will see her a little later."

Sonia had known only three or four words of English when I began working with her. Tibo, her husband, spoke English fairly well and was at the hospital too.

--more--

Believing all was well, I drove down the road to my next lesson. Afterwards, I started the 20-mile trip home, thinking I would visit Sonia that evening. But God had other plans! As I was praying for her, something (Someone?) nudged me into thinking, "Sonia needs you now. Go to her."

This nudging was so strong, more like a giant push, that I turned down the road to go to the hospital instead of toward home. I kept thinking, "Martha, her cousin, is there for emotional support and her husband is there to translate. Why, Lord, do you want me there? I'll just be in the way right now."

Again, there was that nudge: "Go, now."

So I went.

The sign on the door said: O.B. Department. No Admittance.

I saw an X-ray technician I knew and asked, "May I go in there?"

"Is she a friend of yours, Vicki?"

"Yes."

"Sure, I don't see why not."

I went through the door to the O.B. department and saw immediately why God wanted me there. Sonia's husband wasn't in the delivery room with her. I had forgotten, in Hispanic culture, a man does not usually stay with his wife during delivery -- that is for female relatives and a midwife.

The delivery room door was open and I saw that her cousin, Martha, was there. Martha had arrived from Mexico only a few days before and spoke less English than Sonia. I looked over at Dr. Ostahowski and asked, "Is she understanding anything?"

"No," he shook his head. "Do you speak Spanish?"

"Well, yes."

The delivery room staff said, practically in chorus, "Grab a gown and get in here!"

Sonia's eyes were full of pain, fear and questions when I went in. She and Martha understood nothing of what the doctor told her. Sonia was in labor, in a foreign place where she couldn't communicate and surrounded by strangers in masks and gowns.

The doctor explained what he wanted her to do during her next contractions and I translated. A little bit of the fear seemed to leave Sonia's eyes.

For the next hour and a half, Sonia worked very hard. I translated, wiped her brow with a cool cloth, just held her hand and helped hold her up when she had a contraction. Finally the doctor said, "I think on the next contraction, we'll have a baby."

I told Sonia, "Empuje tan fuerte que puede!" (Push as hard as you can!)

God is so good! I wept. Martha wept. Even some of the nurses wept as Sonia's little girl made her way into the world. To watch a birth is to watch God working so clearly it touches anyone.

As I stood in awe at this tiny little miracle, I prayed silently, "May she come to know you, Lord. May she love you and serve you, her creator."

I helped the nurses get Sonia to her room and translated their instructions for her. Her husband came in and after speaking with him briefly, I said good-bye to Sonia.

"Gracias, maestra," (Thanks, teacher,) she replied with her eyes shining now.

I drove home singing praises in my heart to the Lord. I also smiled to myself as I thought, "Ah, yes, another typical day in the life of an ESL teacher."

--30--

Murder victim, alleged attacker

both members of same church

By Melanie Childers

Baptist Press

8/16/94

FRANKFORT, Ky. (BP)--Members of a Kentucky Baptist church grieve deeply in the wake of a recent tragedy that has called them to minister to the families of both the victim and the accused.

--more--

Thornhill Baptist Church in Frankfort, Ky., received widespread public recognition for its quick response after a faithful member of the church was reported missing July 23.

But days later, the woman's body was located and officials determined she had been murdered. The church found itself in a delicate position since both the victim and her nephew, who was charged with the murder, were members of the church.

"You just try to be a pastor to both sides," explained pastor William Hartung regarding his part in helping the church cope with the tragedy.

G neva Vaughan, 77, "was practically a lifelong member of the church," Hartung said. She joined as a young teenager and had taught Sunday school more than 40 years. Her husband, who died two years ago, was a deacon.

"She was here every time the church doors were open," Hartung said. "She was very faithful and a very generous person in the church's ministries. Several ministries have started because she helped back them financially."

When concern for her whereabouts prompted family members to break into Vaughan's home Saturday, July 23, they discovered her glasses smashed on the floor and a puddle of blood in the dining room. However, neither Vaughan nor her car were on the premises.

She had not been seen since Thursday evening when a friend from church brought her home after an excursion, Hartung recounted. Relatives became concerned Friday when she failed to keep an appointment.

The uncertainty of the situation left church members unsure about how best to minister to the family, Hartung said. "We felt so helpless" to do anything.

However, by the next day, the church transformed helplessness into hopefulness by mobilizing a massive search to help locate her.

On Sunday afternoon, more than 100 people gathered at the church. Driving more than 70 cars, members "looked up county roads, dirt roads and hollers," the pastor said. "Just about every road in Franklin County was pretty well covered."

