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-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 4, 1995

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
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Nashville, Tennessee

FMB marks milestones
in mission personnel

By Mary E. Speidel

Baptist Press
4/4/95

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board sent out a record number of 545 "ordinary people" in 1994 as missionaries assigned to the extraordinary task of reaching the world for Jesus Christ.

"It's so easy to put missionaries on pedestals," Mark Shook told worshipers attending the December appointment service where he and his wife, Laura, were named missionaries. "But I've discovered missionaries are ordinary people. I know because I'm going to be one."

The Shooks, from Houston, joined the ranks of other "ordinary people" who set the 1994 appointment record of 545 and helped push the board's total mission force beyond 4,000 for the first time.

The 545 total, which broke the 1993 mark of 498, includes 255 career and associate missionary appointments and a record 290 two-year International Service Corps (ISC) workers and journeymen. The 255 career appointment total was the highest in seven years; the record was set in 1985 with 304. The two-year worker total topped the 1993 record of 275.

In April 1994 the overseas missionary force topped 4,000 for the first time in its 150-year history and stands at 4,108, according to the latest available figures. That includes 3,518 career and associate missionaries and 590 two-year workers.

Marking the 4,000 milestone moves the Southern Baptist Convention closer to its goal of having 5,000 missionaries by A.D. 2000. "Given our pool of potential (missionary) candidates, the prospects for reaching that goal are realistic," said Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin.

"But that needs to be paralleled with whether Southern Baptists will provide the financial resources" for supporting foreign missions, Rankin said.

Currently the mission board has a list of about 3,300 Southern Baptists who have started the career missionary appointment process, said Lloyd Atkinson, director of the board's personnel selection department. His department also has contact with another 2,200 prospects for mission service.

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Last year the board saw an increase in total "initial contacts" -- people who contact the agency for the first time to express interest in career missions. In 1994 the mission board logged about 2,300 phone calls from such people -- up from 1,965 in 1993. In 1994 the agency registered about 3,000 other "initial contacts" made by mail and in person at conferences.

But these numbers don't give the whole picture, according to Jim Slack, the board's consultant for church growth.

Predictions for future missionary appointments must be measured against the board's rate of missionary attrition, Slack said. Attrition includes deaths, terminations and resignations among the total missionary force.

That rate stands at about 3 percent for 1994, low compared to other missionary-sending agencies, Slack said. But even with that low attrition rate, the board will have to send out 440 to 500 workers per year from now until A.D. 2000 just to maintain its current missionary count, Slack said.

Final attrition statistics aren't yet available for 1994. But Slack noted that for the first time in years, no deaths occurred among the board's total missionary force last year.

"When you think about the places where our missionaries live, the kind of travel they do -- in planes, in cars over rough roads and in areas where ambushes, terrorism and persecution take place, you know that means the Lord has been good," Slack said. "But it also says something about the way we take care of our missionaries -- through medical care and family ministries."

Personnel statistics for 1994 reflect that a growing number of new career missionaries earlier served overseas through the International Service Corps and/or journeyman program. That was the case for 44 of the 255 career and associate missionaries appointed last year. ISC assignments -- ranging from four months to two years -- are open to Southern Baptists at least age 21. The journeyman program is open to single college graduates under 30.

The new missionaries include Mark and Martha Jane Grossmann, from Florissant, Mo., and Pelham, Ga., respectively, appointed to develop churches in Kenya. Grossmann comes from a family of seven children, three of them Foreign Mission Board missionaries. Before marriage he was a journeyman in Kenya, and she was a journeyman in the Philippines. Both say that experience confirmed God's call to become missionaries.

"I saw God work in and through me as I had never seen before," said Grossmann, who planted a church and worked as a pastor while a journeyman.

Besides career and associate missionaries, last year the board sent out 434 mission workers for terms of service ranging from four months to two years through the ISC and journeyman programs. (The agency also sent out a record 12,976 people for shorter terms through its volunteers in missions department and through programs for students and medical professionals).

The 434 figure represents a 45 percent increase from the 1990 total of 299. Of that 434, 71 people (16 percent) are using their assignment to gain two years' professional experience required for career missionary appointment. Another 106 of that 434 (24 percent) say God has called them to career missions, but they haven't begun the formal appointment process yet.

