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home missions

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Cover: Two old men find it's possible to communicate—if you're selective enough. Opposite: It might also be true. Enough said. Cover photo by Don Rutledge.

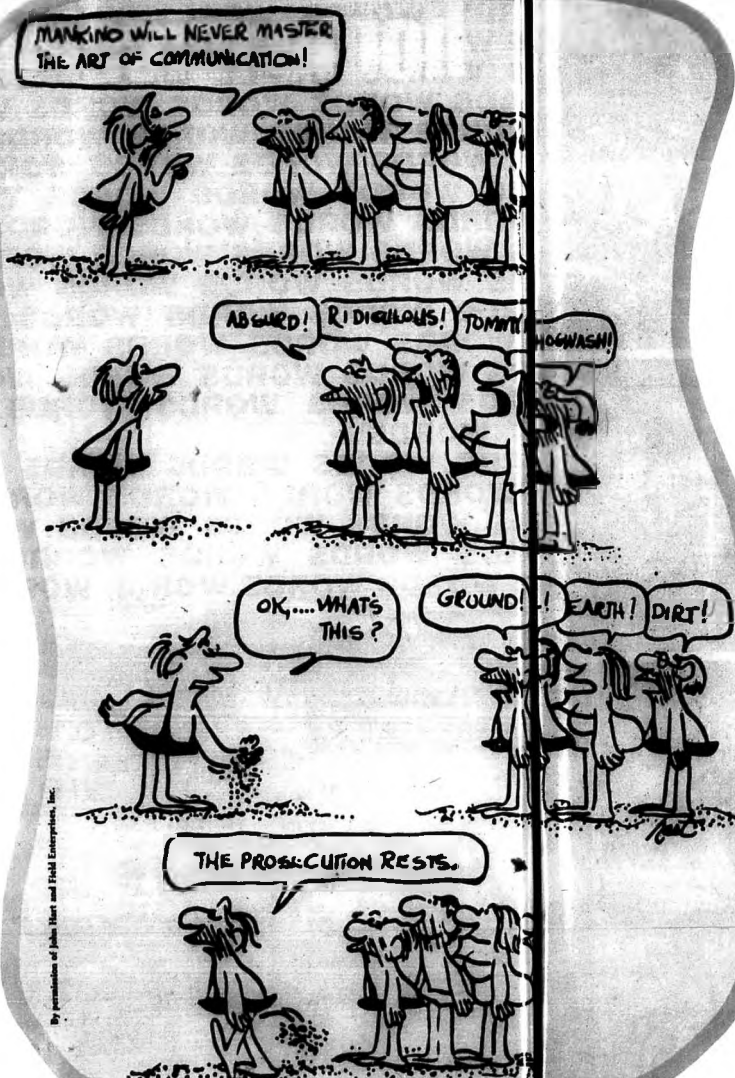
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JANUARY PREVIEW

On communication & faith

In this wordy world of overwhelming communications efforts and underwhelming communications successes, talk's cheap, we note. And it's that very cheapness which makes it no longer possible if we want our messages heard, to take for granted our ability to communicate. So this is an issue about communication. And the Christian faith.

Talking about communication and faith is sort of like wandering around in a house of mirrors—you're never sure where the exits are, and sometimes you meet yourself coming and going.

But we figured the trip was worth while. Two quotes explain why. From Martin Marty: Words can be used to

corrupt worlds. They can be misused and they can be simply despised. In today's culture, people often reject words. But the Christian community, born of a shaping Word and bearing a tradition that can only be known through words, has special reasons for not going along with every bit of rejection.

And from Welton Gaddy: The Greek word usually translated as communication has the same stem as does the word translated communion. In essence, our responsibility under God is to so understand the purpose of our communication of his Word, the process by which this communication occurs, and the variety of means available to us through which such communication may travel, that communication may end in communion. When communication has thus become communion in Christ, it is complete.

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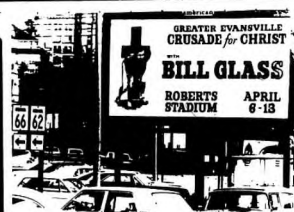
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Hello, hello,
is anybody
out there???

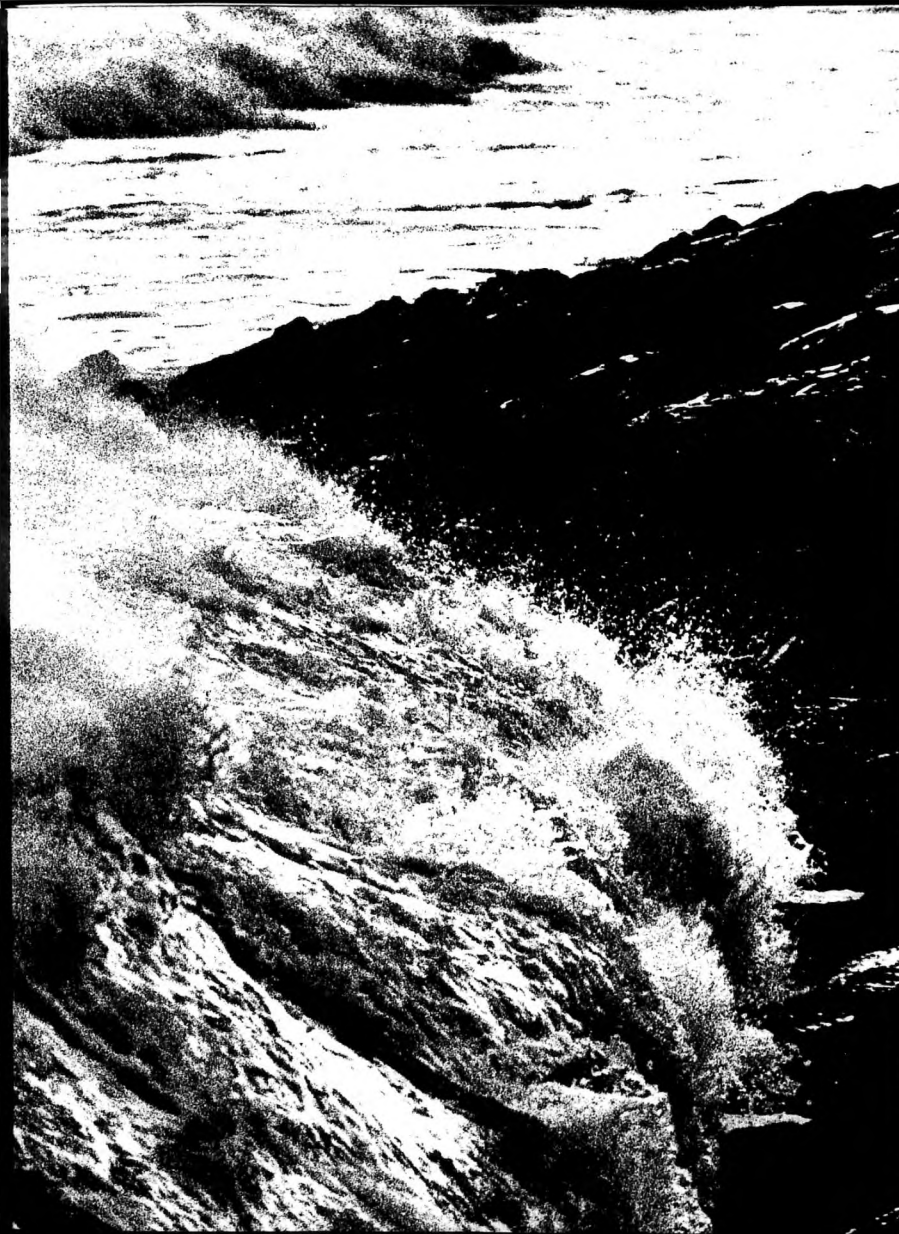
Q. Can you play a
musical instrument?
A. #1. Sure. The
record player; #2. No,
but hum a few bars
and I'll fake it...

By Walker Knight
and Everett Hullum



*A sound of water
droplets, a tune of
waves a roaring . . .*

If one picture is worth a thousand words, you've just "read" about 20,000 words. And hopefully, they've impressed upon you the myriad ways humankind attempts to communicate. Attempting to communicate is, in fact, what we humans are all about in our push-pull walk upon this earth. We're wrapped together, all of us, by our skill in communication, and the whole bundle comes unraveled—in disagreements, in wars—when communication fails. That's logical. You have only two ways of affecting your fellow human beings, or being affected by them. One is purely physical, the other is purely communicational. You can move persons by words, or you can move them by muscle. Usually, muscle comes along when words fail. "Come let us reason together" isn't an idle injunction. □ It seems important, therefore, for us to understand communication, for we all depend upon it to exist. The cooperation that makes human society possible rests almost totally on our ability to communicate. Which makes us wonder why we all seem to take communication for granted; personally, we know we communicate well—but everybody else seems to be doing a lousy job of it. □ Many of us tend to think too narrowly of communication. We see the drops of water, but not the roaring waves. And we seldom seek to view communication as a process, an ever-changing, continuous, dynamic variety of events and relationships that flow and change with the culture, or even the



*A lesson in
communication without
wet feet . . .*

A long time ago, a Greek philosopher noted that no man can ever step in the same river twice: both the man and the river will be different. In the same way, no two people can ever have the same experience, for they can not both share identical time and space in the river of events that is our universe. All experiences are individual. Nevertheless, many of our experiences are similar enough that we can find common ground for communication. □ Our understanding of what this means is still fragmentary, but we do know that the process by which human beings communicate is much more complex than we might wish. According to communications theorists—a new breed of social scientists—communication is “an ongoing process in which the meanings of a sender make creative contact with the meanings of a receiver, leading to action within a mutually responsive relationship.” Or, if you prefer, “communication is some living thing taking something into account to some end via the

means of acquiring and converting raw event-data into ‘consumable’ information-about.” So much for communications theorists. For our purposes, communication is establishing “commonness” with others, usually through use of symbols. We not only communicate, we meta-communicate, in that everything about us sends messages. Communication is not a one-way street, not even a two-way street, but more like a network of streets and belt highways. The photos illustrate how the simplest communications exchange—or transaction—takes place. The old woman is the sender. She encodes a message in language, emphasizing her words with gestures. The channel through which she sends her message is air. The man is the receiver. He decodes the woman’s message, and smiles. His reaction is feedback, assuring the old woman her message has been received. She relaxes, the communications process complete. Phew! □ To some theorists—but not all—feedback is necessary for communication to occur. The com-

munication process, they argue, is a loop closed by feedback. Unless the sender becomes a receiver, the communications transfer is incomplete, like the forest tree that falls when no one is there to hear. □ That theory, of course, plays havoc with mass media—such as television or movies—since time and distance limit the immediacy of feedback. The sender is so far removed from his audience he has difficulty adapting to its reaction. That’s why the TV networks buy Nielsen ratings—it gives quick, “accurate” audience response to broadcasts. Sometimes, feedback comes even more effectively, however. Take the Sunday afternoon one TV station pulled its football game for a movie. Angered viewers set the switchboards aflame. □ But it’s not always that easy to get feedback. Often the difficulty seems so overwhelming we give up rather than allocate the time and money necessary to gauge reader/listener reaction. Which is a mistake, since it means we may be shouting into an empty hole. Hello, hello, is anybody out there?

PHOTOS BY DON RUTLEDGE





Private property:
no trespassing
on my meanings...

PHOTO BY DON RUTLEDGE

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Unfortunately not all communication is as simple as the conversation between the old woman and man. The whole process is littered with bear-traps, and senders must tread carefully. For example, some 600,000 words make up the English language, but we've narrowed that down to about 2,000 commonly used words. The top 500 of these have some 14,000 dictionary definitions. That's a pitifully small number of symbols with which to express the range and fervor of human experience. But it's okay, perhaps, since none of those words really have meanings in themselves. That's the first axiom of communication: Words do not have meaning; only people do. Meanings are locked in individual experiences. Meanings are learned; they are private property. Says David Berlo in *The Process of Communication*: "Communication does not consist of the transmission of meaning. Meanings are not transferable. Only messages are transmittable, and meanings are not in the



message, they are in the message users. This point seems apparent, however, all of us forget it now and then. Serious breakdowns in communication can be attributed to the false assumption that there is meaning in the message, rather than in the source and receiver." □ What happens in this world affects us, becomes part of us. But when we tell someone about outside events, we create new events; the happenings are in us, not outside us. That explains, partially, why eyewitness accounts of events are often conflicting, yet each is truthful. Nobody's lying; they just see through different eyes. Many of our problems in communication arise because we forget this fact. □ Even if we remember the meaning of meaning, other communication snares can entrap us. Sometimes we forget, for example, individual selectivity. Not everyone is interested in the same messages; constantly we tune in—or out—incoming messages. We have to. We're bombarded by some 1,600 commercial messages a day; we consciously notice

about 80, respond to 12 or less. Journalist Ben Bagdikian writes: "Apparently we have become skilled in screening out the unwanted messages and at selecting the desired or unavoidable. But at what cost? Don't we have to learn to ignore most sights, sounds, smells...?" □ Difficulty also comes when we ignore silent languages—or expect them to carry too exact messages. Much communication is non-verbal—the symbols are as diverse as the color of a room, the wink of an eye, the nod of a head, the swashes of an artist's brush. □ Handshakes are elementary communications; photographs are sophisticated ones. Both are high-risk, because the encoding lacks exactness. This photograph of children counting says one thing to a racist, another to a mathematician, another to the teacher, still another to the parent of the child holding up three fingers when everybody else has extended five fingers. □ Maybe that kid just marches to the beat of a different drummer. And that music is a language, too.

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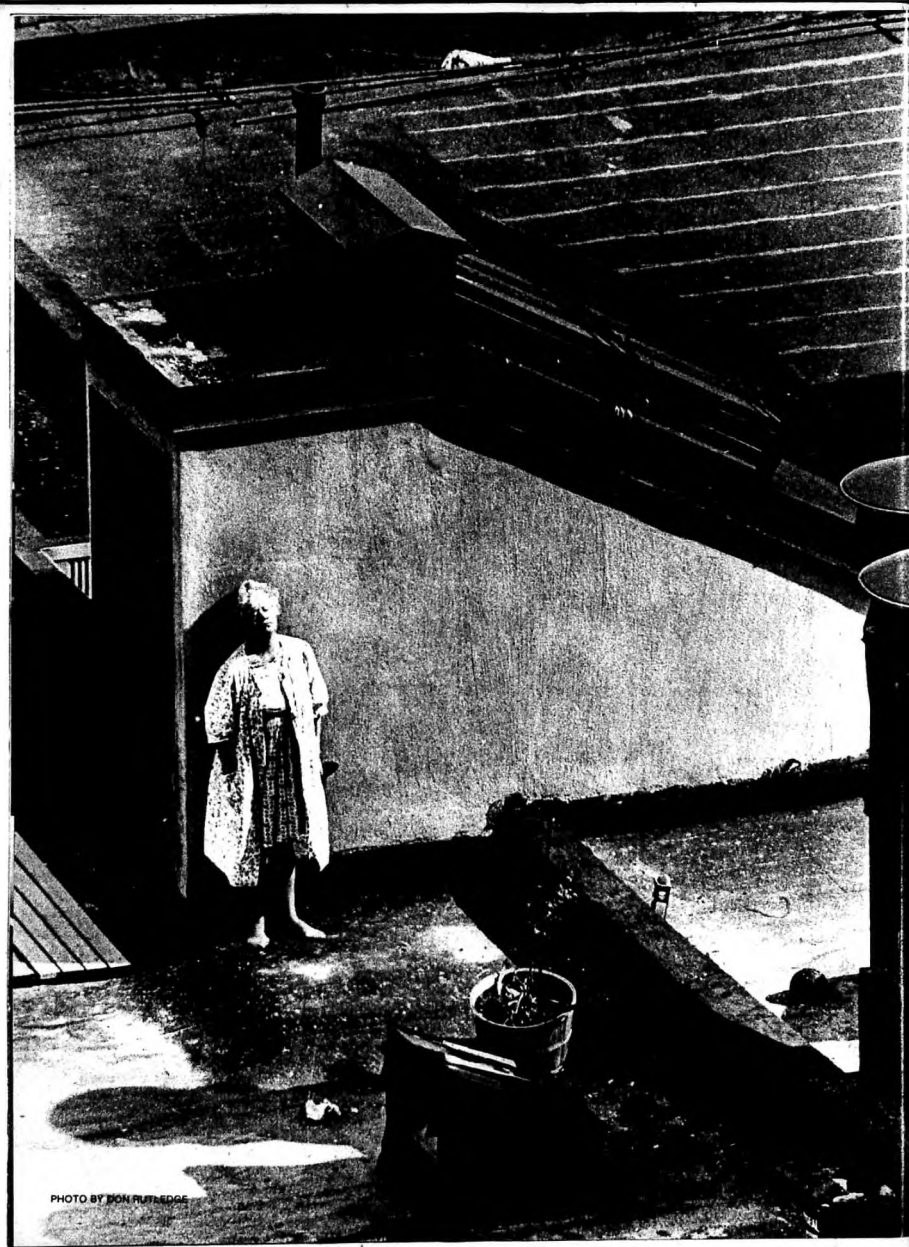