And although the search did not lead directly to Vaughan's location, it served an important purpose for the church, Hartung said.

"Going out and looking for her was a way for our people to express their grief and sorrow over this," he explained.

However, grief and sorrow were compounded two days later when Vaughan's body was discovered in the trunk of her car, which had been abandoned at Lexington's Bluegrass Field Airport.

Vaughan apparently was kidnapped and murdered during a robbery of her home late in the evening July 21.

Relatives and church members suffered another blow when Stephen Marshall, Vaughan's 26-year-old nephew and also a member of Thornhill Baptist Church, was arrested and charged with her murder. Marshall's mother and grandmother are faithful members at the church, too, Hartung said.

"W 're in a state of numbness," the pastor said of the church's response. "I won't be able to tell much until a couple of weeks. Right now, everybody's stunned."

Although most of the attention has focused on the grief of family and church members, Hartung said, guilt also has been a prominent factor. Some family members harbor "a feeling of remorse for what has occurred."

But the church has handled the situation quite well, he added. Rather than pitting family members against each other or presuming guilt, the church has emphasized God's love and forgiveness.

Thornhill Baptist, a family oriented church, averages about 260 people in Sunday morning worship, Hartung said. Many members were in some way related to Vaughan, but "anybody who has been a part of this church for any length of time has been touched by her life."

The experience has "shocked us into realizing how much we are interdependent," he continued, noting members have developed a heightened awareness of the need for frequent communication, especially with members who live alone.

Trag dy is not new to Thornhill Baptist Church. Less than two months prior to Vaughan's murder, an 18-year-old in the church, Suzanne Elam, was killed in an automobile accident. Elam's father, Tony, serves as the church's minister of music.

The church still was grieving the loss of Elam when Vaughan was killed, Hartung said. "Our minds know it has happened, but it's just hard for our hearts to accept."

--30--

**Assimilation skills are essential
to attracting, keeping new members**

**Baptist Press
8/16/94**

By Charles Willis

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--The mystique of why some people are attracted to a church, why they stay and why they leave may be solved in part by knowing the role assimilation plays in helping persons become integrated into the membership of a congregation.

Assimilation begins when the person first sees the church facility and continues until they become full-fledged, accepted members of the church, a national consultant told participants in a Southern Baptist Conference on Deacon Ministry at Glorieta (N.M) Baptist Conference Center, Aug. 13-19.

"The church is not a task to be accomplished," Bob Sheffield, deacon ministry consultant at the Baptist Sunday School Board, observed. "The church is people. So church growth is not a task. It has to do with people, and assimilation is part of the church growth issue."

After years as a pastor, Sheffield said he experienced firsthand trying to become a member of a Southern Baptist church when he began work at the Sunday School Board in 1985.

"It's very difficult to become a full-fledged member of a Southern Baptist church," he declared. "Whether we mean to or not, we are freezing some people out. For some people, this doesn't matter because they conclude they aren't sure they want to be a part of that. Others would be more involved if only they could."

Sheffield said certain assumptions must be made about assimilation when meeting guests of the church.

"Assimilation is not automatic," he said. "We have to plan for it to happen. The church is responsible for new members being assimilated into the body. The new members are not responsible first; we are responsible until we have done all we can do, and the new member has refused.

"People who reach a new member have the primary responsibility to help that person follow through," he continued.

"What do we say about a mother who births a child, wraps it in a blanket and leaves it on the hospital steps?" he asked. "We say she abandoned it, but we don't make the transfer to the same kind of behavior at church."

Assimilation begins before membership, Sheffield said, with how people perceive a church's appearance and how they are greeted at the earliest point of entry. He urged placing people on the church parking lot to greet, answer questions, provide reassurances and to give directions.

"Assimilation must be a high priority for the church," he added. "Not just outreach, but the church must have as a priority the person becoming a full-fledged member of the church."

Sheffield said he sees evidence that church members say the right words but do not support their words of welcome with action.

"We say to the newcomer, w 're glad you are here,' and we mean that, but we are unwilling to do what is necessary to make people feel included."

--more--

As an example, he cited one church in which visitors were welcomed, followed by an announcement that "we are going to sing such-and-such chorus ... we all know that." Sheffield said he was among guests who, in fact, did not know the chorus and were not provided words to participate.

The matter of recognizing guests is important, he said, because many baby boomers and baby busters, research shows, do not like to be publicly recognized. Others don't complete guest cards, so members need to be aware of who sits next to them, he said.

Factors that affect the inclusion of new members, Sheffield cited, are a clear congregational identity, congregational harmony and cooperation, a warm and inviting welcome, the pastor's ability to generate enthusiasm, the congregation's involvement in service and evidence of a place or group to join.