"Southern Baptist young people are hearing God's call to be involved personally in missions. They're willing to commit themselves to spend one to two years sharing the gospel with a needy world before becoming obligated to career, home mortgages and family," noted Wendy Norvelle, director of the board's international service department.

"And at the other end of those obligations, older Southern Baptists are committed to using their skills and experience to make a difference around the world."

But there's more to the story than numbers. "I believe God is greater than statistics and projections," said Atkinson. "God is doing some amazing things in our day" in missions.

Rankin echoed that comment. "What's really exciting is that these statistics reflect what God is planning to do in missions as he calls out people in high numbers. And it's not just the numbers, but where these people are being sent," said Rankin, noting more and more new missionaries are heading to World A (that portion of the globe which has little or no exposure to the gospel) and former communist countries.

"Some of today's best informed missiologists say this generation of Christians is witnessing the greatest missions stirring of God's Holy Spirit than any generation has ever experienced," added Thurmon Bryant, the board's vice president for mission personnel.

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed 3/31/95 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet News Room.

SBC Cooperative Program March
receipts down slightly; year up

Baptist Press
4/4/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for March were down .35 percent compared to that month last year but the year's receipts were 2.48 percent above the same period a year ago, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

For March 1995, receipts totaled \$12,798,612, which is \$45,213 less than March 1994. The fiscal year to date, October through March, totaled \$73,676,952 which is \$1,786,060 over the previous year's period, or a 2.48 percent increase.

Designated gifts were up for March 1995 at \$18,128,922, which is a \$980,402 or 5.72 percent increase, as well as 2.03 percent for the fiscal 1995 year to date over 1994: \$81,995,342 compared to \$80,366,033.

The March 1995 figure also surpassed 12.48 percent the SBC budget requirement for the month of \$11,378,310. For the year-to-date SBC program allocation budget, gifts for the six months totaled \$73,676,952 compared to \$68,269,865 for the previous year, or a 7.92 percent increase.

The SBC Cooperative Program total includes receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions and fellowships for distribution according to the 1994-95 program allocation budget as well as restricted funds received from state conventions which identify them as Cooperative Program.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, the Anne Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions, world hunger and other special gifts.

State and regional conventions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining funds to the Executive Committee for national and international ministries. The percentage of distribution is at the discretion of each state or regional convention.

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As Burundi crisis builds,
BWA issues call for help

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press
4/4/95

WASHINGTON (BP)--Baptist leaders in Burundi report they are often targets of violence and insinuation, according to Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid for the Baptist World Alliance.

"Most of the officers of the Baptist Union of Burundi, all Hutus, often flee across the border to Zaire from the killing in their own country," said Montacute, who returned from a March 15-20 visit to Nairobi, Kenya, where he met Baptist leaders from Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire.

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One missionary told Montacute, "the situation in Burundi is like an abscess waiting to burst."

While recent reports indicate the flow of refugees from Burundi to Tanzania and Zaire has slowed because of assurances the Burundi army will protect Hutu refugees, the Baptist World Alliance is concerned Burundi not be a repeat of the recent massacres in Rwanda. In both countries, the fighting is a result of a majority Hutu population ruled by a minority Tutsi government.

"Another tragedy is awaiting us in Burundi," said Denton Lotz, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance in a recent letter to President Clinton. "Please use all of your efforts to bring the warring parties together to begin some process of negotiation for a peaceful sharing of power both in Burundi and Rwanda."

Lotz asked Clinton to consider "a rapid peace force from the United Nations if killing begins to prevent another Holocaust."

In his report, Montacute, who visited Nairobi to continue work on BWAid's response to the Rwandan conflict, said not only are there already killings in Burundi, but killings in Rwanda of returning refugees, especially professionals.

Few of the Rwandan refugees have returned home and now more refugees are coming from Burundi. All of this has placed an extra burden on Baptist pastors ministering to refugees in Zaire and Burundi. Montacute learned many relief agencies no longer provide for some refugees in Zaire, and both Burundi and Rwanda are in need of essential medications.

"We have been able to assist the Baptist communities in Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire as they have been helping to meet the needs of many thousands of refugees," said Montacute.

Baptists around the world have given almost \$900,000 through BWAid for Rwandan relief. This money has provided food and medicines, assisted with hygiene and sanitary needs, provided funds to relocate pastors and helped sponsor reconciliation workshops.