PHOTO BY JOHN R. HEDGES

*The messages and the medium:
don't walk through the gate until
you've checked with the gatekeeper*

In communication, music and noise are not synonymous. And we make a mistake when we fail to recognize that noise—"static"—can drown out, foul up, or befuddle communication, or that noise isn't always noisy at all. Noise is anything that distorts the quality of the signal. Noise can be literal, like the sounds coming from your TV now, distracting your attention from this magazine. Or noise might be figurative, influenced by your attitudes, knowledge level, sociocultural backgrounds. Examine this message for its noise level. "The church in its usage of various media will experience a communicative dysfunction if its commendation of various Scripture passages is not complemented by a demonstration of the truth of these passages in its various activities." Is the noise reduced for you if we merely say, "Practice what you preach"? □ One final note, before we scurry on to apply our new understanding in communication: to be successful, a communication must target for a specific audience. The audience may be as general as 20 million TV viewers, or as narrow as an old woman on a rooftop, warming in the sun. But whatever the intended audience, the sender must keep it in mind when he encodes his message. This means he must choose his channel of communication carefully. If you wanted to convince that old woman to come out of the sun before she has a heatstroke, you wouldn't prepare TV broadcasts about sun and heat; that'd be like shooting gnats with a shotgun. Marshall McLuhan, the communications philosopher, believes the medium is the message, that the channel through which a message is presented is as important for the receiver as the message itself. The corollary of McLuhan's message is this: the message determines the medium. □ Understanding that leads to a second fact, which is that each medium is limited in what it can and cannot successfully carry. Hitler's Germany—the world's most controlled communications environment—proved that, despite controlled radio and newspapers, not everyone can be persuaded to believe everything. Mass communication is most effective when reinforcing opinion, rather than creating it. Interpersonal communication is more effective in changing opinion. It's harder to turn off your next door neighbor than it is to turn off the TV set, or toss this magazine aside. □ Yet even if you encode the message accurately, choose the channel carefully, and aim at a well defined audience, your communication may fail. An example: You call your girl friend. Her mother answers the phone and you say, "Tell Beckie Sue I'll be late tonight; I've got to work late."

Later, Mother relays this message: "That bum called and said he couldn't be here on time; he said he'd be working late, but I could hear music in the background." The role played by Mom is "gatekeeper," and it's not an uncommon role, at that. We've all been gatekeepers at one time or another, allowing some messages to pass unchecked, stopping others completely, altering others. Whether we've done it for family, for friends—for our congregation or our Sunday School class, the result is usually the same: a message filtered through a gatekeeper is changed. In some cases, it is garbled, distorted or destroyed. In others, it is clarified or amplified. The gatekeeper role, therefore, is neither negative nor positive, but some communicators who desire fidelity of original message—at all costs—look upon gatekeepers with downcast eyes. So do some boyfriends who work late.





*Drifting along into
social systems, opinion
leaders & boxing gloves*

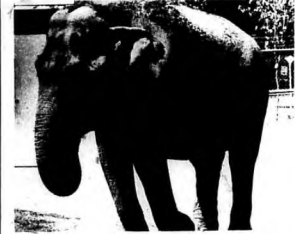


The young man lacing his friend's boxing gloves is our next subject. Let's title him, "Boys' Club Sponsor," BCS for short; and point out that he is a member of a distinct social system (the boys club) and that he occupies a distinct role in that system. And let's say we can make predictions about him because of our knowledge of that role and that social system. We can, in fact, assign him a group of behaviors such as settling disputes, making plans, directing activities—and something intangible called "leading." So what? □ In communications theory, our BCS is important. We realize the inherent danger in "labeling" our young man—people aren't labels, after all—but to do so does ease our communicative problem. Now, without empathizing, with interaction, we can design communication for him—and others in his same role in similar social systems. And we can be specific in our encoding. □ In fact, many communicators do just that with (in Baptist circles alone) publications like *Church Musicians* and *The Dastan*. □ But understanding our BCS's role also enables us to single out individual behaviors for specialized communications attempts. Perhaps most significant is his leadership role. □ Our BCS has a position of authority within the club, and can, thereby, affect the operation of the club social system. He is pressured to conform to group norms, but he also has power to change those norms—up to a certain point. □ Now, if you remember your communications model, you probably get our drift. Suppose we want to send a message to the boy putting on the boxing gloves; it's a complicated message, which involves changing his value system. We recognize our inability to empathize with his position/situation in life (we're too far away); our lack of money prohibits us from designing direct messages (they might fail anyway, for we don't know the "code" that unlocks his receiver). So we send our message to the boys' club sponsor, hoping that he will re-encode our message and send it on to the boy. We make the BCS our channel, in effect, building a chain-link communications network. Odds of success are below direct personal appeals, but much greater than wild scatter-shot communications. □ That's why, almost daily, we depend on the "opinion leader" process in our communications ventures. The pastor who "sells" several key deacons on a new policy, hoping they'll sell the entire church on it, practices this process. So do presidents, congressmen, pod sharks, salesmen and magazine like HOME MISSIONS. □ In each case, however, we face failure, unless we remember that the "opinion leader"—in church, in school, in Congress—belongs to many colliding social systems (we call them "communications environments" on following pages), and other messages may distort, alter or otherwise affect ours. □ And even if he decodes us clearly, reacts favorably, and attempts to pass on the new message, he can't do everything we'd like. How successful, for example, do you think our BCS would be in getting his friend to swap those boxing gloves for a red-haired doll?

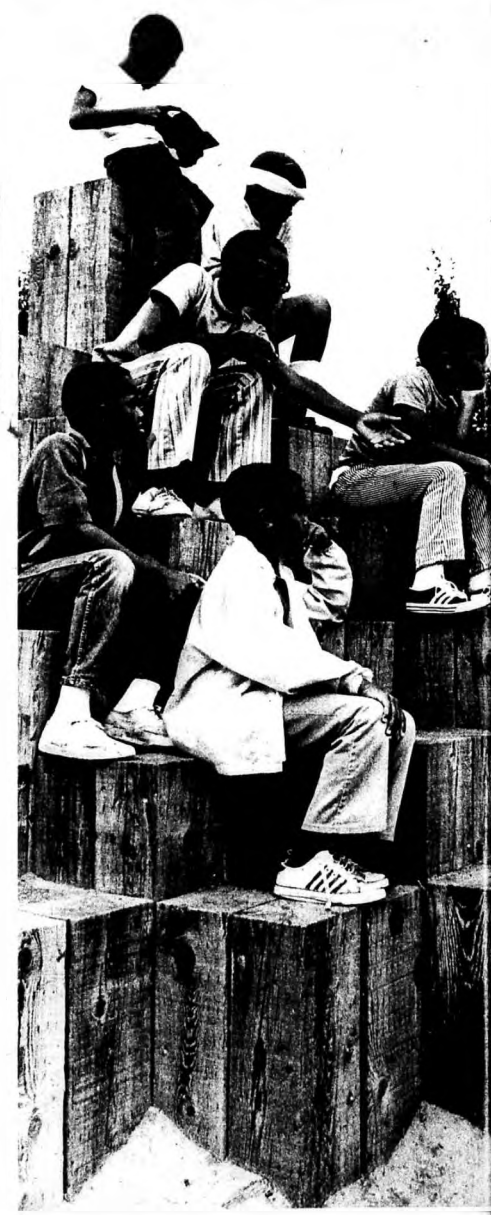
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PHOTO BY DON RUTLEDGE

A rope like a tail... or tale?



Remember the parable about six blind men who examine an elephant? One feels the elephant's side, and concludes the elephant is like a wall. Another feels a tusk, and says the elephant is like a spear. To the others, the elephant's trunk is a snake, his foot makes him like a tree, his tail like a rope, his ear like a fan. "And so these men of Indostan," the parable concludes, "disputed loud and strong! Each in his own opinion! Exceedingly loud and strong. Though each was partly right! They all were in the wrong!" □ Observes Don Fabun in a *Kaiser News* publication on communication: "It reminds us that the world we live in is built up of the quite different experiences that people have had, and which they have managed to communicate with each other. But let us also consider that if the blind men had exchanged places and individually experienced that portion of the elephant that they had not felt previously, they ultimately would have been able to agree on a much better looking elephant. As we read, and listen, and experience, we establish a basis for closer understanding of what others experience, and thus we can—in the end—find that we have much more to agree on than to disagree about. It is when we stop learning that we begin to build the barrier that keeps us from understanding other people—and perhaps finding some common agreement with them."



The rippling rings
of communication circles,
raindropping in puddles

So far, we've discussed only the simplest, most direct sort of communications—those involving two people in face-to-face encounter. But the same process that occurs when people talk applies to all media. This magazine, for instance, is a channel. We have encoded a message which you are now decoding. The difference is merely time and distance—but in introducing these two elements, we have created a communications transaction infinitely more complex, and the danger of its malfunction is infinitely greater because we are unable to respond immediately to your reactions to our message. That's a major source of communications failures.

□ And what is true of all media is also true of all organizations, all businesses, all families, all churches. In each case, we have "communications environments," networks of institutions that make up our lives, and we move constantly from one such communications environment to another—all within the context of society, which is itself a larger communications environment. □ Within each compartmentalized environment, we continually send and receive messages. And what happens during these transactions is important, for our environments overlap in varying degrees, like the circles of an Olympic symbol, or the rippling rings made by raindrops hitting a puddle.



If we were all in complete communication with each other, we would tend to control each other.

If we say the church is one of our communications environments, then every task we undertake within the church can be stated as a communications task. And this turns communications theory into communications fact. Looking at the results of a meeting of Southern Baptist leaders, meeting as a task force to discover strategy for rural-urban problems, helps illustrate.

The participants were divided into groups, and discussion was heated, excited. Everyone fought to give his opinions; pencils flew rapidly as people took notes. Old ideas stimulated new ones; communication took place. The participants left motivated to do something fresh, to put greater effort into their work in rural-urban missions.

What was created in the meeting was a communications environment that was dynamic, and complete with opportunities to send and receive messages. Feedback closed the loop, and evaluation indicated that such meetings should become an element in the strategy.

The same principle applies to every church: to both discover new ideas and to transmit these ideas to people, motivating them in the process, create communications environments. And to do this, build an atmosphere in which messages can be sent with clarity, and received without static. Provide opportunities to speak as well as listen.

We have a theory that individuals have only received those messages which they can transmit back. In other words, we have received only those thoughts of yours which we are able to articulate—only those are really ours. We can agree with what you say, we can nod our heads, laugh or cry with you. But we

have only internalized that which we can repeat, that which we can put into our own words and relay to others.

What does this imply? Maybe it says we spend too much of our time in transmitting, in one-way communication, and not enough in receiving. Maybe it says we need to encourage persons to articulate their concepts.

In Renaissance debate, you had to restate your opponent's position before you could state your own. Workers with communications problems in group process came up with a similar technique—forcing each person to speak for himself only after first restating the ideas and feelings of the previous speaker—to that speaker's satisfaction. You might want to try that if you have persons who cannot communicate with each other.



Right here, it might be helpful to emphasize that one of the biggest blocks to personal communication is man's inability to listen intelligently, understandingly and skillfully. This deficiency in the modern world is widespread and appalling.

As we become aware of the problem of hearing, we all work harder to place our messages within more and more attractive packages—we strive to be clear, coherent, entertaining. Why don't we ever train ourselves to listen; why don't we

build into the communications effort the feedback step, to discover how well we're being heard? Usually we just turn up the volume.

Carlyle Marney says his major effort at Interpreter's House is to restore to ministers the ability to hear. Hear, hear!



One technique to overcome the listening block is to shift the message to another medium. It is amazing how we often devote all our energy to one channel of communication. The preacher thinks only of speaking, the musician of singing the writer of writing. Most channels carry certain messages better than others, and we should seek to understand what each does best.

Another technique is to repeat the message, but in another form. We did that earlier, when we changed a quote about "communicative dysfunctions" in the local church to "practice what you preach." Unfortunately, many church people—and church buildings—are not geared to changing the form of the message.

We stride through a world in which two major movements influence our lives: the first is the movement of persons through space; the second reverse this process and brings the experience to the person—in four-channel stereo and full-dimensional color.

Our nerve ends are TV antennas, and

we expect a fast-paced drama, entertainment and information in a painless package. Church buildings—and church communication—have changed little in the past 500 years to accommodate our communications revolution. What new church today is built with an understanding of the potential of multi-media, or designed to handle even the theatrical performances of our youth musicals? And what church depends on any form of communication other than a pastor's sermon?

Which brings us to another point. Words are abstractions, symbols which stand for something else. And there are many things beyond words or symbols, impossible to communicate—they can only be experienced.



One helpful thing about seeing the church as a communications environment is that as we become aware of all the channels, all the messages, we recognize a need for giving thoughtful consideration to what we want to communicate—and how that differs from what we are actually communicating.

One minister spent months studying the church's community, investigating the information sources, checking on agencies, isolating needs and opportunities, taking slides, and preparing a detailed presentation.

He brought all of this to the deacons, outlined an extensive program, and then asked for their reactions. One deacon moved that they build a new building, and a committee was formed.

To say the least, that was one disappointed pastor. The tools he used communicated the opposite from what he hoped. Seeing the church as a communications environment would have brought an awareness of the direction and flow of messages, the use of more than one channel (like several laymen), and proper feedback earlier in the process.

The minister's failure also raised barriers to further communication, because now his congregation feels they are informed. Next time it will be harder to get people to hear what he is saying.

How much more would they have learned if he had enlisted them in gathering the information? How much would this have provided in motivation? Uninvolved and unmoved, they thought only of institutional needs, which was a safe way of rejecting his program—or the

"program" they heard him presenting when he talked about needs of the community.

In communicating our faith, we communicate both an experience and a set of concepts. Some of us are better at communicating the experience (evangelists) and others are more skillful at communicating concepts (teachers). But the two cannot entirely be separated. In one, strong emphasis is on emotion, in the other strong emphasis is on intellect. Because many do not recognize that both elements are necessary, they become confused. Some judge a sermon, for example, by how it stirred their emotions; others by how it made them think.

If we expend all our energy on the intellectual and neglect the feelings—or vice-versa—we will find ourselves in trouble. Communication doesn't rest only on one plane.

Our times provide us with a vivid illustration of this. We are being inundated by wave after wave of sensory impressions—sights and sounds and experiences.

Social scientist Robert Lytton tells us each individual is touched by everything, but at the same time he is overwhelmed by superficial messages and undigested cultural elements, by headlines and endless partial alternatives in every sphere of life. We appear to be literally drowning in this flood of imagery as we strive for a saturation point with the eye, the ear, the mind—the soul.

We erect our barriers to unwanted messages, using symbols as our clues to those we want to consider. But the \$17 billion advertising industry retains the highest paid talents of society to penetrate our shield. They use sex, novelty, humor and hero-type association, but their chief weapon is deceit—putting an acceptable package around an idea we have learned to reject.

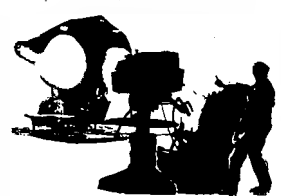
What is frightening is the highly skilled and systematic perversion of words and ideas and images for purely commercial or ideological purposes," says writer Ben Bagdikian, "and then doing it so efficiently through mass media that in a very short time the symbol means nothing. It took only two years to spread the psychedelic styles in language graphics and clothing from Ken Kesey's wired bus to the most respectable magazines, TV programs and clothing manufacturers of the country.

In a very short time the symbol means nothing.

If we use worn-out symbols to break through another's shield to entice him to hear an old message he has already rejected, we muddy the already confusing channels of communication.

Columnist James Reston says we hear the most astonishing things each day, but we are not astonished. Composer John

Cage says, "Nowadays everything happens at once and our souls are conveniently electronic, omni-attentive."



