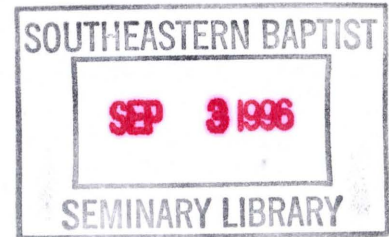


Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Post Office Box 1889 · Wake Forest, NC · 27588-1889

Office of News & Information
Phone (919) 556-3101
Fax (919) 556-0998
CompuServe 71173,2451
Greg Kingry, Director
Dwayne Hastings, News Editor
Norman Miller, *Outlook* Editor



Mission Field Changing For Career Home Missionary

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--A veteran home missionary will be leaving the streets of New Orleans, where she has "put her life on the line," for a lectern in a Wake Forest, N.C. classroom. Carolyn McClendon, a missionary with the Home Mission Board since 1981, has been called to teach at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

In making the announcement, Southeastern president Paige Patterson said McClendon was coming from a challenging ministry at the Baptist Friendship House, a community center near the French Quarter in New Orleans. She spent nearly 20 years at the inner city ministry, that offered programs for children, youth and senior adults including literacy programs, recreation and Bible studies as well as emergency assistance for families in need.

"Not a day went by that she did not see people who were on the edge; this put her frequently in positions of danger. McClendon has a heartfelt burden for the decaying situation in our nation's cities. Her tremendous courage coupled with the zeal of her witness for Christ will make her a tremendous asset to the faculty," said Patterson May 22.

McClendon, who is the first woman appointed to the seminary's faculty under the current administration, will be an instructor in Christian Education. Holding the master of religious education degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, McClendon plans to complete her work on the doctor of education degree from the New Orleans seminary this fall.

She will bring a very special perspective to our Christian education courses, said L. Russ Bush, Southeastern's dean of the faculty. "Too often when we think of children's ministry we fail to go beyond the deacon's kids and the children of the folks already in the church. Her work in urban ministries in New Orleans gives her a much broader view of local church ministries. She will be an advocate for churches reaching out to children and their families in all types of settings."

"She knows that through social ministry you can win people to Christ," Patterson said. "You have the beautiful opportunity that Christianity provides in such ministries to give physical, emotional and spiritual help."

McClendon, whose mission work during the past 10 years included

serving as literacy coordinator at Washington Correctional Institute, Angie, La., sees her move to the classroom at Southeastern as simply a continuation of her service as a missionary.

"My calling came from God not the Home Mission Board," McClendon said. "What I was doing at Baptist Friendship House was a calling from God. It was an appointment that God gave me. It is my desire to teach people how to work with people who are different from them."

"If you are going to meet the needs of people of the world you can't do it inside the four walls of the church. There are many people who will never darken the door of the church building. This is what Jesus teaches us: We must go where the people are; and it is not necessarily those who always smell good, look good or even agree with us that need to hear about Christ," she continued.

McClendon, who also works with the Regional AIDS Interfaith Network in New Orleans as a caregiver to AIDS patients and their families, is determined that her class presentations remain practical: "I don't want to be teaching something that stays inside the classroom or inside of a notebook that is closed and thrown away by the student at the end of the semester. The class material should cause them to reflect on who they are in the kingdom and what Jesus would have them to do."

The Mt. Hermon, La., native said Jesus Christ is the best social worker there ever was: "Social worker, preacher or whoever -- it's simply doing what Christ would do. God has given me a real ability to accept people, not necessarily to agree with them, but to accept them where they are. My love for people, my willingness to be on the cutting edge, to take a risk, drives my interest in social ministries. The bottom line for me is sharing the Gospel."

Bush noted McClendon, who was director of children's ministries at St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, from 1978-1980, is a proponent of a vibrant ministry to young people. "A person who goes into children's ministries can be one of the prime influences on the growth of a church and its ability to reach new families," Bush said.

"It's not the same world it was 20 years ago, so we sometimes have to get beyond the traditional. We need to show in our churches that children are important," McClendon said.

"There is a lot more to working with children than just knowing how to sing 'Father Abraham' or knowing how to tell a story," McClendon continued. "You've got to be real. To be a Christian is not something you can fake because you're going to run out if you are faking it. It's got to be real, it's got to be consistent and it's got to be daily, hour by hour, minute by minute."

--30--

By Dwayne Hastings