"With the deterioration of the situation in Burundi, BWAid is receiving more requests to help these indigenous leaders as they help refugees and displaced people," said Montacute.

"With most of our funds already committed, BWAid is looking for another outpouring of generosity from the worldwide family," he said. "They have ability and experience if we can give them the resources."

Donations for "Africa Refugee Assistance" can be made to Baptist World Aid, 6733 Curran Street, McLean, VA 22101-6005, USA.

Meanwhile, a rapid response team from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has been surveying the situation and will make recommendations. Donations designated for world hunger and relief also may be sent to the Foreign Mission Board, in care of its human needs department, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

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SBC president underscores
use of media in evangelism

By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press
4/4/95

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--SBC President Jim Henry is a veteran of media ministry who underscores the importance of fully utilizing technology to proclaim the gospel.

Henry, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla., said with people cocooning more and more (enveloping themselves in a coating of privacy) the use of media for ministry is becoming increasingly important.

"There are a lot of hurt, wounded people out there who watch a pastor on television and a friendship develops before they ever come to church," he said.

"Properly used for God's glory, television can be a tremendous witnessing tool and it can open all sorts of doors for witness. It's asy for those of us at First Baptist, Orlando, to measure the impact of television. We see evidence of what our weekly program is doing all the time. We don't have to prove ourselves in the community. People know where we're coming from, know that we represent Christ and his love."

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First Baptist Church has a one-hour magazine-format program called "Sunday First Edition" on Orlando's ABC Television Network affiliate (WFTV/Channel 9) every Sunday at 9 a.m. following the network's Eyewitness News "Weekend Daybreak" program. Until beginning the new format earlier this year, the church had telecast its morning worship service live for more than 30 years.

"Our program deals with real-life problems and issues," Henry said, "and it offers Christian comfort to those who are hurting. For example, on one program we had an interview with Randall James, a member of our church and an aide to the city's mayor. He has cancer and he talked about how his faith in Christ has helped him deal with it. People can identify with that because so many either have cancer or have a family member or friend who has been stricken with it.

"Every facet of our program is Christ-centered and evangelistic," Henry said. "We stay focused on why we are using technology, which is to proclaim Christ. People today are technologically oriented and television enables us to multiply our ministry."

"Jim Henry understands the impact media have on families, especially children and young people," said Jack Johnson, president of the Fort Worth, Texas, -based SBC Radio and Television Commission. "That is why his church has such a strong media ministry."

"Let's face it," Henry said. "The majority of people want quality family values programming, but the content will continue to worsen. As the number of channels increases, there will be more and more trash on television. We have a responsibility to God to use media wisely, to provide quality and content in creative and innovative ways that proclaim Christ to the world."

He said Southern Baptist churches are filled with creative, talented people capable of producing television that both entertains and evangelizes.

"Our own church is an excellent example," Henry said. "More than 600 people are involved in producing our Easter pageant, 'The Light,' which more than 50,000 people attend each year. We get similar participation and attendance for our annual Christmas program. These programs have made such an impact on the community that local TV people are asking if they can run them on their stations free of charge. In addition, we sold more than 3,000 videos of these program to people all over the world.

"I give an invitation at the end of each presentation and people come giving their hearts and lives to Christ. One of the city's outstanding lawyers was saved while watching our Christmas program. Now he provides tickets to the presentation for everybody in his firm. Quite a few business people provide tickets for their employees. The Easter and Christmas presentations have tremendous evangelistic outreach."

Another facet of the church's media ministry is distribution of audio tapes of Henry's sermons. More than a million have been distributed, mostly in Africa.

Henry, now in his 18th year at the Orlando church, began using media for ministry in the 1960s when pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn.

"Actually, I was on both the CBS and NBC affiliates in Nashville," he said. "We telecast our Sunday morning worship service on one station and on the other I did a two- or three-minute early morning devotional five days a week. The devotionals opened a lot of doors. I got to know all the television crew and received invitations to be on a number of other TV programs. Even today people from the central Tennessee area tell me they watched me years ago. They remember, which tells you the kind of impact television has on people."

Henry said he cannot go anywhere in central Florida -- restaurants, ball games or the beach -- but what people come up and say, "You're the preacher from First Baptist Church who's on television."

He said the strange thing is people come up and say they recognize his voice.