An assimilated member, he continued, identifies with the goals of the church, attends worship regularly, feels a sense of spiritual growth and progress, has taken necessary steps of affiliation, has new friends in the church, assumes tasks or roles appropriate to spiritual gifts, is involved in a fellowship or Bible study group which fosters fellowship relationships, tithes or gives regularly to the church.

While assimilation into the congregation is not always a quick process, Sheffield urges patience in dealing with newcomers.

"If we care for people," he said, "they will respond."

The Southern Baptist Conference on Deacon Ministry was sponsored by the pastor-staff leadership department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

--30--

Lists citing reasons people join, stay in and leave a church is posted in the SBCNet News Room under the file name "lists.txt."

Keys to empowered communication
can help pastors unlock audiences

Baptist Press
8/16/94

By Charles Willis

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Since God chose to use narratives and poetry to communicate, why shouldn't preachers do the same?

Calvin Miller posed the question during a session of the Bible Preaching Leadership Conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

For the preacher whose audience begins to yawn and mentally drop out of the sermon, Miller, professor of communications and ministry studies and writer-in-residence at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, offers "Seven Keys to Unlocking an Audience."

For purposes of his list, Miller said he does not use the term audience to indicate spectator status. Rather, he views the audience as active "hearers."

First, Miller suggested building a "speaker-listener" relationship. He suggests a communicative, relational style which may be viewed by some as "hokey, but it's OK as long as they see you reaching out to them," he told pastors during the Aug. 13-19 conferences.

"Step over the ego barrier toward the audience" is another key, "a grace that is learned best in smaller (church) situations."

"The smaller the microphone, the better," he cites as one example of eliminating ego distractions. People listen genuinely to people they believe care about them," he observed, and a large, obvious microphone does not contribute to an atmosphere of warmth.

The fourth key is to promise you will give them usable information and keep your promise with content.

In telling your story, Miller continued, "create tension and resolution, building attention with the story and finishing with a happy ending. People listen as long as the tension is unresolved. Smart is the pastor who quits talking when the people quit listening."

--more--

Construct a pyramid of priorities -- truth, interest and inspiration -- is the fifth key.

"Make sure they hear through a trinity of audio values: projection, dynamics and listener involvement," he said.

"The pulpit represents the single strongest part of the stage from which to speak, but it is also a barrier. Let the audience talk back to you a little bit," he urged. "And learn to laugh at your stupidity when they do."

The seventh key is to "kill interest lag through values of mobility."

People may not long remember the message of a typical sermon, Miller admitted, but a dramatic visual demonstration may place a sermon in memory for years.

As an example, he cited a sermon in which a preacher illustrated "the most dangerous thing in the world" by pulling out of a sack a knife, a gun and, finally, a cow's tongue to illustrate the danger of the tongue. While some in the audience did not find the tongue especially appealing, the point of the sermon was not forgotten.

Miller said he believes the sermon has a task -- to win people to Jesus, to prompt people to recommit their lives or to return Jesus to the center of a marriage, among others.

A sermon outline that is too obvious will cause many people to mentally leave the message, ending the possibility for accomplishing the sermon's task.

"You have to move between structure (the sermon outline) and interest (the biblical techniques of narrative and poetry) to get the whole audience listening," he insisted, urging the preachers to move from the text to a key word, to stories, to personal illustrations, to poetry to a reckoning with God.

"The altar is the place of reckoning," he said. "It doesn't matter how long you sing praise choruses to the 'God of feel-good.' If it doesn't end with some kind of reckoning, it has failed."

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

--30--

Church planters needed in Ohio
at free church site, elsewhere By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
8/16/94

TORONTO, Ohio (BP)--Terrell Moore has an unusual problem.

A Christian woman wants to give Muskingum Valley Baptist Association five acres of land for a church in an Ohio community where there currently is no Southern Baptist congregation -- a community where the association would like to start a church.

So what's the problem? A year after the offer was made, Moore has not been able to find anyone willing to move to the area and begin a church. Someone with pastoral experience would be great, but a committed layperson could do just as well, he says.

Moore's problem typifies one of the greatest challenges facing leaders of Southern Baptist work in Ohio and other parts of the Midwest. To borrow the words of Jesus: "The harvest is great but the laborers are few."

Opportunities abound -- in Toronto and hundreds of other locations -- but Baptists willing to venture into new work among Ohio's 11 million residents are scarce, says Peter Miller, church starter strategist for the state convention.