Modern technology, like man's electronic extension in television, has brought man of age, and threatens to rob man of his need for mystery. But just when some were saying man could get along as though God does not exist, others launched into the deepest search of the occult, of astrology, of demonology in modern times. There is a worldwide explosion of the charismatic, and an emphasis upon the Holy Spirit. Man has become experience oriented.

Bagdikian credits much of this to information overload. He says, "It's not too much to suggest that we may already have reached an intolerable limit for many persons. Many people today reject rationality and sequential systematic thought, and turn instead to the instinctive and subjective life. They have been abstracted beyond human meaning; there is a limit to how much you can withdraw the human personality from direct, emotional experience. So all the beautiful methods of inundating the society with abstract information could produce a starvation of emotion."

Finally, let's recognize the limitations of communication—let's find our stopping point. There is a degree in which communication is control. Within a closed system, such as the airconditioning system of a modern building, it would be difficult to determine whether the thermostat is controlling the heating and cooling unit or the unit is controlling the thermostat. If we were in complete communication with each other, we would tend to control each other.

It is beneficial to view Christ's ministry within this perspective. He matched communication means with his goal, leaving the individual free to choose his response to the communication. We often operate under the assumption that if everyone knows all the facts—the truth—about what we are seeking to do they will do the right thing; that is, they will agree with us. Measure this against the decision of the rich, young ruler who turned away from Christ. We would not want to say that Christ failed to communicate, would we? Jesus having the power to control, did not. ■



Confrontations at ear-level (and no shouting)

*In conferences and
discussions, maybe
listening becomes
a language, too*

*Story and photos
by Floyd Craig*

It was a different kind of conference. Everybody listened. Even the speakers. □ Most Southern Baptist conferences are cut and dried, traditionally featuring assigned speakers and little feedback. Most such meetings degenerate into "telling" sessions with their yawning agendas, written or hidden. □ But maybe things are changing. The recent conferences of the Christian Social Ministries Department of the HMB and the Puerto Rico Baptist Association, illustrate the point. □ The conferences—held throughout the island in local churches (above left) had a subject: "Evangelism through Ministries." And they had a "sort of" agenda. But these conferences were a surprise—to speakers and to audience. Conference director Beverly Hammack (above right), an associate in the CSM Department, set the tone early: "We have come to listen," she told program personalities. She added with emphasis: "And we mean it." □ "We would like to learn from the people who attend these conferences," Miss Hammack continued. "We think we have some things to share, but above all else we want to listen. We want to be flexible enough to meet their needs, not our own. We want to know where these folks are—in evangelism, in social ministries, in everything."

Continued

*It's a creative act,
this hearing,
and being heard in return...*

Shortly after arriving, conference personalities met with Puerto Rican associational leaders (below, left) to "plan" the meetings. They wanted to avoid "mis-communication," to understand local feelings and to avoid "red flags" like the word "social," which has bad connotation to Puerto Rican Baptists. They succeeded, but only after a few anxious moments. Apparently Baptists are programmed to be spectators, not active participants. And some conferees

found it difficult to shift gears and become "the program." But during the opening minutes of the first conference, something began to happen, something which every communicator strives for each time he encodes a message: communication took place. It was strange and wonderful to experience the process of communication in action. Like a creative act, it became the experience of knowing that you are actually hearing and being heard in return; that they and you understand each other's

words and gestures; and that you are making discoveries together. The CSM people had been told, "There aren't many ministries being done here." But they listened, and they learned from participants of many existing ministries—from literacy (bottom center) to drug rehabilitation to hospital and prison counseling—though none were called "social." Nor was the communicative act confined to special conference periods. Leaders listened enroute to other meetings; in back rooms

between sessions; at luncheon and coffee breaks; while awaiting transportation (below right). These small meetings didn't move the earth. But they did prove that listening can be any conference's agenda. And what happened during those five days in Puerto Rico might well say to every Southern Baptist, "Listening is the beginning of communication and communication does not take place without it."*

*Craig is director of public relations, Christian Life Commission, Nashville; he participated in the conference.



22 JANUARY HM



HM JANUARY 23

Traditionally, you know, it's been preaching and printing...

*Preaching and printing
have traditionally
been the main tools by
which the SBC communicated.
And they still are today.*

By Toby Druin

For Southern Baptists, proclamation of the gospel is as multifaceted as the colors in Joseph's coat, and embraces every area of communications. But the bulk of the telling of the good news still lies in the traditional modes of expression—preaching, teaching, singing, personal witnessing and the printed word.

Whether anyone "out there" is hearing the message, and how many are responding, is difficult to measure. But the story is being told.

Every Sunday in some 35,000 Southern Baptist churches across the land, enough words are spilled out to fill most of the nation's library shelves. Counting Sunday evening and Wednesday services, the total verbiage avalanching down on more than 6,000,000 persons weekly is astonishing.

Talk to any 100 of that six million and you would probably get at least 100 different opinions on the effectiveness of that verbal tonnage, though few would argue its unimportance in the life of the average Southern Baptist.

Clyde Fant, professor of preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, says that in spite of increasing secularity, the place of preaching in today's world is not diminishing—fluctuating, maybe, but not diminishing.

"The value of preaching changes from generation to generation," Fant says. "One idea that I'm pretty well able to debunk is the contention that preaching through the years has been going through a long, steady decline. My feeling is that it is always in a cycle; its prominence comes and goes."

"When preaching claims too much for itself and doesn't live up to its promises, it becomes nothing. But this hardly hap-

pens before people realize there is something intrinsically valuable in preaching and the quality returns."

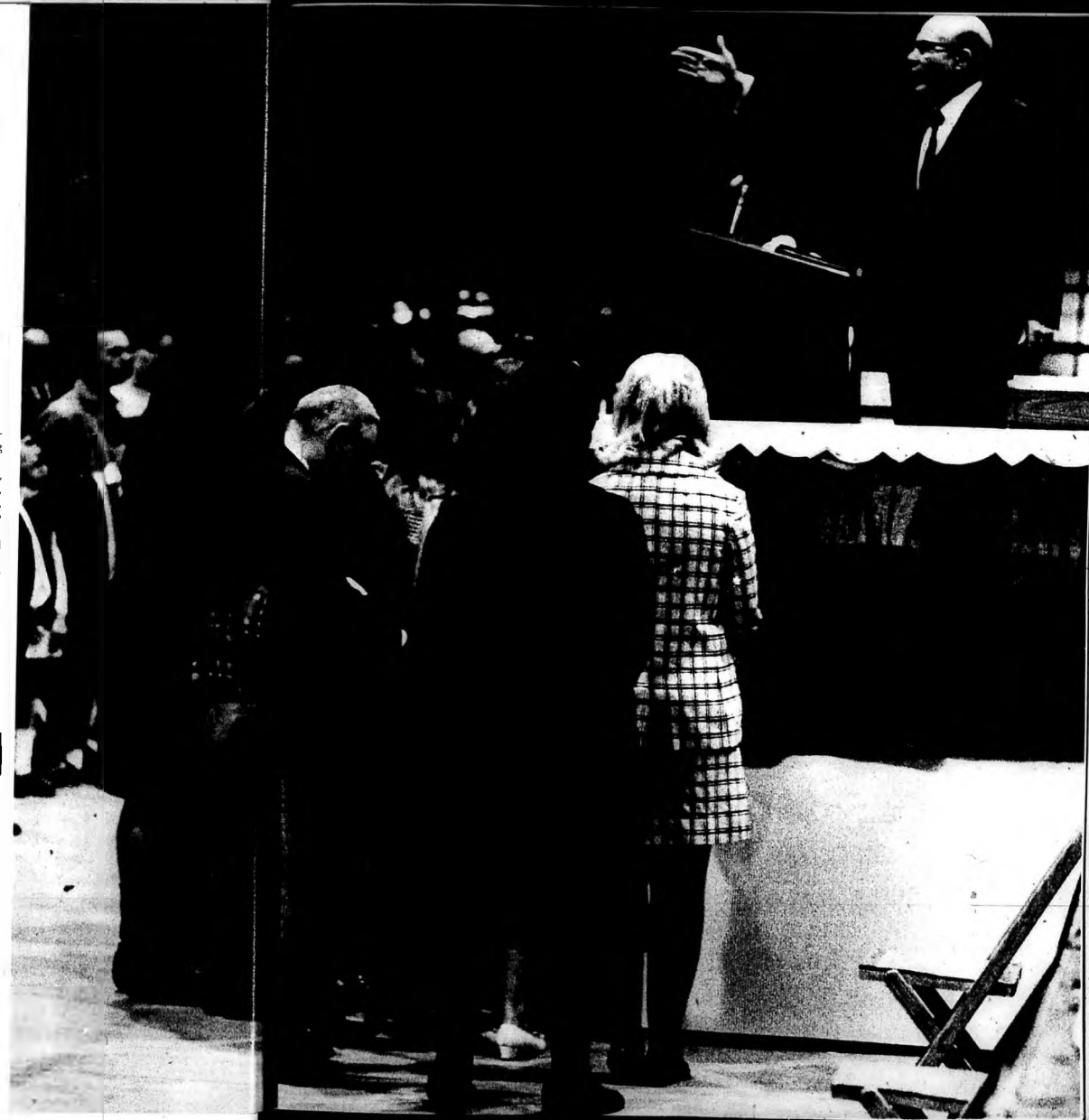
Preaching has always been criticized, even in the first century, Fant points out, but recent critics are doing a turn-about, he thinks, and preaching is taking on new importance.

"Many professors of preaching feel that preaching's decline bottomed out about five years ago," Fant says. "People became strongly negative about it. We're no longer at the bottom of the cycle, but we're not at the crest of the wave, either—maybe we're emerging from the trough."



Nevertheless, the old-style orator doesn't draw as well as he did before television, movies, radio and multi-media dimmed his glamour; the realization of this fact has caused a change in preparing the preacher as communicator. Fant admits that Southwestern makes more and more use of audiovisuals, specifically video tape that enables the student to "instantly replay" his sermon.

"We're doing more small group work in the communications lab, using role playing with students acting as laymen to critique the preacher. We're also emphasizing 'micro-teaching,' teaching on a two to three minute 'piece' of the sermon



"The audience is my friend, not my enemy. I'm interesting before I'm biblically dullness is heresy. And I use words people use daily in their speech."

such as illustration or the applications of the introduction or conclusion of the sermon."

Fant acknowledges that such teaching methods have helped bring about dialogical or "talk back" preaching.

"One thing is important to remember," he says. "We are not teaching dialogue as a replacement but as an alternative or additive. However, we are emphasizing that every sermon should be dialogi-

cal in stance if not in form," leaving the impression with the congregation that it has shared in the service.

Fant also says that his students are encouraged to recognize the necessity of interpreting the word of God in their contemporary situations and to experiment with innovative or different forms. "We're trying to get them to focus on the people and their needs," he stresses.

Cecil Sherman, pastor of First Baptist

Church, Asheville, N.C., and one of the most quoted communicators in the SBC, follows three rules in delivering his sermon.

"First," he says, "the audience is my friend, not my enemy. Second, I try to be interesting before I'm biblically dullness is a bigger offense to the laity than heresy. And third, I think you have to use words that people use daily. I don't mean you have to be vulgar or 'pop' or have the

Continued

Unlocking goals

Pluses and minuses for Key 73

Key 73, the national evangelical drive with a goal of visiting every home and confronting every person in the U.S. with the gospel, ended January 1, 1974.

Critics give both thumbs up and thumbs down to its efforts to communicate the Christian faith.

Clearly the campaign waged by 150 Christian bodies—Southern Baptists included—failed to accomplish the stated goal.

But it did succeed in establishing "horizontal relationships across denominational lines," said Theodore Raedecke, Lutheran evangelist who directed Key 73.

"I think Key 73 has communicated our faith to the extent possible," added Ken Chafin, pastor of South Main Baptist Church, Houston, Tex.

"We had to realize a thing of this size cannot work in every little detail,"

said Chafin, who helped plan Key 73 while director of evangelism for the HMB.

Southern Baptists were involved in Key 73 from early stages, and worked actively in Key 73 efforts in many communities. But in other areas, Key 73 personnel criticized Baptists' failure to participate.

For Southern Baptists, permanently geared to mass evangelism, Key 73 offered little input, explained one SBC spokesman, but "when Baptists and other denominational groups can pray together about winning the continent to Christ," the program is a success, he said.

Key 73 produced one television program—shown on national TV—but lack of funds limited its media use. Its main efforts centered around rallies, scripture distribution and community visitation.

Scripture distribution in



1973 increased almost 30 percent, reported Jim Loken of the American Bible Society, "and we attribute a good portion of the increase to Key 73."

Raedecke reported "almost total saturation" in some areas, such as Denver, Colo., where more than 200,000 Luke-Acts combinations were given away; and Nebraska, where "85 percent of the homes have been visited."

Raedecke also believes the personal evangelistic

thrust of some denominations has increased because of Key 73.

"They were encouraged by numbers, first of all," he said, "and then by realizing that their denomination was not the only one preaching the Gospel."

"Our primary mission in Key 73 was not church membership," added Raedecke, "but to confront people with Christ, to make disciples, first of all, and then to let discipleship result in church membership." •

CHRISTIAN RENEWAL CRUSADE

SPEAKER:

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latest story, but you have to use words the people are using.

"In preaching," he continues, "my basic stance as a communicator is to start with a problem my people recognize as a problem and proceed to a biblical answer."



For as long as there have been Southern Baptists, a vital part of preaching has been the annual or semiannual—or sometimes more often—revival meeting. Any oldtimer can remember "protracted" meetings, some under brush arbors, that were community affairs—and the best entertainment in town.

Times have changed, and revivals—though still integral threads in the SBC fabric of communication—are not the all-important force they were once.

Proportionately, they do not attract the large numbers they did during their heyday, but still many professions of faith—some believe most—in Southern Baptist churches are registered at revival meetings. And the revival is still the most fervently used SBC method of mass evangelism. Nevertheless, revivals are different.

Anyone who can remember a revival of more than one week can also remember, undoubtedly, when Church Training was "BYPU" and its been 30 years since he worried about the draft. Revivals now are held only a week, and four-day meetings are frequent.

But a survey of state directors of evangelism, conducted by Nathan Porter of the HMB's Division of Evangelism, reveals the majority—probably 85 percent—of Convention churches hold at least one revival a year. And those revivals, reports Porter, who now pastors First Church, Arkadelphia, Ark., record the most professions of faith.

Formats vary, however. John Havlik of the HMB's Division of Evangelism observes a trend away from visiting evangelists to lay-led evangelism or meetings that emphasize other concerns, such as home or community problems.

For as long as there have been Southern Baptists, a vital part of SBC preaching has revolved around the annual—or semiannual revival meeting.



Increasing use has also been made of big-name personalities—athletes, actors or anyone who has a built-in following and can therefore draw a crowd. The practice has been tagged "the Christian Celebrity System," and has been successful—on the surface.

But some observers fear shallow, superficial theology may result from opening the pulpit to anyone, however "trained."

Editor Jack Harwell of the *Christian Index*, Georgia Baptist paper, warns that

"no one really checks into the biblical theology embodied in the testimonies and preachments of these Christian celebrities." Someone just hears that they have an exciting testimony and here goes the invitation.

"Would a pastor be so flippant in selecting his revival preacher?" asks Harwell. "Are pulpit committees so careless in seeking out a possible pastor? Are Christian institutions so irresponsible in hiring theological professors?"

Harwell urges that the sacredness of the pulpit be protected from "Christian celebrities" whose testimony is, in many cases, patently contrary to scripture.

Regardless of the increased use of celebrities, at the same time, the churches which are growing the fastest are still using traditional revival methods, in both urban and rural areas," contends the HMB's Havlik.

He cites successful revivals in the Northeast and in pioneer areas where people have not become jaded to the annual emphasis. "I have said that every generation has to rediscover ways of evangelism, including revivals," he says.

Others question Havlik's conclusion. John Hughston, pastor-director of Greater Boston Ministries, admits he's never had a revival in the Boston area, and has no plans to hold one. "We don't believe they'd be productive in this city," he says. "In our ministry, we emphasize personal contact and building relationships."

One Texas pastor says he is having professions of faith every week in his church. "The surest way to stop it is to have a revival meeting," he feels.