"It's not so much the face but the voice," he said. "It doesn't matter. The important thing is that I know we're getting through."

Henry said he was recently on an airplane when a Catholic woman came up to him and said, "You're that Baptist on television."

"Her daughter was meeting her at the airport," he said, "and she insisted that I meet her. She later wrote me a personal letter thanking me for the time I spent with her. Such incidents are not uncommon. When your program is Christ-centered, you earn credibility."

Henry said a media ministry creates audiences who have never heard the gospel before.

"Because of our media ministry, we receive many calls from people who are in hospitals and nursing homes," he said. "By following up on these calls, we have led many people to Christ.

"We also receive numerous calls from people who don't have a church home who want us to do a funeral for a loved one. We have been able to consistently lead people to Christ by doing funerals because many of the people attending have never responded positively to the gospel."

Henry said a number of people have told him their elderly parents, unable to attend church, dress up like they are going to church and watch the television program aired by First Baptist.

"I've had people tell me, 'Dad hated preachers, but because of your program he made a profession of faith before he died,'" Henry said. "A media ministry may or may not add names to your church roll. But that shouldn't be its purpose. Its purpose is to proclaim the gospel, to make aware of the saving power of Christ."

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ANALYSIS

Parents, grandparents must
combat media irresponsibility

By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press
4/4/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Concerns about the impact of media on society -- specifically the negative impact on children and youth of gratuitous sex and violence -- are not limited to one segment of the population, one religious group or one political point of view.

If one can believe polls by newsmagazines, the majority of Americans agree the entertainment industry has been irresponsible and has had a direct impact on rising crime rates and self-destructive sexual behavior.

People in Hollywood who promote sex and violence, interestingly, aren't in it just for the money: Every study during a 10-year period showed PG and G-rated movie titles -- on average -- earned far more than R-rated titles. However, R-rated titles went up and up in percentage of total releases. To someone interested in making the greatest return on an investment dollar, this simply doesn't make sense.

So if the motive is not profit, what is it? Simple.

The entertainment industry is driven by a desire for people to impress one another, to make a statement -- to win the respect of their peers.

Michael Medved, a Hollywood film critic and co-host of "Sneak Previews" on PBS, has noted: Things end up looking on screen the way they do "not because they reflect America or what America wants. It is because they reflect the lives of the people who create this material." The reality that Hollywood reflects is not one that is larger than life, but smaller than life, he said.

"It is characters who are less noble; less intelligent; less fundamentally decent than our own friends and neighbors," Medved said of entertainment industry people who are not actively religious and lead very unconventional lives, which makes them a self-selecting group. "And ... that is ... one of the reasons that so many Americans feel detached and removed from the kinds of stories being told."

Medved, a Yale Law School graduate, has written several books, the best-known being "Hollywood vs. America," "Popular Culture" and "The War on Traditional Values."

People can improve the quality of their lives immediately and set a better example for their children by cutting down the amount of TV they watch, Medved said.

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"If you can agree to watch one hour less a day," he said, "that gives you seven extra hours a week ... to participate in your community; to participate in your church ... to read a book; to talk to loved ones; to indulge in some of that communication of which television is the biggest enemy. Understand that there are better things in life than television, even than movies. It is the real world, the world that God has made, that matters far more."

A 1994 study conducted by the Center for Media and Public Affairs reported TV is more violent today than even 1992, after examining one full day of TV and comparing it to a similar study in '92.

The findings included:

- Violent scenes increased 41 percent.
- The average hourly rate of violent scenes per channel increased from 10 to almost 15.
- Life-threatening scenes of violence (assaults with a deadly weapon) were up 67 percent.
- Gunplay was up 45 percent.

The study focused on 18 hours of sitcoms, dramas, cartoons, news stories, music videos, movies and commercials on Washington network affiliates; Paramount-owned independent station WDCA; cable's USA Network; MTV; HBO; and TBS.

ABC, CBS and NBC downplayed the results, and one cannot blame them for disassociating from what is broadcast on cable, which obviously skewed the results.

Still, the study's co-director, Robert Lichter, said: "This is a snapshot to see if we should be worried about violence on television. The answer is yes."

Two new networks trying to duplicate the Fox Network's success will probably up the violence quotient on TV: WB (Warner Brothers) Television Network, targeting viewers age 12 to 34, and the United/Paramount Network.