In the Akron-Canton area, Peter Kendrick, missions development director for Summit Baptist Association, actively has sought to recruit bivocational pastors to start new churches. He has written letters to friends from seminary days, issued passionate appeals to students preparing to graduate from seminary and more.

Yet out of a goal to secure 22 bivocational or volunteer leaders for new congregations, the association has lured only two.

--more--

"I am disappointed that so many pastors want to go to ready-made churches. We pray fervently that God will still call men and their families into missions environments," says Kendrick, himself a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary who answered the call of new work in Ohio. He currently serves as pastor of Crestview Baptist Church in Stow, Ohio.

The need is urgent in the Canton-Akron area, he notes, because an estimated 70 percent of the population is not Christian.

Toronto, meanwhile, is a picturesque town of 7,000 people on the banks of the Ohio River in the northeastern corner of the state. There are a few other churches in town, but none with the evangelical zeal of Baptists.

Muskingum Valley Association is neither Ohio's strongest nor weakest association. But it is an area where Southern Baptists -- and evangelicals as a whole -- struggle to get a foothold.

Tommy Mills, bivocational pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in nearby Steubenville, Ohio, has traveled to Toronto once a week for the past year to lead a Bible study in the home of "Mrs. B" Winland, the woman willing to donate land for a church. But the Bible study has not yet developed into the seeds of new church.

Limited efforts have been made at canvassing the community.

What's needed, Moore believes, is a person or couple willing to move to Toronto for an extended period of time as volunteers. With earnest efforts at surviving and developing relationships, the association might know for sure whether a church could be started or not.

For now, Moore is considering executing an agreement with "Mrs. B" whereby the land is given to the association for a certain amount of time but will revert back to her if a church is not developed.

The location of the property isn't ideal, but churches have done well in much worse locations, Moore notes. And despite the lack of leadership to plant a church, Moore still wonders what God may be trying to say to Baptists.

"If someone gives us five acres of land to start a church, maybe God's up to something," he reasons.

--30--

(BP) photo available upon request from the Western Recorder.

Annuity Board trustee
Herman J. Smith dies

Baptist Press
8/16/94

DALLAS (BP)--Herman Jared Smith, chairman of the investment committee of the board of trustees of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board and a trustee of Dallas Baptist University, died Aug. 15 after suffering a massive heart attack. He was 64.

Smith and his wife, Patsy, their daughter, Vicki Weinberg, and grandson, Josh, had returned home to Colleyville, Texas, that evening from a salmon fishing vacation in Alaska. He was stricken shortly after 10 p.m. and died at Bedford Hospital early Monday.

Smith had been an Annuity Board trustee since 1990 and was re-elected to a four-year term by the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando, Fla., last June. He was a deacon at Richland Hills Baptist Church in Fort Worth and served as finance chairman for the Greater Fort Worth Luis Palau Evangelistic Crusade in 1993. He and his wife have been longtime benefactors of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he served on the advisory council, and of Baylor and Dallas Baptist universities.

Paul W. Powell, Annuity Board president, said, "I have lost both a friend and a counselor of the highest order. Herman Smith's value as a trustee has been incalculable. He brought to his office a keen business mind and a deep spiritual commitment to the people we serve."

--more--

Smith's successor as chairman of the investment committee will be named by Richard C. Scott, chairman of the board, who is dean of the Hankamer School of Business at Baylor University. Scott chaired the investment committee prior to his election as board chairman.

Smith was prominent in business and civic affairs. He was a former mayor of Hurst, Texas, and had served as president and chairman of United Way of Fort Worth and Tarrant County. He was principal benefactor of Women's Haven of Tarrant County, a shelter for battered women and their children.

Owner of Herman Smith & Co., Smith had built more than 8,000 homes in the north Texas area. He was a director of Bedford National Bank and chairman of the board of First American Savings Bank. He was a past president of the National Association of Home Builders and the Texas Association of Builders. He was a past chairman of the Federal Home Loan Board of Little Rock and the National Institute of Building Sciences of Washington; a former board member of the Federal Mortgage Association and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Washington.

Smith had served as a trustee of Howard Payne University, a Texas Baptist school. He received the honorary degree, doctor of humanities, from Dallas Baptist University where he was a current trustee. Baylor awarded the Smiths the university's Outstanding Family Business Award for 1991.

In addition to his wife, Smith is survived by two daughters, Vicki Weinberg and Karla Hamilton; and six grandchildren. Weinberg is executive vice president of Herman Smith & Co., and has declared her intention to continue running the business.

A funeral service is scheduled for Aug. 17 at Richland Hills Baptist Church.

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, TN 37234

F
I
R
S
T

C
L
A
S
S

Southern Baptist Library
and Archives