Cecil Sherman says his church has never had a two-week meeting in his nine-year pastorate in Asheville, and it has been five years since the last week-

Continued

Words, worlds and The Word

Today we know words have the power to shape men's worlds, to bring—or destroy—community
by Martin Marty

A Spanish philosopher, Jose Ortega y Gasset, believed that we are who we are "in our circumstances," "on our landscapes," "in our different worlds." We inherit these, they are given us; we shape them, and are actors in them. At all points, words are crucial. "Man has a mission of clarity upon earth," Ortega declared. We penetrate each others' worlds through words.

Of course, as we bring the two together, cautions are in order. We do not always use words. In the Christian community we know the power of silence and of action. We do not use only words. The Bible shows how God's acts and words are a unity. We do not only speak. We listen, to discern someone else's perspectives, circumstances, or world. We have to fear words. They have power to kill and give life, as anyone who studies the language of love or law courts or church history knows.

We have difficulty bringing together people who live in different worlds, yet make up congregations and communities. A gifted speaker or writer learns to intersect

these private worlds and let words serve as magnets to attract a new community. Preaching would represent little challenge if people all simply understood each other and lived in the same little world. Writers would be bored were it not difficult to pull people together out of their separate word-worlds.

Let me concentrate on only one of the ways in which words can help create a Christian world or community: the form of the story. Christians also use the language of argument and dogma, of law and interpretation. But the church is born of the story of God's dealings with his people, of the life and work and death and resurrection of Jesus, and of a community that remembers.

Story can break up a world. Some people think the world will be saved if it adopts the "biblical world view." The Bible shows how story was used to get people out of the biblical world view. Its story is shocking, scandalous, surprising—and thus saving.

Today we are relearning the power of story to shape a world. Some theologians are using autobiographical

forms. By telling their own story, they are trying to find new ways to speak about God. The Jesus people at their best and the Harvey Coxes unite in this interest. But the story of one's self is not the whole story. Christians tell the story of how God works in community. The journalist in this sense is an evangelist, and the historian is a custodian of community.

What matters most, of course, is "His story," the One that helps create the worlds in which Christians know hope. The creed tells the story; he "suffered under Pontius Pilate," in our world of injustice and untruth. The Lord's Supper is not a set of doctrines but an event set in a story on "the night in which he was betrayed." Why were Christians supposed to remember? A modern thinker, Theodore Adorno, has said, "As soon as all tradition is extinguished, inhumanity begins." Suffering and triumph live on through words in stories, and they humanize us.

Someone recently pointed out the power of story in the case of Pope John. He greeted some Jewish visitors by reaching out his arms to them and saying, "I am Joseph, your brother." He evoked recall of a story they had in common from the Hebrew scriptures, a story that had once united God's People, who have later divided and fought each other. His gesture and his story created a world of reconciliation.

Martin Buber tells of a rabbi who was asked to tell a story. He said, "A story ought to be told so that it is itself a help. My grandfather was paralyzed. Once he was asked to tell a story about his teacher, and he told how the Baal Shem Tov used to jump and dance when he was praying. My grandfather stood up while he was telling the story and the story carried him away so much that he had to jump and dance to show how the master had done it. From that moment, he was healed. This is how stories ought to be told."

Words can heal. If we carry out our "mission of clarity on earth," we can speak directly about our faults and problems and can build a new community. No one should look for magic. We may bring words and worlds together in fresh ways and still not solve our problems of magazine subscriptions or book sales; we may not have congregations lined up to break down our church doors. We will still need gesture and touch and action—as any lovers can tell us. But we shall have been faithful stewards in another generation. We will live in a world of fidelity to experience, to community, to words and worlds—and to the Word of God. •

Marty is a leading church historian and dean, Divinity School, University of Chicago. This article is excerpted from "Words and Worlds," *The Lutheran Magazine*, Nov. 7, 1973. Used by permission.

In both urban and rural areas, the churches which are growing the fastest are those still using the traditional revival methods.

long meeting. His church has some 2,000 members and the last week-long revival attracted only 88 persons on Friday night. But the traditional methods of outreach—isolation of prospects, visitation, etc.—are employed, and Sherman is pleased with results.



Vance Havner, the Greensboro, N.C., evangelist who still averages 20-25 revivals annually, says that many revivals now run only four days. "Friday football games hurt," he says. "Even Billy Graham is cutting down."

Havner says that it is more difficult to sustain interest in a congregation, but he remains a staunch advocate of week-long meetings that allow time for the preaching to "soak through" a congregation. Cutting one too short is like "tearing off the cocoon before the butterfly is ready to fly," he says. "More than coffee needs time to percolate."

The revival picture lately includes more laymen as the push on "Witness Involvement Now (WIN)" and lay evangelism spreads.

Jack Stanton of the Home Board's Division of Evangelism "guesstimates" that 10,000 lay evangelism schools have been held over the past three years, involving hundreds of laypersons who have been taught techniques for sharing their faith.

One avenue for that witness has been lay-led revivals.

But the schools also try to create a "lifestyle" of personal evangelism that will carry into everyday life as well as the special emphasis weekend. That aspect of the program, rather than the one-shot "specials," may more accurately explain the phenomenal success of the program.

The schools meet basic, personal

Continued on page 32

The care and feeding of a sermon

by Welton Gaddy



In preaching, remember: the end does not justify the means. Ethics outweigh effectiveness.

Preaching is one of Christianity's oldest means of communicating the good news of Jesus Christ. But lately, critics have questioned its effectiveness and its validity as a communicative form. "Almost everyone would agree," said a writer in *Dialog* magazine, "that preachers are in trouble and the pulpit a source of infinite boredom which God, at best, may be using to test the patience of his people in the pew."

Reasons for preaching's current disrepute include its irrelevancy and a lack of courage; an integrity crisis in which actions are not congruous with words; and the fact that the place in which preaching takes place has been pushed to the periphery of life.

Whatever those justifications, I still think preaching is one of our most effective means of communicating the Word of God to our contemporaries.

In *Second Chance for American Protestants*, Martin Marty insists the biblical command to preach the Word is a mandate and not a recommendation or temporary injunction which can go unheeded because the culture is too complex.

It is clear, however, that not all preaching communicates to today's listeners. To be effective, preaching must be "incarnational"—concrete rather than abstract. The temptation to preach in broad generalities always exists, but this makes the entire biblical message appear to be something it is not—detached.

Incarnational preaching must also be timeless, addressing a biblical message to specific events; and it must recognize the level of intelligence of the audience.

Secondly, preaching must be "confessional." A ring of authenticity is produced only by the preacher's own personal involvement with the message.

Thirdly, to communicate today, preaching must be authoritative. Perhaps the central problem with contemporary preaching is its lack of authority. To muffle the prophetic note, "Thus saith the Lord," is to weaken the pulpit. But the preacher should also remember this competence is in the realm of biblical truth, and he should not presume to tell an economist economics, a politician politics, or a scientist science. His responsibility is to confront each of these with the biblical principles which relate to their work.

Finally, preaching should be "dialogical." Because the success or failure of most communication depends so heavily on feedback, traditional monological preaching seems less able today to bring about changes in attitudes, life-styles and commitments.

Many preachers use a dialogical technique by anticipating congregational questions and answering them in the sermon. But recently, other models—such as mid-week sermon-seminar sessions and feedback periods immediately following the sermon delivery—have been used.

Dialogue preaching—in which two or more people engage in a "verbal exchange" during "sermon-time"—is also gaining acceptability.

All this, of course, precludes considerations of sermon content, which leads to the ethics of preaching. In many ways, preaching is an exercise in the art of persuasion. Every man who preaches the gospel has the serious responsibility to be effective; the attention of men must be aroused. But it must be done legitimately and without the use of questionable moral means.

There has always been a suspicion of those who practice rhetoric, including the rhetoric of preaching, because it is a persuasive communication whose central aim is the changing of men's beliefs and actions.

Persuasion is a morally neutral act—it may be used for good or evil. Unfortunately, it has not always been used for good—even by preachers. Persuasive preaching is not always ethical, for sometimes a man's humanity, biases and selfishness twist his acts. To insure that they stay within ethical bounds, preachers—as well as any Christian attempting to communicate his faith—should apply these standards:

- Never distort, falsify or misrepresent evidence.
- Be informed, but speak only in areas of professional competence.
- Do not seek approval for a policy or program by linking it in the audience's mind with emotional values with which it has no connection.
- Debate issues, but do not attack people. There is no justification in shifting attention from a weak argument or in confusing listeners by using "smear" tactics on those who disagree.
- Do not pretend objectivity when expressing subjective prejudices.
- Be persuasive, without using propaganda. Although the word "propaganda" itself has no "morality," its present connotation—arising from a nation's lies and misrepresentations during World War I—has made it a negative term denoting unethical practice. Among rhetorical devices used by propagandists—and avoided by Christian communicators—are name calling; glittering generalities; sweeping statements unsupported by facts, testimonials which appeal to base emotions; use of techniques such as "we're all plain folks," and "bandwagonism," insinuating that one opinion or act is held in common by hundreds.
- Remember: the end does not justify the means.

In preaching, this means that even though a man is under moral obligations to be effective, he must not attempt effectiveness at any cost. If a decision has to be made between ethical and effective, it should be ethical.

This isn't always an easy choice. A preacher may find that certain themes and certain types of delivery delight his congregation; he learns to be effective without saying many of the things that need to be said.

In addition, the preacher must guard against emotionalism, balancing rational content with genuine, naturally emotional appeals. And he must continually reexamine his motivation:—avoiding self-interest, defensiveness, aggressiveness, domination.

The preacher—in fact, all Christians—have a moral obligation to spread the good news of Jesus Christ—but not in a manipulative or exploitative way that denies the listeners' freedom to act. Christian ethics should not only be a part of what we preach, but also a determinant of how we attempt to fulfill our individual responsibilities under Christ's Great Commission. •

This article is adapted from a series of lectures, especially "Media and Message—Preaching and other Possibilities," and "The Ethics of Preaching." Used by permission Gaddy is director of Christian citizenship development, SBC Christian Life Commission, Nashville, Tenn.

needs, and they emphasize developing lay witnessing as a way of life," says Stanton. "There is a new awakening among the people of God to today's opportunities—to who they are and what they are."

The burgeoning success of the lay evangelism program, adds Stanton, comes because the schools aren't gimmicks. Properly conducted they prepare interested and dedicated laypersons to be communicators of their faith.

The layperson who plunks down his \$5.00 fee—that takes it out of the "commonplace," says Stanton—and sees it through, more often than not accepts witnessing as a lifestyle.

"This thing is really fantastic—it cuts across all cultural and social lines because all have basic needs," says Stanton. "For instance, we had a fantastic school in Delhi, India, with 44 decisions for Christ. And the Foreign Mission Board sent nine missionaries from Europe to one of our schools and 15 nationals and

missionaries attended a school in Puerto Rico." is difficult to determine. Their tasks, obviously, are Bible study and training for discipleship.

Critics have accused them of shallowness and cultural biases, pointing to the long-standing racial bitterness in the Convention as evidence.

But such charges are difficult to substantiate. More accurate a gauge, perhaps, is how well Baptists are responding in attendance. Statistics show both Sunday School and Church Training have suffered decline in recent years, though Sunday School experienced an upturn in

1972, while Church Training continued to decline in 1973.

liminary projections—seriously questioned by departmental leaders—indicate another decline in 1973.

Despite attendance drops, Sunday School Board officials feel "we are doing a better job." Says Don Trotter of the Sunday School Department, "We are encouraged in the enthusiasm we see and feel in many churches for Sunday School and Bible study."

Churches in which SS growth is occurring commonly have an enthusiastic pastor and innovative program—which usually includes bus routes.

A chance to cooperate—more?

On limiting literature?

One of the problems in SBC publishing, obviously is overlapping of audiences. The result is a "literature list" as long as a church secretary's arm, and in many cases, a good bit longer than many churches' budgets.

In the 1960s, the Convention's inter-agency council attempted to remedy this with coordinated programming, which defined goals and contents of each publication. But problems still exist.

At least four publications, for instance, are targeted primarily for pastors. And the denomination has four "missions" publications for adults (plus a dozen or so for children of different ages and sexes).

The adult missions publications are a good example of disjointed communications policy. Even though all serve a purpose (or an agency), they do not present a comprehensive overview of missions as a single, united effort of Convention agencies and churches—unless each is read monthly.

One option voiced lately by Owen Cooper has been to alternate months with *The Commission* and *HOME MISSIONS*, thereby lightening the read-

ing overload of missions-oriented Baptists and giving supporters of each agency better insights into the workings of the other.

Although discussion is pure speculation now, the two publications did sponsor and carry a joint article (on the Cooperative Program) recently.

In the final analysis, however, it may be factors other than communicative ones that influence such a decision. The energy crisis which threatens travel by reporters, and skyrocketing costs in magazine production, printing and mailing are taking an ever-increasing chunk of each agency's budget. It may be economics, therefore, not concern for readership, that forces the reexamination of publishing efforts. •



No other Protestant denomination can match the SBC in volume of materials produced—or communications network—newspapers, magazines, books, brochures, tracts...



The necessary concomitant to the teaching and training programs of communicating the gospel and its implications is the printed word. No other Protestant denomination can match the SBC in volume of materials produced, or network of communications vehicles—magazines, newspapers and books, brochures, pamphlets, posters and tracts.

A sizable portion of every church's budget is ticketed for "literature," mostly quarterly study guides for Sunday School and Church Training. Several pages of the *Southern Baptist Convention Annual* are required merely to list the general groupings of magazines published by the SSB.

The SSB's publishing arm, Broadman Press, produces books of general interest for distribution through its chain of Baptist bookstores, and also through secular outlets.

A special publishing outlet, Convention Press, prepares materials for program use.

The SSB also produces magazines for virtually everyone in a Southern Baptist church, from the large family-oriented *Home Life* to such specific audience publications as *The Deacon* (for deacons), *Church Administration* (for ministers, primarily), and *Church Musician* (for choir members).

Both mission boards have publishing outlets, also, producing mission study

materials and other items dealing with their areas of work.

Each has its own magazine—*HOME MISSIONS* for the HMB and *The Commission* for the Foreign Mission Board. Each reaches more than 75,000 Baptists monthly.

Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood Commission both produce materials for their organizations.

Newest publications venture in the Convention is the Brotherhood's *World Mission Journal*, an ambitious replacement for the anemic *Baptist Men's Journal*.

Edited by Jim Newton, former assistant director of the Convention's news service, WMJ was launched in November, 1973, as a hybrid newspaper-magazine with the purpose of communicating "the total scope of Baptist mission concern that stretches from the local church to the uttermost part of the earth."

The emphasis, of course, remains on what laypersons are doing.

Newspaper publications are not, in fact, new to SBC publishing. For more than a century—Georgia's *Christian Index* observed its 150th birthday in 1972—state Baptist papers have done a consistent, dependable job of communicating with a growing convention.

Formats have changed, from papers largely devoted to sermons and aimed primarily at preachers, to today's style, which emphasizes denominational news and is targeted to general audiences.

The extensive state paper system is unique to Southern Baptists. Each convention has its own paper, and no two are alike. Most are edited by preachers-turned-journalists, but a few are produced by professional journalists like John Hurt, dean of editors with 27 years in Georgia and Texas, who worked for Associated Press at one time.

Each week, the 30 state papers are read in 1.7 million SBC homes. E.S. James, editor emeritus of the *Texas Baptist Standard*, believes that the editor probably is the best-known Baptist leader in any state and that he exercises more influence on the thinking of Baptists than any other person.

The responsibility is, clearly, awesome. If he uses his position and his entree into

homes, the editor can be a powerful influence. Many have exercised this option, but others have depended on outside sources to carry them past controversy.



In Baptist journalism, that "outside source" is likely to be Baptist Press, the independent and creditable news service of the Convention.

BP provides news coverage and feature articles which are released to secular news media and state papers weekly. Granted, a number of the 1,000 or more BP stories produced annually could be labeled "propaganda," but others—such as reports of racial tensions or mismanagement of funds—have given BP a reputation for honesty and integrity in gathering and reporting the news.

As in other areas, the effectiveness of Baptist Press—or the state papers themselves—is largely unmeasured. Doubtless some controversy in the denomination in recent years has been precipitated by a more knowledgeable constituency. But BP and the state papers have also challenged many Baptists—individuals and churches alike—with their reports of problems and solutions facing Christians daily.

And that is what all communications efforts of the SBC are about—ultimately, at least—sowing facts in hopes that the many publics "out there" will hear, and hearing, understand, and understanding, respond. •

A revival is a revival is a Life Enrichment Week...or is it?