Television producers and writers concerned about the well-being of America's children might gain insight from Dr. Benjamin Spock's 1994 book, "A Better World for Our Children." Unlike some of his earlier books, this one has nothing to do with daily child-rearing.

In a Los Angeles Times interview, Spock said the book is about the educational, ethical and spiritual poverty in which America's children are being raised -- and the awful legacy being created.

The 91-year-old author reeled off: "Instability of marriage and the family; cruel competitiveness in sports, education and business; racial and ethnic divisiveness; materialism running rampant, with no spiritual or ethical values to offset it; increasing violence; a coarsening of our attitudes toward sex; lack of high-quality day care; an educational system that spews out children with no skills, no goals, and no preparation for productive, satisfying lives."

Many of the things Spock concludes are wrong and what some Americans blame on television are addressed in his book. In the interview the author said he had to use the word "values," but did not want to be linked to those he considers "regressive family values folks."

"What we have lost while moving forward," he said, "is our sense of dignity of each individual; our desire to treat others as we want to be treated; our goal of raising children with the ideals of helpfulness, kindness and service to others. ... We include nothing spiritual to sustain them ... nothing so simple and profound as that we are in this world to love and help each other."

If these values were brought back, Spock said America could move forward faster than ever and "our children would feel valued, educated and motivated."

Now, by age 18 the average person will spend more time being entertained by media than any other activity except sleeping. In fact, media now function as a "parallel school system," often with conflicting messages from lessons traditionally taught in classrooms and learned at home.

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In a summer 1994 issue of CONNECT, published by the Center for Media Literacy in Los Angeles, John Davies recounted: "An entire volume of the 1972 Surgeon General's report explored the effects of television violence upon adolescents. Conflicting research results and communications industry politics resulted in an ambiguous summary despite the establishment of a causal relationship between watching violence on TV and violence and aggression in adolescents."

Davies, director of the Middle School at Miami County Day School in Miami, further wrote: "A decade later, a report issued by the National Institute of Mental Health concluded the research question was no longer whether, but how, violence on television leads to aggressive behavior."

Some think religionists and organizations concerned about the media send out nothing but negative signals and are attempting to destroy First Amendment rights. This is as much a myth as the idea of a Hollywood/media conspiracy.

Organizations like the Center for Media Literacy teach that people of all ages in today's global media age must be able to communicate competently in all media forms -- to understand and evaluate the powerful images, words and sounds in the mass media culture -- skills essential for our future as individuals and as a democratic society.

The mission statement of the Center for Media Literacy is "to help children and adults prepare for living and learning in a global media culture by translating media literacy research and theory into practical information, training and educational tools for teachers and youth leaders, parents and caregivers of children."

There is a growing network of people eager to take control of the impact of television and all media in their personal lives as well as their cultural environment. There may be differences of opinion as to what should be done, but the concern of most is for the public health impact of violence in media -- from television to video games.

If television is to be changed, these are the people who will do it, not through nonproductive rhetoric, but by education -- engaging the issue of violence in media and what it does to children and then applying critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Cary Bazalgette of the British Film Institute said: "Media education is often seen as a way of defending children from TV. It ought to be seen as a way of giving them high expectations of TV, of all media and of themselves."

For those who say violence on TV does not affect children, one only has to ask, "Why do advertisers use television?" The answer is simple: To sell. TV sells "audience consciousness." Because children are three markets in one, they constitute the most lucrative market there is for some businesses -- a "current market" spending \$4.2 billion of their own money on their own desires; a "future market" for most goods and services; and a market of "influentials" who cause many billions of dollars of purchases by their parents.

Saturday morning television, with its more than \$100 million of child-focused advertising, is a monument to this market. Ann Moore, publisher of Sports Illustrated for Kids, said: "We believe children make brand decisions very early that they will carry into their adult lives."

So if children can be predisposed to "buy" by television, it is only logical they can be predisposed to "violence" by television.

Of course, these predispositions flow from a media saturation that also includes pop music, radio, newspapers, magazines, computers and video games.

Some TV industry spokespeople argue children understand everything on the tube is make-believe and TV violence does not contribute to aggressive behavior. They also say if viewers do not like what they see, they should turn it off. These arguments do not make sense for children not yet able to discern what is and is not reality and who often do not control what they see and hear.

Another argument of industry spokespeople is "parents must be responsible" for children's viewing habits. But no parent, no matter how well-intentioned, can monitor all a child views at home and away. There is, after all, such a thing as involuntary exposure to media.

For example, a 7-year-old can be at a neighbor's watching a violently graphic video rented by her or his friend's mature-looking 16-year-old brother. Or a child can be subjected to promotions for violent or horrific late-night programs.

Research has demonstrated frequent viewing of violence can result in young people becoming desensitized. Learning not to react to disgusting and violent images is one of the ways boys are inducted into the non-feeling world of men. Millions of boys who want to appear manly to their peers soak up videos and movies filled with machine-gun toting maniacs and chainsaw-wielding perverts and their acts of violence.

Even at a very early age, kids are being desensitized to violence by so-called children's programs, especially some cartoons.

Robert Kubey, a psychologist and communications professor at Rutgers, said: "Underlying most problems concerning media and children is the commercial genesis of all too many contemporary productions. Most are created because someone concluded a particular idea could make money by attracting children's attention, not because the idea behind a particular program would prepare children for life."

TV is not going to go away, so parents need to cope with the problem by teaching their children the following as suggested by the Center for Media and Values in Los Angeles:

- You're smarter than your TV.
- TV's world is not real.
- TV teaches us some people are more important than others.
- TV keeps doing the same things over and over again.
- Somebody's always trying to make money with the TV.

Censorship is not the answer. Children must be taught to discern. Parents and grandparents must take a greater interest in preparing children for living in a world of powerful images, words and sounds.

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ANALYSIS

'Joseph' sticks close
to biblical account

By William Neal

Baptist Press
4/4/95

ATLANTA (BP)--It is surprising that Hollywood has not fully discovered the wealth of story material to be found in the pages of the Bible. If you are going to deal with such subjects as violence, sex, dysfunctional families and political intrigue, then why not utilize a scenario that offers some insight into human behavior and teaches some lessons about justice, retribution, forgiveness or the power of love?

Christians are understandably suspicious of secular attempts to interpret our beloved and sacred Bible stories on film. Those efforts have often strayed so far from the text as to be misleading or even heretical.

But occasionally a film comes along that does justice to the biblical tradition and such is the case with "Joseph," a two-part television special to be aired on TNT Easter Sunday and the following Monday evening. While some liberties are taken to embellish the missing details, the script does not deviate far from the Genesis account.

For instance, the role Potiphar plays in Joseph's eventual success is more extensive in the movie than is indicated in the text. Potiphar's suspicions of his own wife are never as fully indicated in the biblical account, and yet this television version of the story is quite believable, and certainly a viable interpretation.

Potiphar is obviously impressed with Joseph, the slave, and subsequently interested in his God. As Joseph is arrested and put in prison on trumped up charges by Potiphar's wife, her husband comments: "Wherever he is, whatever happens to him, he is free, because his God is with him."

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Sunday school gives students a glimpse of segmented Bible stories without benefit of putting them all together in context. This film does a good job of placing the many stories about Joseph and his family into some order and relationship: Joseph and his coat of many colors; Joseph sold into slavery; the rape of Dinah and subsequent violence against the males of Shechem; Judah's relationship with his daughter-in-law, Tamar; Joseph's rise to prominence in Egypt; and Joseph's testing of his brothers.

The most dramatic scene in the movie is the reunion of the brothers and Joseph's revelation to them of who he is. Their fear is relieved by his forgiving attitude: "Perhaps we have learned the meaning of brotherhood, of family, and that wherever we may go, no matter how God's plan may separate us, we must be true to one another, to be family."

Actor Paul Mercurio plays a handsome, youthful, humble Joseph, who is always the innocent victim, always the patient and loyal servant, always the courageous man of conviction. Perhaps the film's greatest weakness is in keeping us from seeing a more human Joseph.

Two fine veteran actors, Ben Kingsley and Martin Landau, do a credible job of portraying Potiphar and Jacob, respectively. Kingsley is bald again and somewhat stoic, reminiscent of his award-winning portrayal of Ghandi. Landau plays the tragic but beloved father of Joseph and gives some insight into his troubles as a parent who definitely shows favoritism among his children.

The graphic scenes and adult themes of this movie keep it from being appropriate for young children, but it is an excellent movie for the rest of the family, providing both entertainment and biblical insight, and done in good taste. It is an Easter treat not to be missed!