*Today a revival
by any other
name seems to
have a lot
more going for it.*

The handsome, youthful man at left, surrounded by autograph hounds, is a bona fide celebrity. A former jet pilot and distinguished Air Force officer, he flew the lunar module for Apollo 15, becoming in 1971 one of the handful of men to setp on the moon's surface. The experience, he says, changed his life. "I felt God as I had never felt him before," he remembers. "Something happened to me there that I felt I must share with everyone on earth." Which brings us to this young man today: his name is Jim Irwin, he's a modern, circuit-riding evangelist, and he's brought his "High Flight" team to Fayetteville, Arkansas, on the town's busiest weekend of the year for some events University Baptist Church calls "Life Enrichment Week." Which may be, euphemistically speaking, a 1973 version of a good ol' fashioned "revival." Or it may not be. And that question, folks, is the point around which our story revolves.

Continued

*Photography by Don Rutledge
Text by Everett Hullum*



On homecoming weekend at the University, a church draws crowds

When Jim Irwin's invitations to speak began to outrun his ability to accept, he turned to his pastor, Southern Baptist Bill Rittenhouse. Together they formed High Flight, an evangelistic foundation with Irwin as president and Rittenhouse as vice-president. □ Shortly after its charter, High Flight hosted a well-planned, cost-free retreat for Vietnam ex-POWs and their families, which drew so many people Irwin had to mortgage his Colorado Springs home to meet expenses. The event grabbed national publicity, and H.D. McCarty, pastor of growing, vibrant University Baptist, Fayetteville, recognized the organization's drawing power. He invited the Irwin team to "headline"—if you'll pardon the show-biz parlance—the church's annual "Life Enrichment Week." □ That was more than a year ago; this past fall, High Flight arrived—along with the red and gold leaves—for a three-day blitz of the scenic Ozark community. □ The action begins on Thursday night with Bill Rittenhouse. A forceful, staccato speaker,

Rittenhouse captivates more than 450 people in University Church's auditorium with his humorous, moving experiences as a prisoner of war in World War II (bottom left). As Rittenhouse prays and the youth choir sings, hands clasped and index fingers pointed skyward, several young people respond to the message (right). □ Afterwards, Rittenhouse and McCarty hurry to University of Arkansas student center—some 1,000 of the school's 14,000 students attend University Church—to join the Sixth Day, High Flight's singing group (top left), for a late evening performance. □ The Sixth Day's singing and Rittenhouse's memories draw 400 people, but attendance disappoints McCarty. "We're going to reevaluate this," he believes. "We used to draw 600. Maybe we had two or three saved tonight, but it wasn't that productive. I really have my doubts about continuing it." Rittenhouse is more positive. "On this weekend, with the homecoming football game between Arkansas and Texas A&M," he smiles, "I hadn't expected that good a crowd."





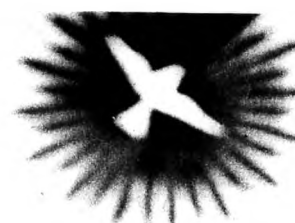
"We don't just have these weeks to throw out the same old 'Jesus saves'."

Friday—a bright, clear day filled with autumn smells—belongs to Red McDaniel. While continuing his military career, the Navy pilot—for six years a prisoner of the North Vietnamese—speaks occasionally with High Flight. Tall and pleasant, McDaniel arrives about noon, greeted by minister of evangelism Dennis Spencer (left), then whisked away to a local television station, where the ebullient McCarty interviews him and Rittenhouse (left middle). That evening McDaniel tells a crowd of 500-plus

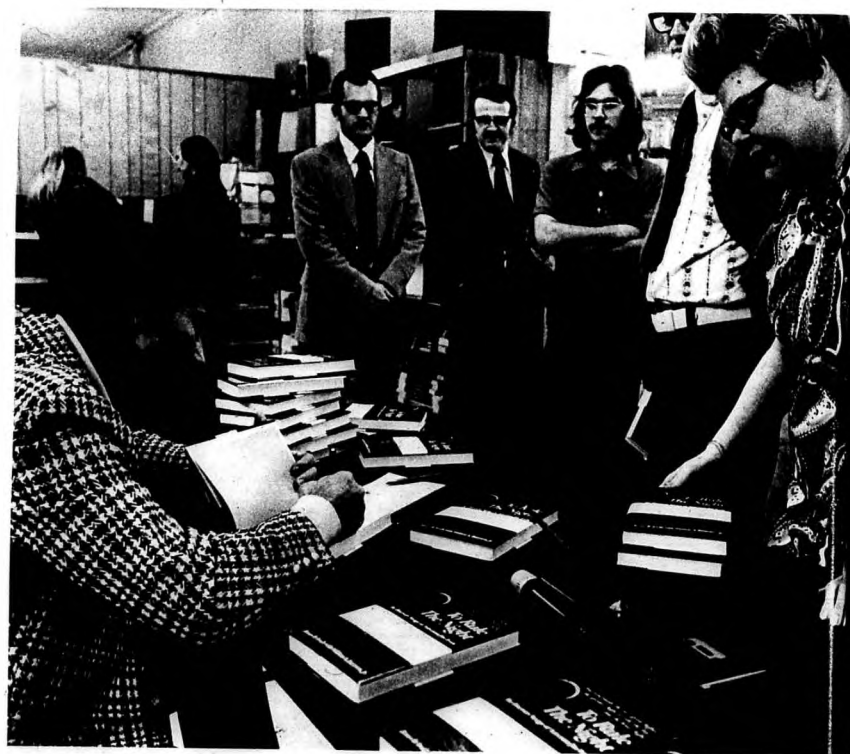
gathered at University Church, about life and faith in a North Vietnamese prison camp. No invitation given; McCarty doesn't feel they're always needed. Later McDaniel visits with well-wishers and signs autographs (right). So ends day two of Life Enrichment Week, which isn't a week at all. There's too much to compete with," McCarty feels. "People say, 'You got something for me, throw it out and we'll look at it, but don't take too much of my time.' We had our last full-week revival in 1968." Now LEW lasts just three or four

days, during which contemporary issues and the home are stressed. "You're never going to build strong churches on bankrupt families," McCarty believes. Nor will uninformed Christians build a "New Testament church. So we deal with sex, the occult, family life," he adds. "We don't just hold these weeks to throw out the same old 'Jesus saves.'" McCarty's been attacked, he admits, for bringing in well-known personalities and "not trusting the glory of Jesus" to make the week succeed. "People say to me, 'Do you have to bring in a James

Irwin to prove Jesus is authentic?' These folks think Christians are stupid," he says. "What's the world going to come hear, Joe Ardvark of Muleshoe, Tex., or the quarterback of the Razorbacks football team?" He laughs. "We need new people just so our people can hear things differently," he says. "Everybody doesn't hear alike. I've preached some sermons that when I got through, somebody came up and told me about a point I made, and I'd swear I never said that. Somebody new adds another dimension to your outreach."



"A church has to have a motif, a logo, something that says, 'This is what we are all about.'"



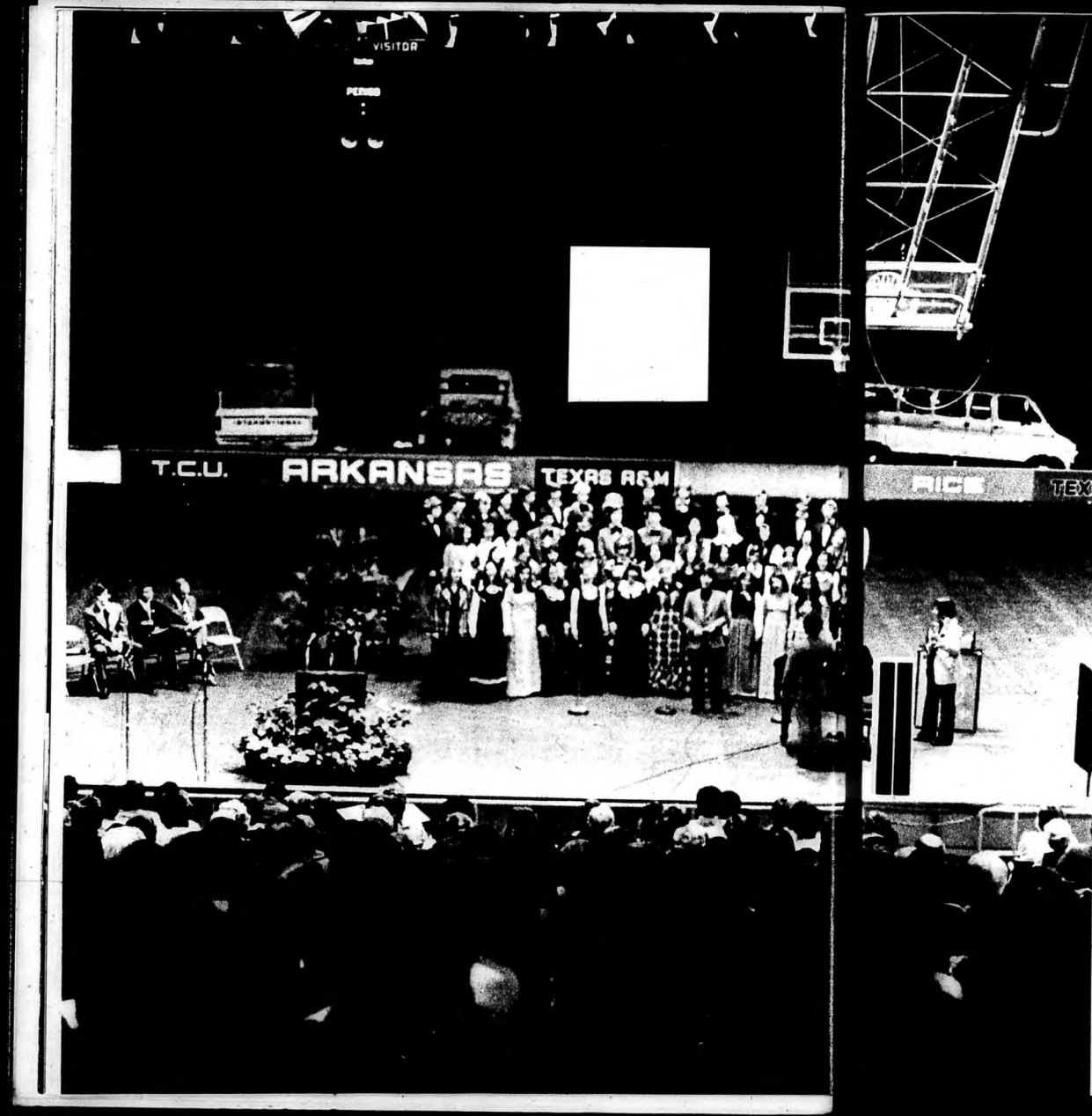
40 JANUARY HM

Because of Jim Irwin's popularity—each year he gets more than 1,000 invitations to speak—High Flight rations his time carefully. "We work with churches, interested in outreach for the Lord," says Bill Rittenhouse, who does much of the scheduling. "We're not interested in pastors who just want to build bigger clubs." □ Yet the team concentrates on urban areas. "There are only 52 weeks a year," Rittenhouse says, "and we feel we have to budget Jim's time wisely so that a maximum number can hear his testimony." □ Despite a recent heart attack, Jim Irwin keeps a hectic pace. His Saturday in Fayetteville begins early, with an autograph party for his new book (left). In the afternoon, he gives the invocation at the football game (middle). Along the way, the charismatic McCarty—who knows at least half the townspeople by name—introduces him to friends (top right). McCarty, too, uses the time to plug the night's rally, while University Church staffers pass out handbills ad-

vertising Irwin's speech (bottom right). □ The day pleases McCarty, who feels LEW is moving toward its peak, even with occasional snafus—such as one staffer who discovered he was to pick up someone at the airport—only minutes before the plane landed. Part of McCarty's relaxed manner results from University Baptists' previous "big extravaganzas," which starred name personalities such as former footballer Bill Glass, black evangelist Tom Skinner and TV star Cynthia Clawson. "We got Cynthia through her agent for a flat fee of \$600 plus expenses for four days," remembers McCarty. "Some of my folks were surprised, but you have to expect these things are going to cost something." □ But money isn't as important, he adds, as "quality and being on the cutting edge. A church has to have a motif, a logo, an image. This is part of what we're all about," McCarty smiles. "My reputation with the church doesn't go on the line with this one event. We try lots of things. We try to be sophisticated, to do things with dignity." He looks adamant: "Jesus shouldn't sponsor Hops."



HM JANUARY 41



"Our success comes in our ability to make Jesus an issue in the community..."

The finale comes Saturday night. Irwin attracts more than 3,000 people to the University of Arkansas field-house... a larger crowd than anywhere else in town," boasts McCarty, who's not surprised, despite beginning publicity efforts—in radio, TV, newspapers—only a few weeks before. Nor does the church use "standard revival techniques," he adds. "We don't play 'pack-the-pew' games or organize committees to promote the thing. We depend on word-of-mouth advertising mostly." □ It's worked for him since 1965, when he came to 300-member University Baptist. □ "I think the term 'revival' has lost its meaning among the people you're trying to reach," McCarty feels. That doesn't mean church growth has stopped. University has more than 1,800 members now, adding 400 yearly, one fourth of them by baptism. □ But evangelistic spectacles like High Flight haven't always been possible, even for McCarty. "Seven years ago," he says, "we couldn't have pulled this off. But I've tried to get my people thinking they can trust God to provide. My motto is, 'Unless it's humanly impossible, it's not spiritually possible.'" The four days will cost University Baptist almost \$4,000, net few new members. McCarty shrugs it off. "Financially it'll be a disaster. But you can't judge by that. We've laid a foundation for the future only God can measure, and we increased the stature of our church in the eyes of the community. We got our folks excited about Jesus. I think we effectively made Jesus an issue in this community. And I know one thing: I'm a communicator, and weekends like this communicate." •





... But today's
modern media
offer new
potential...

*Baptists are balancing
a tension between
old ways and new ways
of communication.
The new ways are winning...*

By Robert O'Brien

There's no sure way to measure exactly how many individuals are touched each year through the "newer modes" of Christian communication such as motion pictures, broadcasts, telecasts, multi-media shows, slides, art, musicals, audiovisual aids and the like.

But it's no exaggeration that Southern Baptists—while not forsaking traditional methods of preaching, teaching, printing and visiting—have invested a lot of time and dollars in modern media attempts to reach what Elton Trueblood calls the "lost pockets" of society.

At the same time, they have diligently tapped traditional and innovative routes to inform, persuade and hopefully edify those already "in the SBC fold."

In both efforts, Southern Baptist communicators—from local church officials to denominational leaders—have often found themselves under two directional fire.

That tension, between those who would launch out into the unfamiliar and those who revel themselves to the familiar, has receded as our whirlwind society has set the climate for innovation.

Where tension remains, research indicates, the debate is more often over the message's coding than its channel—slide, film, cassette, movie or whatever.

"In mass communication today," says Charles Swann of TRAV, the Television, Radio and Audiovisuals agency of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., "the name of the game is entertainment."

"The Scriptures tell us preaching is necessary, and we believe it," continues Swann, "but we find there are an awful lot of ways to preach. The Federal Communications Commission requires sta-

"You just can't take old church forms and hose them over people through mass media and expect to communicate with anyone except your own faithful..."

tions to do public service programming, but they don't have to do religious public service programming. So we have to gear our communications to fit their needs."

TRAV, which in the early 1960s became the first agency of any denomination to produce TV spots, has "drawn flak from some people who are threatened, I think, because what we're doing is so unlike what they're doing," Swann says. "They see the contrast and they're very uncomfortable with the concept that they might be wrong."

"A lot of people are really hung up on that, especially pastors, because they imagine themselves 'lining it out' in traditional church forms, and they don't realize you can't just take those church forms and hose them over people through mass media and expect to communicate with anyone except your own faithful followers."



Most Southern Baptist communicators would agree with Swann's appraisal, except they're not too sure they can continue to communicate even to their own constituency with "traditional methods."

"We've entered just about all the newer modes of communications," says Jesse Fletcher, who directs the Foreign Mission Board's Mission Support Division, "and we're projecting use of more of them."

"We have a responsibility to use all legitimate means of communication," adds James Sapp, director of the Home Mission Board's Communication Division.

"When you move around among the 34,500 Southern Baptist churches, you find the big majority of them are doing the same things they've done for the past 50 years, but there are a lot of folks in our

midst who are looking for help in finding additional ways to convey the truth of the gospel," says Ernest Mosely, of the Sunday School Board's Church Administration Department.

Paul Stevens, president of the SBC Radio and Television Commission, likens his agency's varied and open broadcast formats to a "soap display I saw while grocery shopping with my wife."

"There was blue soap, white soap, liquid soap, solid soap—packaged in boxes, cans, bottles. I realized only two companies produced all those types and brands."

"They were saying, 'We are going to sell you soap. We will package it any way you like, in whatever form or color you prefer, but we are determined to sell you soap.'"

"I realized," Stevens recalls, "we could do the same thing with the gospel. The Radio-TV Commission has just one 'product' to sell—the Christian faith. We rarely advertise this at the beginning of our shows and when the message finally comes, it is short and to the point. But we have not watered down the message—we have just presented it in a different format."

The search for "different formats" that blend traditional and contemporary approaches has led Southern Baptists to produce numerous audiovisual materials each year.

The few available measured results and the reactions of media experts indicate SBC agencies are doing a creditable—occasionally outstanding—job of producing messages for overlapping, diverse and sometimes conflicting internal (within SBC) and external (outside SBC) publics.

One of the biggest markets, primarily serviced through Sunday School Board bookstore outlets, is SBC churches, whose needs range from contemporary youth musicals to cassettes, slides, posters and movies.

To adjudge proficiency, Sunday School Board marketing experts turn to sales figures. By that criteria, the new media are well accepted by Southern Baptists. Sales through trade accounts have increased about 80 percent since

1971, says Jim Edwards, manager of the SSB's Broadman Trade Sales Department.

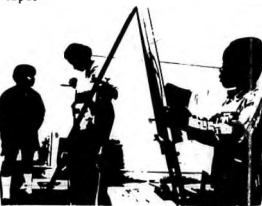
The Sunday School Board actually started back in the late '40s in audiovisual distribution, but the early '60s saw a large jump with the introduction of the Church Audiovisual Education (CAVE) plan," says Crawford Howell, manager of the Broadman Consumer Sales Department.

The CAVE plan, an umbrella for audiovisuals produced for any SBC organization, and the Ministers' Tape Program an individual study opportunity, total 3,186 members, Howell says.

During the past 10 years the Sunday School Board has distributed about 5,000 16mm motion picture projectors, "almost all of these to Southern Baptist churches," Howell says. "Including projectors, we distributed 2,680 units of audiovisual equipment during the past year."

Other indicators of proliferating use of audiovisuals by churches, Howell says, include in 1972-73 fiscal year alone: sale of 55,252 filmstrips, 23,952 tapes (mostly cassettes) and 1,505 overhead transparency sets, and rental of 7,950 motion pictures.

During the past four years, Broadman has released 14 new motion pictures, 116 new filmstrips and 87 new cassette tapes.



Youth musicals, a field pioneered by Broadman with release of "Good News" in 1968, has produced one of Southern Baptists' most dramatic communications breakthroughs. Not only did the denomination produce the first such musical in the industry but apparently laid the groundwork for a

Continued on page 47

A visit to holyland, incorporated

In which we make Jesus Christ as real as, well, Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck...

Take the Golgotha Express train ride up Calvary Hill and view the full-size statue on the Cross, which contorts on the hour! What began in the mid-1960s as John Bent's satirical comment on a "plastic religion of the carnival midway to salvation" may become a questionable reality in the 1970s. Capitalizing on growing attendance at "theme parks" such as Disneyland and Six Flags, several builders plan "Bibleland amusement parks"—costing from \$10 to \$300 million to create—in heavily touristed areas of the U.S.

One developer of a major Biblelands franchise in the South believes such "Christian ventures" reflect a necessary Madison Avenue tactic. He argues that Christianity has always been too negative, and this was a positive approach.

Another developer promotes his planned "Bible World"—to be built in Florida near Disney World, Sea World, Circus World and Busch Gardens, to name a few—as "designed to inform, entertain and inspire."

But *Christianity Today* calls the proposed parks a "gimmick." Walt Disney would have loved it.

Some of the Bible-park fun features to be offered the thrill-seeking visitor/tourist may include—according to various brochures and press releases—a Noah's ark kiddies' petting zoo, Ben Hur-style chariot races, a biblical wax museum, a train ride through heaven and hell, a David and Goliath marionette theater, push-button miracles such as the burning bush, a light and sound presentation of the last days of Christ, and a full-scale replica of the temple in Jerusalem.



At present, few "holyland parks" exist in the United States, and no one has conducted studies to determine if they make "Christians" as well as money. But it is possible for such attractions to offer "spiritual enrichment and historical enlightenment," says Leonard Fredrick, news editor of *Amusement Business Magazine*.

Fredrick, a Church of Christ member, has attended a Biblepark at Eureka Springs, Ark., which features a Mount of Olives and a professionally acted Passion Story. The enactment of the Bible story is "good" and "not a desecrated version of the historical event," says Fredrick. Fredrick also thinks "The Way," planned near Dallas, Tex., will be an "extremely authentic" Bible-oriented park.

"It's being put together by good, sound business people," he says. "They've advertised that their intention is to transport people mentally, emotionally and spiritually back to the beginnings of Christianity."

Biblelands parks or museums, if handled properly, and prepared professionally, could make positive contributions by faithfully reproducing and representing the Bible and Bible lands, adds Joseph A. Callaway, professor of Old Testament archaeology at Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

People might then be able to see the nature and character of the Holyland, without having to travel abroad, Callaway says. But he cautions against commercial exploitation, sensationalism and poor taste.

There are aspects of the actual Bible and Holyland that border on credibility," Callaway admits, and these areas of faith could be abused if people were attracted to displays thinking they were credible, when actually half-truths were being presented.

Others have been more critical. James Young, feature editor of *Baptist Press*, remembers visiting a Bibleland park which "showcased and exhibited Jesus Christ on the side of a multi-laned freeway. There was the possibility that the roadside show in all its blatant ugliness was an attempt at a valid witness of Jesus," says Young. "And I had to ask myself, 'Did it perhaps communicate an accurate portrayal and witness to thousands of people who whizzed by?' I'm not sure about others' reaction, but for me, the answer was 'No.'"

Young's response was echoed by *Rolling Stone*, the iconoclastic magazine for young people, which carried one of the few major articles on the Biblelands parks. In it, a promoter was quoted as saying, "If we present the Bible, this message will come across! In essence, we are bringing the Bible to life. We are presenting Christ, presenting Jonah, presenting the characters of the Bible."

"Bringing them to life, and letting them be as well-known as... Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck."

ing traditional vs. contemporary tension in churches.

From 1967—when Broadman youth musical sales were zero—to July, 1973, more than 416,000 copies of 10 youth musical titles have been sold, says Jessie McElreath, Broadman's marketing, planning coordinator.

"Acceptance of youth musicals, while not total, has been exceptionally good," reports William Reynolds, church music secretary at the Sunday School Board.

In the wake of success, Broadman has marketed a pulpit musical drama, "Celebrate Life," and an instrumental accompaniment tape for youth musicals. Both are significant barometers of public acceptance, McElreath feels.

"In the past, local churches would not think of using such things as sing-along tapes, but now they're widely accepted," he says.

Buoyed by a recent survey's favorable findings, Broadman observers believe that the musical surge is no fly-by-night fad. "Every generation has to speak the gospel in its own vocabulary," says William Reynolds, "to articulate its own expression, whether spoken, read or sung."

"Music is one indicator of the mood of a generation. We've got more of the gospel being sung today than at any time."



The youth musicals' most significant contribution to Southern Baptists may be in evangelism. Performed in prisons, on street corners, in civic auditoriums, they draw non-Christians as well as Christians with their "appeal to the untrained ear," says Loren Williams, Broadman music sales specialist. "The average listener doesn't have to be a trained musician to like

them, appreciate them or understand their message."

In 1973, reports Joel Land of the Home Mission Board's special mission ministries department, more than 150 youth (choir) groups helped in US missions. "Youth groups have given us entree into areas we otherwise would not have been able to enter," Land adds, "and helped us reach large audiences unreachable before."

The powerful impact of contemporary youth musicals has even been felt by the Convention's Foreign Mission Board, which seldom rushes into a new area without careful analysis of how the move will further the FMB's worldwide mission endeavor or affect its support by Southern Baptists.

"Grain," an FMB musical group made up of five young people, toured many US colleges and seminaries this past fall, interpreting missions through dialogue, contemporary music and personal sharing. The FMB was so pleased with Grain's reception it extended the tour into the spring.

Both Home and Foreign Boards have also sponsored the writing of missions musicals to help interpret and promote their work.

"Southern Baptists recognize the dynamic nature of music as a medium through which we can communicate the gospel both at home and on the foreign mission field," says Reynolds.

"We have almost 100 music missionaries under appointment by the Foreign Mission Board right now," he points out.

"Missionaries in foreign areas have gone to radio stations to ask for free time. They have been told, 'If you're going to preach, we'll give you five minutes. If you're going to sing, we'll give you an hour.' Singing has opened doors to places where missionaries have never been before," Reynolds says.

Although no specific figures show the complete scope of musical mass communication on mission fields, striking examples stand out.

One, Kabaria '70, an unusual Indonesian choir whose repertoire contained Asian church songs and Christian dance interpretations based on Javanese-Bali-

nese classic folk dance forms, had "amazing success" in its performance, reports FMB missionary Bill O'Brien, the choir's director.

"The appeal and strength of this group comes from Asians sharing the good news of Jesus with fellow Asians through art forms," O'Brien believes.

Indonesian Baptists also developed a radio-TV ministry, pioneered by O'Brien although current figures are unavailable. Indonesian Baptists at one time had 10 slots per year on government-run television.

Radio stations on three major islands of Indonesia and the Far East Broadcasting Company's transmitters in Manila, Philippines, also beamed prerecorded Baptist programs, which reportedly drew hundreds of letters from listeners.

Radio and television ministries are not a brand new phenomena on the foreign mission field, but they have escalated in the past several years, Fletcher says. The FMB has four regional radio and television representatives and 44 radio and television specialists in countries abroad.

But the Board has not made extensive use of broadcasting in the States, except for producing two TV spots, tested in five broadcast markets, and eight radio spots, tested in 10 broadcast markets, "to interest potential Southern Baptist missionary personnel in exploring the possibilities and, as a by-product, to involve Baptists more directly in something of what's happening around the world," Fletcher says.

Results proved disappointing. "Our test was probably too small to be really significant," Fletcher says. "The money we had available was minimal and the public service time we got was negligible. As a result the spots might have been shown in a given town five times and the odds of someone seeing them were pretty poor."

Because of low feedback, the Board recycled the spots for other uses, Fletcher says, offering them to such organizations as Baptist Men and Baptist Student Unions to use in sponsoring mission projects.

"We also made them available to churches with Sunday broadcasts to run

Radio and TV ministries are not new phenomena on the foreign field, but their use has escalated in the past several years, far extending SBC outreach.

as a front, middle or trailer ad in their own time slot," says Fletcher.

Fletcher denies the effort constituted an advertising campaign.

That interpretation would indicate shortsightedness and a deficient understanding of the whole communications process. "But it was, he adds, an attempt to use a "non-traditional mode of communication. We're not locking ourselves into a period of time and running the risk of becoming outdated."



Like the FMB, the Home Mission Board has entered radio and television in an attempt to communicate its message. Dozens of missionaries, for instance, have local radio shows.

But the HMB's major thrust has been "Spring Street USA," the 30-minute color TV program produced by the Radio and Television Commission for the HMB.

After a slow start, "Spring Street" now draws about 500 letters a month, with more than 95 percent of them favorable," says Bill Hogue, the Board's evangelism director. "We get a few letters from people who worry about the entertainment aspect of 'Spring Street.' They think we ought to make a preaching service out of it, but we've found that most television stations will not allow us to unless our program can qualify as entertainment," says Hogue.

Besides," he says, "we're not trying

to reach Christians. We're trying to reach non-Christians. We're not compromising, but we're trying to give them enough entertainment to get their attention so we can talk to them about becoming Christians."

Perhaps the show's greatest weakness has not been program content, but financing—which not only limited the time and availability of broadcasts, but also prohibited extensive marketing research to determine viewer response.

"Spring Street" results have been far short of the responses viewers have given well-known TV campaigns such as that of Billy Graham, whose one-week crusades cost more to broadcast than all 34 episodes of "Spring Street" will—or Oral Roberts' specials, which have received more than 400,000 responses, says George Woodin, executive vice-president of Traco, Inc., the advertising agency of the Oral Roberts Association.

Roberts' TV shows "try to reach the best TV markets possible," Woodin says. His agency studies markets and tries to get "the prime time, when most people could see the show."

Woodin admits only that costs are "very high," and maintains that mail-in contributions will not pay for the programs. But he and Pat Griffin, supervisor of correspondence for the Roberts' organization, both believe "TV evangelism is definitely effective."

"We have found," says Mrs. Griffin, "that people are watching television and where the church hasn't really reached them in any other way, you can reach them. It is effective if you are effective in your program."



The SBC agency most involved in effectively reaching a mass audience through radio and television, of course, is the Radio and Television Commission, which not only works in program production with other SBC agencies, state conventions, churches and associations, but is also heavily involved in its own programming.

The Commission produces for radio "MasterControl," a half-hour program combining popular music and general interviews and heard on 644 radio stations; "Powerline," a top-40 music program for teenagers, heard on 782 stations; "Country Crossroads," a country music cousin of "Powerline," heard on 545 stations; "The Baptist Hour," the commission's flagship program (and the only one with a preaching format and "Baptist" in its title), heard on 410 stations; and two new bids for public service time, "Night Song," a 15-minute, late-night show featuring a Commission-sponsored singing group, and "Soul Searchers," a new show designed for audiences of black radio stations. Several of these are dubbed into different languages and used overseas.

Baptists entered television with "The Answer," a series now supplemented with a new series of half-hour color dramas and documentaries called "The Human Dimension," designed to help people deal with today's most pressing problems.

One of the Commission's best known programs, "IOT," a children's TV cartoon, burst on the scene in 1968 and soon grew to 100 stations drawing 150,000 letters a year from children and parents.

IOT, the animated dot with the personality and problems of a child, has been described by *Newsweek* magazine as "the first genuinely entertaining and effective use of television for preaching morality to pre-teen children." The cartoon crosses racial and cultural boundaries to encourage truthfulness, obedience, responsibility, an awareness of God's presence, practicing the Golden Rule and forgiveness.

IOT's voice has been translated into Spanish, dubbed into Mandarin Chinese and Korean and videotaped for nation-

wide use by the deaf. Recently JOT donned a bush hat and was shown—complete with Southern Baptist tagline—on Australian television under the auspices of the Anglican Church.

The Commission also offers local churches select 60-second radio spot readings, "Living Words for Today," from "The Living Bible," which can be passed on to local stations. More than 600 radio stations now give the daily readings, which often are tagged by a

local church to give it community identification.

The Commission, in fact, encourages local church sponsorship of programs—such as that of Second Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark. Its pastor, Dale Cowling, recognized an opportunity to offer localized counseling by inserting three 60-second spot announcements in the "Powerline" broadcast.

Youngsters now call "Dr. C's Hotline" for help on subjects ranging from paren-

tal distrust to illegitimate pregnancies and potential suicides.

In other situations, the Commission provides films for use on local cable TV hookups and, through TimeRite, its advertising subsidiary, has worked with churches, associations, state conventions and SBC agencies in preparing radio and TV spots and documentaries for a wide range of purposes.

"The spots are presented in an up-to-date style that sets the listener thinking

The Radio and TV Commission accounted for 207,480 separate broadcasts in 1972—for an audience in the millions. All on free air time. "The results are exciting."



about his spiritual needs before he even realizes it's a religious promotion," says TimeRite's W. C. Woody.

In 1972, 1,735 people, not including those who contacted only local churches, made decisions for Christ because of radio and TV programs produced by the Commission.

During the same year, the Commission distributed 3,334 half-hour programs weekly. Those programs and spot announcements, television series and spe-

cials (produced in conjunction with ABC, NBC and CBS) accounted for 207,480 separate broadcasts in 1972, and an audience well in the millions.

All of that time on radio and television was public service time—\$7.4 million worth. "We don't buy time on the air," Stevens says. "Our support comes from Baptists who give through their church's Cooperative Program and from listeners who write in. The results of the programs are exciting."