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Program featuring Tony Evans
to be aired weekly on FamilyNet By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press
4/4/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Tony Evans, one of the nation's most popular and influential African American preachers, can now be seen and heard every week on FamilyNet. Name of the 30-minute weekly program is "The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans." Viewers should check local listings for time and channel number.

FamilyNet is the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission broadcast television service that reaches into more than 65 million homes. The RTVC also operates ACTS, a cable television service that reaches into almost 23 million homes.

"Dr. Evans is a man of God who combines a unique blend of expository Bible teaching and storytelling," said Deborah Key, vice president of network operations for the RTVC. "He preaches the Word with clarity and motivates his viewers to action."

Evans is senior pastor of the 2,500-member Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas and president of The Urban Alternative, a national organization that seeks to bring about spiritual renewal in urban America through the church.

He has been a speaker at numerous Southern Baptist meetings, including the Southern Baptist Convention. He also has been a speaker for large gatherings such as Promise Keepers and the National Religious Broadcasters. He is author of seven books and his weekly radio program, "The Urban Alternative," is aired on more than 200 stations.

He also is the author of "The Urban Concern" booklet series and has two video series: "God's Blueprint for the Christian Family" and "Unleashing the Power of the Word."

He is chaplain of the National Basketball Association Dallas Mavericks and has served as chaplain of the National Football League Dallas Cowboys.

A native of Baltimore, Evans received his undergraduate degree from Carver Bible College in 1972 and later became the first African American to graduate from Dallas Theological Seminary with a doctoral degree. He and his wife, Lois, have two daughters, Chrystal and Priscilla, and two sons, Anthony Jr. and Jonathan.

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Leighton Ford: God's story
determines man's story

By Douglas C. Estes

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Everyone has a story to tell and the "power of story" is today's method of choice for reaching the unsaved for Christ, said Leighton Ford at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Ford, an evangelist who served as vice president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, underscored the value of narrative evangelism in communicating the gospel during Southeastern's semiannual Page Lecture series.

Defining narrative evangelism as the act of living and telling God's story to other people, Ford said, "We can lead people to Christ by telling them the story of how God impacted our life."

As the story of encountering Christ is an extension of the gospel, it must be based on the Word of God, Ford said. "Story has to lead to, and be built on, truth and exposition of Scripture," he said, speaking March 22-23 on the seminary's Wake Forest, N.C., campus.

Scripture is the story of God, Ford continued, using the term "story" to describe "what God is doing in history, the story of the love of God the Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit."

And, Ford said, story is what God has done and is doing in one's life: "When my story or your story collides with his story, we either walk away from it into ultimate lostness, or we get connected with it and we become part of the greatest story ever told.

"Evangelism is other people colliding with that story, the story of God, and our story. Evangelism is sharing the story of the one who changed my story," said Ford, who chaired the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization from 1976-92.

The interaction of God's story with the story of humanity began at the dawn of time, in the theme of the love of God the Father: "There was Father God, who made this world, and made a people for himself, and they ran away," Ford said.

God uses his story to touch the story of those who have run away, Ford said. "It's a wonderful picture of a God who runs out of his temple in the person of his Son to say, 'I love you and I want you to come home,'" said Ford, using the illustration of the joyous father in the parable of the prodigal son.

Each person is like the prodigal son, said Ford: "... each one of us has a story about our relationship to the Father, how he found us, how he ran to us and how we've come to know him. Somehow we have to build from where people are, in their skepticism and their hunger, to the story of God in Scripture."

Paul, full of skepticism, ran into God on the road to Damascus, and there Paul's story collided with other stories. "A collision took place and his life was changed," Ford said.

The union of the story of God with the story of Paul reveals an unmistakable theme of grace, Ford stated. "The story itself is a story of grace, about the God of grace who, though he was rich, became poor for our sakes."

Each Christian's story can open the door of salvation in another's life, but only if the story carries the power of the gospel, bringing "the love of God, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" all to bear on the one who is lost, said Ford.

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Estes is a newswriter at Southeastern Seminary.

EDITORS' NOTE: A list of "Laws of Lostology," to accompany (BP) story titled "'Lostology' offers Christians spiritual shoehorn for evangelism" dated 4/3/95, is posted in the SBCNet N wroom. The file name is "Lost.txt."

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