Continued

To reach the diverse church and non-church publics that make up its prospective audience, each SBC agency uses dozens of media. The Home Mission Board is no exception. A sampling, old and new:

Personal contacts—The more than 2,000 home missionaries, plus more than 1,000 short-term missionaries, are the HMB's major communications thrust with the non-church world. The total number of people reached by this huge communications "arm" of the HMB is unknown, but statistics for 1971 (last year available) hint of person-to-person power: professions of faith—62,026; decisions for special service—6,113; sermons preached—113,247; additions to churches—28,030; new missions started—1,261; new churches—136.

Television—Billed as the SBC's first TV evangelism show, "Spring Street, USA," attempts to reach a non-church audience. Because

of financial limitations, the HMB was able to produce the weekly "variety" show but was unable to purchase prime airtime; viewer response to early programs—often aired at odd hours—was poor, but recently, letters—98 percent favorable—have poured in at a growing, 15-25 per day rate for the past three months. The Board's Evangelism Division has filled more than 1,700 requests. But hoped-for monetary support has not materialized, either from viewers or from the SBC executives.

Future plans for the show are uncertain.

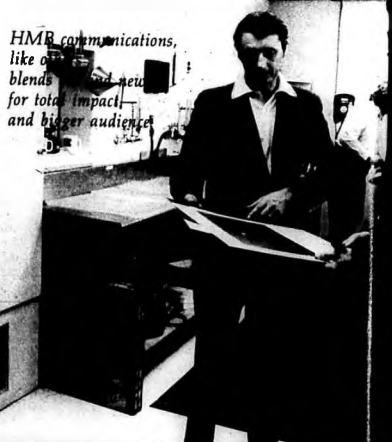
Tape Cassettes—"Missionscope," a monthly tape cassette service begun in the summer of 1973, resulted from survey findings that 1,000,000 Baptists have cassette recorders.

This "tour of home missions," a self-supporting communication aimed primarily at church leaders—has attracted 55 subscribers.

In addition, the Audio-visual Department produced more than 6,500

Books, films, songs, tapes & other such

HMB communications, like other media, blend old and new for total impact and bigger audience.



cassette tapes in 1973, mostly relating to special events such as conferences.

Filmstrips—Twelve HMB filmstrips, designed to inform church audiences and promote mission study, were released in 1973. More than 10,000 filmstrips (including previous years' releases) were sold through Baptist bookstores. Total audience is estimated at 1,000,000 people.

Motion films—Two 16mm films were produced in 1973, making a total of six films now available from the HMB. On an average, each film is seen by 650 groups for a total audience of 30,000 people a year. Despite some distribution problems, the Board plans more motion picture films in 1974.

Slide sets—A growing medium of communication for general audiences, the HMB has 18 slide sets, two new in 1973. The Interfaith Witness slide set, accompanying the annual graded mission study, sold 1,250 sets; the other, which is used in performances of the

HMB's youth musical, "Joy," sold 169 sets.

Photographs—In three years, the number of photographs released to SBC agencies, churches, publications and organizations jumped from 8,000 to 42,000, making the HMB's black-and-white photo lab the busiest in the Southeast.

Tracts, brochures, printed materials—In 1972, the number of new, revised and reprinted materials totaled more than 9 million pieces, ranging from educational tools such as an Interfaith Witness tract-set, to promotional materials such as a brochure describing HMB work. Printed materials are targeted for Christians and non-Christians, from small groups of teenagers to church-wide audiences.

Newsletters—Two are produced at the HMB, both for specialized audiences. The first, from the Division of Associational Services, goes monthly to 3,600 superintendents of missions, associational moderators and officers and directors of the HMB. The other, pub-

lished by the Division of Chaplaincy, reaches an estimated 18,000 chaplains quarterly.

Books—The four mission study books' sales annually top 200,000 copies. Other HMB titles published each year are on subjects as diverse as the black church and the occult. HMB staffers have written 20 books.

Displays—An estimated 50,000 people annually see HMB exhibits at state, associational and Convention meetings. Plans call for local-church displays on "share-the-cost" basis.

Magazine—Produced monthly, HOME MISSIONS has a circulation of 80,000-plus (including 34,000 SBC pastors and 8,000 National Baptist pastors). A special audience publication, HM is designed primarily for church and denominational opinion leaders.

Speakers, conferences—In the past two years more than 2,000,000 people have heard about home missions first-hand, as missionaries and HMB personnel spoke in camps, world mission

conferences and churches. In addition, the Board's departments—in their roles as "resource aid" for local churches, associations, sponsors conferences each year, such as the Small Church Conference, which drew a capacity audience of 450 to Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in the spring of 1973.

Musicals—In 1973, the Board introduced its first youth musical, "Joy," which attempts to tell the home mission story in song. Response has been overwhelming; more than 200 church choirs—including Methodists, Lutherans and Episcopalians—have performed "Joy" before church and non-church groups estimated to exceed 20,000. More musicals are planned.

News releases. The Board's BP bureau and news service sends out 200-plus stories annually to Baptist and secular papers.

Recordings—The Board has produced only a few records, and these are being phased out in favor of tape cassettes. ■



When you get right down to it, most of our communications are guesswork—scientific but unproved. We work in a communications vacuum."

In retrospect, it's easy to see that if the total number of audiovisuals used by SBC organizations were fully calculated—and they are not—the number would run into tens of thousands, involving much time and money. And this wouldn't even include the many creative uses of public service programming originated by local churches, associations and state conventions.

Yet despite all these efforts at communication, Southern Baptist agencies do little to assure that their messages are correctly "targeted" for intended audiences or to determine if the message did, in fact, achieve its communicative goal.

At the Radio and Television Commission, professionally-trained broadcasters use industry data and knowhow to help gear programs for whatever type of audience they want to reach—such as teenagers through "Powerline."

And in spot "commercials," even when wording doesn't vary, Commission specialists may change background music, depending on age of target audience, for example.

As for follow-up market research, such as used by the United Presbyterian Church, USA, to document the effect of the Stan Freeburg ad agency's "religious thought" commercials in the 1960's, no SBC organization has ever been willing to budget for that.

Most SBC spokesmen point to a fairly healthy number of write-ins and local set-ups with associations and churches as effective indicators," but communications specialists downplay letter writers and "friends" as "often unrepresentative," sometimes biased and seldom accurate barometers from which to judge actual audience response. They question the wisdom of attempting to evaluate audience internalization of the message from such small, unscientifically determined samplings.

"We don't really know what effect we're having with our mass media efforts," says one SBC communicator. "Take 'Spring Street' for instance. I think it's doing a good job, but I don't know that."

"There is a risk whenever you strike

out on new ventures, such as 'Spring Street.' But the potential is so great, the risks seem all worthwhile—if you program in some qualitatively and quantitatively accurate method of determining exactly what audience—or audiences—you're reaching, and how they're responding to your message."

"The HMB has spent maybe \$300,000 on 'Spring Street,' and the Board believes some lives have been changed. But was that \$300,000 TV show the best way to accomplish that particular communications task—that is, changing men's lives?"

"What exactly did the HMB get for its \$300,000? If surveyed, an audience profile might reveal that 80 percent of the viewers were already Christian—that would say one thing, or it might discover only 40 percent of the audience was Christian, which would say a quite different thing in terms of money-spent per non-Christian reached."

"What did the Board gain by this communications venture? Should the project be scrapped, or had it contributed so effectively to the Board's communications efforts that even at the expense of other programs, funds should be found to continue it?"

"The fact is, we don't have any scientific way of answering those questions. When you get right down to the nitty-gritty of it, most of our communications are guesswork—scientific on the front end, the production end, but never proved. We're working in a feedback vacuum."



Most, rather than ability, has handicapped SBC agencies' efforts to get accurate feedback samplings. The Foreign Mission Board, for example, never had enough funds to adequately air its spot

campaign on missions, much less scientifically measure its success—or even determine whether mass media spot commercials were an appropriate channel for its message!

The Sunday School Board, which markets most of its materials to SBC churches, has research facilities, but still relies heavily on "informal" techniques such as discussions with opinion leaders, letters, reports of agency employees and educated guesses.

The nature of SSB marketing research, says Jessie McElreath, "depends on the total monetary involvement. If we have a product that would cost a great deal of money to produce, then we will, of course, want to make sure to do everything possible, as far as testing is concerned, to keep from bombing out."

For example, McElreath points out, "primary research"—involving selecting a statistically correct sample and designing a questionnaire to determine the sample's opinions and reactions—caused Broadman to drop plans to start a home music club when survey findings were negative.

Another survey projected one million Southern Baptist homes have cassette recorders—hence the cassette tape plan.

The SSB also does a good deal of "secondary research."

"Our consumer salesmen contact about 5,000 churches each year and we encourage them to seek evaluations on the usefulness and suitability of our products," says Ras Robinson, manager of Broadman's Products Department.

"We also discuss product needs and reactions to products, with leaders from churches, both laymen and clergy," Robinson says. "Input from such meetings has resulted in changes, such as our recognition of the need for more overhead transparencies."

Attendance at professional meetings keeps Broadman production personnel abreast of current media developments, like video cassettes and super-eight movies.

Broadman is studying the possibility of these two media and will probably produce materials for them as soon as the industry standardizes the hardware to

Continued

"We must use every medium possible to bring the good news to people where they are, in a manner that will communicate with them as they are."

eliminate costly confusion. Also, most churches don't yet have equipment to use video cassettes or super-eight films



But sometimes hunches or gambles—marketing experts call them "educated guesses based on market experience"—have paid off big. "Good News," the pioneering youth musical, didn't take too much money to offer, so Broadman "played a hunch" and sales skyrocketed, setting the entire church music industry in a spin.

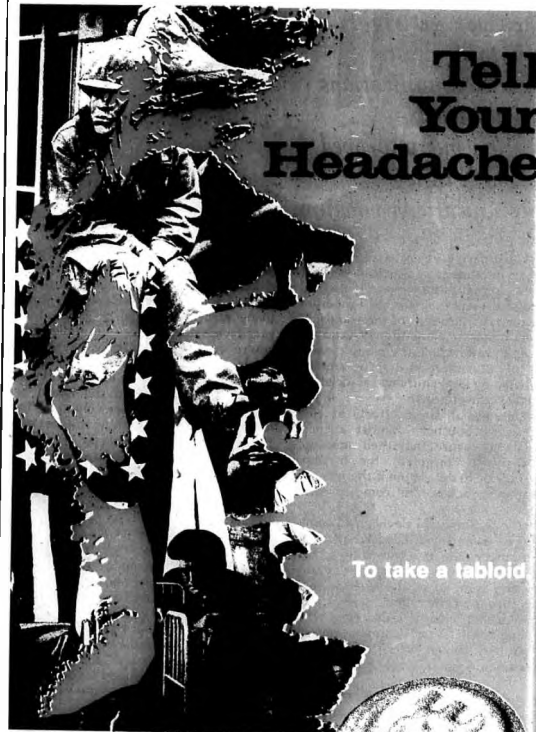
It's that chance to set the world a spinning that has caused Southern Baptists to jump heavily into new media to carry a big load in their efforts to reach people for Christ and educate and inspire those already reached.

The validity of using new communications tools, in the mind of the HMB's Bill Hogue, is simple.

"Paul said he should be all things to all men that he may win some. We must use every medium possible to bring the good news to people where they are, expressed in a manner which will communicate with them. This is in keeping with Jesus' Great Commission to reach all people."

"It is evident," Hogue continues, "that Jesus was a mass communicator. He used every technique and means available to him when he was on earth to gather the masses around him so he could teach them. I see no inconsistency in using whatever means are available to tell his story." •

© Brian is news editor of Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville.



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By A.J. Conyers

Communicating man...

Since author William Fore grew up in Beverly Hills (his father worked for Twentieth Century Fox) it's hardly surprising that he has a certain sympathy for the film industry, and for mass media in general. But it's not an unreserved sympathy. Fore, the director of the National Council of Churches' Broadcasting and Film Commission, sees the role of media in society as promising but badly misapplied. His book, *Image and Impact*, centers upon media's presentation of man and of all that influences man's image of himself. Man's image as presented through media, says Fore, is at the least unbiblical and, if absorbed sponge-like by the public, a danger to man's proper appreciation of himself and his world. Fore makes a strong case for his contention that media presents an inadequate view of man and imposes it, to a large degree, upon the reading-viewing-listening public. His source of data, of course, is almost inexhaustible, since it is the same steady stream of messages and programs that claim our attention through most waking moments. *Image and Impact* draws from all of it, comic strips to major film productions.

His argument is weakened, however, by one unnerving habit. Often, after making a strong point, backed by respectable evidence, he steps aside and makes a little speech about some unrelated controversy. At one point, for instance, he maintains that violent attitudes are more likely to be influenced by real violence than by fictional violence. As examples, he points to draft riots, lynchings, Ku Klux Klan killings, and war. At this point he pauses to moralize on the woes of Vietnam: a simple case, he insists, of killing people "because they believe in a kind of freedom and a type of political system different from our own." Thus he opens up an entirely new debate.

His major point, then, will be lost to some readers because they are turned off by Fore's evidence.

Aside from these occasional sallies, the general argument is tightly constructed and convincing. Fore demonstrates that media often presents an image of man that varies widely from the biblical view of humanity. The most fruitful response, he says, will be media education. If we understand media we are less likely to be ensnared by their subtleties, and more likely to demand a proper understanding of man and his God-given worth.

Image and Impact: How Man Comes through in the Mass Media, William F. Fore (Friendship Press), \$1.50

Media and the liberation of Harvey Cox

Reading Harvey Cox to gain religious insight is like kissing a frog in hopes of discovering a prince. One is more likely to end up with warts. His latest book, *The Seduction of the Spirit*, is somewhat less promising than most frogs.

Every creature has its positive points, however, and this one is no exception. For one, Cox skillfully weaves a very serious theme within the framework of autobiography. It is a protest against man's increasing inability to tell his own story. According to Cox, the story is the fabric of culture and the *sine qua non* of religion. The ideals and hopes that men live by are their real religion, a sort of "people's religion," and this finds its expression in the collective story of a people. Common experience calls for a common story through which men relate to one another and to their world.

The despoilers of "people's religion"

Continued

are mass media. The media themselves become the common experience of society, they supply the story, and the story is a perversion of authentic people's religion. Media represent a misuse of people's religion because the story it gives us is not truly our story. In fact, the media really don't provide a story at all, but they deliver what Cox calls "signal" (systems, doctrines, propaganda—requiring no response except acquiescence) parading as story.

Cox's book suffers from the same disorientation that afflicts his theology. Experience, private or collective, is the focus of religious truth. Never does he suggest that truth exists beyond man and independently of his response. Always it centers in the self and is judged on the basis of its "liberating" value. "For me," Cox says, "the touchstone by which I respond to religious phenomena is summed up by the single word 'liberation.'"

The Seduction of the Spirit, Harvey Cox (Simon and Schuster), \$8.95.

Toward Effective Communication

Any minister knows that his duties require more in the way of communication than preaching. And, in fact, it seems that as churches expand their programs beyond corporate worship, the minister finds increasing demands upon his skills. Most ministers, then, become acquainted quite early with the vastly expanding field of media, and wish, somehow, they could use these means to more effect in their churches.

Merrill Abbey's *Communication in Pulpit and Parish* is a book that seeks to answer the needs along both the length and breadth of the modern communications field. Abbey includes preaching as a primary communicative task, but he sees it as an area that requires skillfully applied support.

The readers of Abbey's book may suffer from the professional and technical jargon that characterizes Abbey's style; but they might find the task well rewarded by the store of sound guidance for effective parish communication.

Communication in Pulpit and Parish, Merrill R. Abbey (The Westminster Press), \$7.50.

Books, film, and tapes

Mediathink: Mass Media Communication Study Course, edited by William K. Waterston and Charles E. Swann (TRAV, Presbyterian Church in the U.S., Atlanta, Ga.), \$25. Editors Waterston and Swann employ print cassettes, film, cartoons, and illustration to provide an exciting course of study on the impact of media upon our society. Four basic concerns are reflected in the course: 1) How communication takes place, 2) How communication takes place through the media, 3) How the media use us, and 4) How to use the media. Cassette tapes add much of the variety and character to the series, alternately employing music, interviews, instruction, panel discussion, and anecdote by Marshall McLuhan.

Among the textbooks is William F. O'Connell's *Image and Impact* which is reviewed above. Others are *Communication: The Transfer of Meaning* by Don Fabun, *Handbook of Church Public Relations* by James Suggs, *The Media Maze* by Richard Woods, and *The Mind Builders* (a workbook) edited by Rob Nelson and Robin Smith. The whole is tied together by a series of lessons dealing progressively with areas such as radio, television, advertising, cinema, and the future of media.

To Meet—To Touch—To Know: The Art of Communicating, John R. Killinger, Jr. (Graded Press, a division of the Methodist Publishing House), \$.85. Killinger has written a study book for adults and young people that can be an effective way to introduce communication to church groups. He deals with barriers to communication and how one might overcome them, especially with insights from the Christian gospel. Each section includes study aids that are applicable in group situations.

"Extend Now: Community Events" (Broadman Films, 1973), \$6.50. This HMB film strip serves as a guide to extending Southern Baptist work through such events as drama, Bible clubs, and coffeehouses.

"Literacy Missions — A New Dimension" (Broadman Films, 1973), \$6.50. This film strip deals with communication in areas where it is desperately lacking, among non-readers and non-English speaking persons in the United States. The presentation includes a recording and gives a brief audio-visual introduction to literacy missions in Southern Baptist work.

The Gaggling of God, Gavin Reid (Hodder and Stoughton, London), \$ 72. The greatest threat to the gospel, says Gavin Reid, is "the breakdown of communication in every facet of daily life." This little book eloquently presents the need for modern Christians to find more effective ways of saying things to people who live in the television age. Just standing in this book, as distinct from preaching in the field, is that the author treats the subject with humor as well as depth. •

The Process of Communication by David Berlo (Rinehart Press) \$7.95. This thorough, concise examination of the way people communicate—or attempt to—is an excellent basic text for anyone wishing to understand the process of communication and/or improve his own communicative skills. Berlo, pointing out the inter-disciplinary nature of communications research, draws from psychology, sociology, linguistics, anthropology, mathematics and philosophy. Yet he never bogs down in a mire of technical jargon, and the book is readable and informative.

The Effects of Mass Communication, Joseph T. Klapper (The Free Press) \$8.40. The author analyzes the research on the effectiveness and limitations of mass media in influencing opinions, values and behavior of their audiences. Although somewhat dated and occasionally obtuse, it is still the best book available on the subject.

"Art of Communicating Our Faith" (Broadman Films, 1973) \$6.50. This HMB filmstrip looks at the many ways a Christian can communicate his faith through his talents, gifts and his lifestyle. It includes a look at personal and electronic means of sharing faith.

Conyers, a graduate of Southeastern Seminary, is pastor, First Baptist Church, Ma, Ga.

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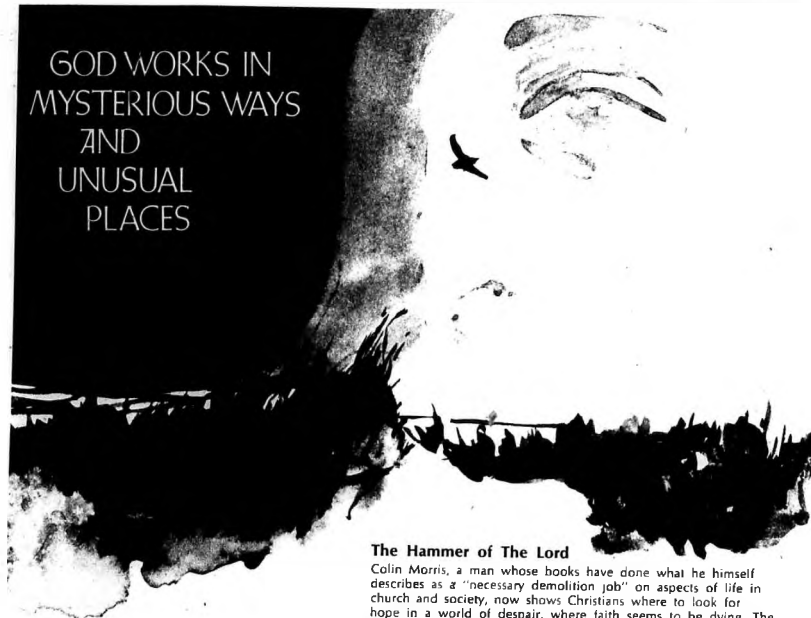
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EXECUTIVE

By Arthur B. Rutledge

Where the action is

The challenge of the new year comes to us with fresh impact, for America stands desperately in need of a spiritual and moral awakening. I have been concerned about the disclosures of dishonesty and duplicity in high places, and a quotation from Billy Graham speaks meaningfully to me. He says that there is a little bit of Watergate in all of us, and he points to the need for national repentance and turning to God. Surely the critical need of our nation at this time is for spiritual recovery.

Every church is where the action is. Your Home Mission Board likewise is where the action is, often exciting action, as it serves the churches as an arm of witness and ministry. The Board undergirds the work of young congregations and young state conventions in "pioneer" mission areas. It serves throughout the nation, with older, established conventions as well as younger groups, in ministering to needy human beings in the name of Christ. It serves in ghettos and subdivisions, in apartment complexes and in rural communities, in resort settings and in hospitals. It serves persons of all ages and of many races. Its continuing objective in every activity is to help persons find Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior—and in him find forgiveness, renewal, purpose, meaning, and a decent and worthy life.

Denominational and Home Mission Board plans place special evangelistic efforts high on the list of concerns in 1974. "Witness Now" calls for accelerated attention to lay witness training, and focuses on "renewal evangelism" to deepen the spiritual life and strengthen personal witness. The Board also hopes to build a much larger audience for its evangelistic television program, "Spring Street, USA."

"Extend Now" is another aspect of the 1973-74 emphasis on "Share the Word Now." An amazing 26,000 new Bible fellowships have been reported. Perhaps a thousand of these will evolve into churches, but many more churches are needed as population grows.

During the year ahead the church loans program will help a larger number of churches with building finances. Besides the familiar loan funds, the Board's Church Loans Division will begin purchasing church bonds for resale to Southern Baptists and others who would like to buy bonds which this agency judges to be safe.

One of the 1974's outstanding conferences is expected to be the National Convocation of the Southern Baptist Association, to be held at Ridgcrest May 6-10. Attendance is by invitation only, hopefully with every one of Southern Baptists' 1,200 associations represented.

The Board is also concerned about developing an inter-program strategy for the cities—our first-line challenge in missions. The HMB's "community-in-crisis" ministries and "urban training centers" offer positive starting points for comprehensive denominational planning for our urban witness and ministry.

We are anticipating that 1974 will see an upturn in the number of home missionaries. For the past three years the missionary force has hovered around the 2,200 mark. The churches have increased their support of the Home Board, but at a rate which has consistently run below the increased cost of operation. The outstanding gains in 1973 in both Cooperative Program and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering support give us hope of being able to increase the missionary force this year.

We continue to be concerned about missionary salaries. Last fall the Board completed a thorough study of home

missionary income. Among the conclusions, two stood out: The median home missionary's salary in 1973 was \$2,000 less than the median national income for a family of four; and the median home missionary's salary in 1973 was \$2,500 below the salary of the average full-time pastor of a church with 500 to 750 members. During recent years the missionaries have received an annual salary increase, but during some years this did not keep up with the rising cost of living. A larger increase is being given this year and plans are now taking shape for a big advance in 1975. We trust that within the next three years we can both increase our total number of missionaries and advance missionary support to an adequate level.

We are anticipating also an accelerated involvement of lay persons in home missions service. The 1973 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering advance funds will enable the Board to support a larger number of summer missionaries. Semester missions—student summer missions throughout the year—is catching on, and we are expecting a sizeable increase in this ministry. The greatest advance is expected in the Christian Service Corps, our volunteer home missions service. W. L. (Bill) Wilson, our first coordinator of the Christian Service Corps, sets the example by serving part-time without salary.

We look back across 1973 and thank you for your support of home missions—in prayer, in confidence, in expressions of encouragement, and in record financial support. We look forward to the challenges of 1974 and rejoice in the privilege of serving our Lord today. We look upward to God and trust in him for wisdom, for compassion, for courage and for strength to fulfill our mission in the unfolding months ahead. *

Evangelism: The Art of Communicating Our Faith



Pictures by Alan Higgins

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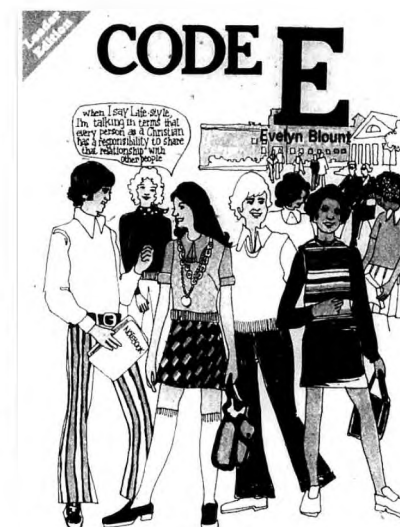
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READERS' REACTION

Wish we could read about our Jesus more

Who's kidding whom?

I have just browsed through the November issue of HOME MISSIONS and I think it is a disgrace to the Southern Baptist Convention. Who is kidding whom? "White is white and black is black" and "ne'er the twain shall meet."

First, we had to contend with "social experiments" in our government and now we're being cursed with them in our Southern Baptist Convention.

I think the Home Mission Board should be scrapped if it takes that to keep our Convention from being "torn asunder" by a "very" small group who have amalgamation of the races as their goal.

If you all had the interest of the Negro race at heart you would encourage him to have racial pride and want to prove that they have intelligence, leadership, dedication, etc., among their ranks enough to maintain their own churches as they have in the past.

The "experiment" has, in reality, destroyed the public school systems of the South first and now the North. Have you read the figures on the number of private schools that have been built in the South from Texas to Florida to Virginia? You would be amazed.

The Methodists and Presbyterians are becoming splinter groups now because of liberal encroachments. The same will happen to our Baptist denomination if common sense doesn't prevail. God forbid it.

I defy you to criticize Dr. W.A. Criswell for taking the lead in constructing a multi-million dollar private school in Dallas, Tex., to preserve racial integrity. Let's see how you treat this dissenting letter.

Donald Nunnery
Liberty, Miss.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Criswell Bible Institute fills the need for the education of ministers who do not qualify for entrance into the seminaries; it has no racial entrance requirements, and was not started to "preserve racial integrity," according to school officials. First Baptist Church of Dallas, sponsor of the institute, has black members.

• Discontinue the HOME MISSIONS magazine to Okolona Baptist and its pastor, as of today. I know believe God loves the Negro and save their soul if called upon. I believe the Negro is happier in his church am happy in mine (white). The Southern Baptist Convention is falling apart because of our leaders leading us contrary to our beliefs and convictions. I had some talking to keep my deacons recommending that we withdraw all SBC literature. If this continues be willing next time to go along them. Next they will be designating money to the Cooperative Program sending direct to missionaries. Our SBC wakes up before it crumple. Now I know why some churches go bankrupt.

Wish we could read about our Jesus more.

Stanley Clements
Tusculum, Ala.

• I would like to commend "Home Missions" as the most relevant and most citing expression of the Christian faith which has come, as far as I have seen from any of our Southern Baptist agencies.

HOME MISSIONS is one of the publications which is not afraid to touch controversial issues, and to point out the hypocrisy which most of us display.

Picking up a phrase which is attributed to T.B. Maston (H.M., Nov.) I say: Why should we not condemn agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention if they consistently place the business perspective and expedite before service and obedience? When is the God of the Christian church on the side of mammon or success? As long as the majority of us do follow the example set by the First Baptist Church of Florida City (Nov. issue H.M., pp. 20ff.), we are "here in the best sense of the word. We are our Lord because we refuse to follow in doing what he did. In such a situation

every confession to the love of God and to the Lordship of Christ and to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit becomes an accusation against us.

Please continue your good work and I wish you God's blessings in your endeavor.

Thorwald Lorenzen
Wake Forest, N.C.

Rally around 'Someone'

Just a note to express our appreciation for the excellent story about the "I Am Someone" ministry of the Chapel. We have received lots of good recognition from this among the Louisville churches and community. We are grateful for your encouragement this article has given the work here. It is something the Long Run Baptists can rally around.

Louell F. Lusson
Louisville, Ky.

• Thank you for the format and scope of HOME MISSIONS. May your tribe increase.

Bob Harvey
St. Louis, Mo.

Milestones

Congratulations on the superb October issue of HM. I have read with interest reports of specific ministries of various churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. But this attempt to share the total ministry of these three congregations surely is a milestone. It made exciting reading.

Charles (Buddy) Dickerson
Louisville, Ky.

• It was an inspiration and a challenge to read the stories of the three ministering churches in the October issue.

All were well-written, and the excellent photographs, captions and informal layout enhanced readability.

I'm pastor of a small but active rural church (about 100 members) in central Kentucky. We welcome into our fellowship believers of all races, and God has been richly blessing us.

We deeply appreciate the prophetic and missionary thrusts of HOME MISSIONS.

L.D. Kennedy
Campbellsville, Ky.

• Thank you for the October, 1973, issue of HOME MISSIONS. I very much like the case history approach. Of course most of us in Texas have been aware of some of the exciting things happening at First Baptist Church, San Antonio, but I doubt if many had any inkling of the tremendous scope of their ministries. Surely God will use this issue to encourage many churches to "reach out" in ways they might not have considered otherwise.

Charles Lee Williamson
Dallas, Tex.

• Many times I have had the urge to write and let you know that I think you are doing a great job with the HOME MISSIONS magazine.

Especially good was the October issue. I have long believed that this is the only way people are going to be reached. The people who need the ministry of the church the most are not going to be found in the worship service at 11:00 o'clock A.M. Sunday.

I feel that day care, after school clubs, tutoring, work with juvenile rehabilitation, work with senior citizens and countless other ministries are the ways in which we will show people we care. These are the areas where they are hurting and need immediate help.

Presenting Jesus as the "Bread of Life" is beautiful, but it has little meaning when physical hunger is not satisfied.

Callie Brown
Tucson, Ariz.

Ideal goals

To give some "feedback" on the articles in September Home Missions. With regard to the Cooperative Program, why not set an "ideal" goal for attaining our present needs. If we miss the mark, we have set a high goal and the attainment in trying to reach higher, might be better than if we had set our goal on a lower level. We must keep in mind that when a program has been working and suddenly it isn't working any more it is not necessarily the program's fault. Positive actions to bring about the necessary changes to correct inadequacies and to meet changing demands are better than too much time spent looking inward at the program itself.

Mrs. Edna Longenecker
Oklahoma City, Okla.

• I never cease to marvel at the excellence of HOME MISSIONS. Each copy is a masterpiece within itself. My prayer is that you keep the good work up!

J. Oscar Lumpkin
Orlando, Fla.

• HOME MISSIONS is terrific! Keep up the good work and remember I appreciate you.

Iva Jewel Tucker
Birmingham, Ala.

• Please accept my thanks for the honest effort you make toward quality and integrity in the publication of HOME MISSIONS. I don't envy your position (I couldn't fill it anyway) but I do give you my support. Keep on doing the best that our denomination will tolerate!

Clyde Northrop
New York, N.Y.

• Thank you for such creative Christian journalism.

Guy Greenfield
West Palm Beach, Fla.

FORECAST

Annual(?) report

The conversation went something like this:

"So who cares?"

"Well, it seems like everybody who's supported home missions should care. I mean, they've given time and money; they ought to care how it's used."

"Okay, but have you ever read an annual report?"

"No, but I don't own stock in any company. If I had money in AT&T, I'd sure want to know how it was doing."

"You figure people have stock in home missions?"

"Sure. They may not think of it that way, but they care about this organization. And I think we have an obligation to inform them about its year—success and failure. A yearly report seems like the best way."

"How are you going to make it different from a regular issue of HM?"

"We could print it on better paper. Use a heavy, colored cover. And design it special—unique."

"What would you include?"

"A report from Dr. Rutledge. A photo essay on the Board, stressing the fact that the Board is people, helping people. Then report on the different programs—evangelism, language missions, Christian social ministries, church extension and so on. About their work in 1973, and prospects for 1974."

"I'd use a lot of photographs, and some art work too."

"Okay, okay. I'm convinced. But it's going to cost more to do this."

"Well, people who've supported home missions all these years deserve it."

"February it is then. Our first ever, first annual, annual report to home missions' shareholders." I hope they read it."

"Or at least look at the pictures."

MARCH-APRIL: HM's coming out in a combined issue in the spring, with a special focus on the Southern Baptist association.



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