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NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Art Toalston, Editor
Fax (615) 782-8736
CompuServe ID # 70420,17

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TENNESSEE--Meetings for the week of Dec. 1-7.

WASHINGTON--United States finally agrees to evacuate at-risk Kurds.

RWANDA--FMB sends \$150,000 to resettle refugees.

NEW MEXICO--Conference centers described as places of renewal, refreshment; photos.

WASHINGTON--Progressive Baptists may give D.C. convention 3-way alignment.

WYOMING--Wyo. Baptists mark 20 years by John Thomason, Charles Crim.

TEXAS--He'll trust Jesus in jail 3 more years than planned.

CALENDAR

Baptist Press will be closed Friday, Nov. 29.

SBC-WIDE--Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions, Dec. 1-8.

TENNESSEE--Southern Baptist Foundation annual meeting, Dec. 3-4, Nashville.

**United States finally agrees
to evacuate at-risk Kurds**

By Erich Bridges

**Baptist Press
11/27/96**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The United States plans to evacuate up to 5,000 endangered Kurdish relief workers and family members -- including hundreds known to Southern Baptists -- from northern Iraq in the near future.

The Kurdish workers, under threat of death from Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, reportedly will be moved across Iraq's northern border into Turkey. From there they will be flown to Guam for processing, then on to the United States for resettlement. The evacuees, employed by more than 20 aid groups, will include 363 workers and family members connected to an international relief agency through which Southern Baptists have aided the Kurds in northern Iraq since the end of the Persian Gulf War.

The evacuation was to have remained secret until it was completed because of concerns that Saddam Hussein or various Kurdish factions might try to prevent it. But news organizations began reporting the plan Nov. 25, and it was confirmed by the U.S. State Department the same day.

"We intend to move forward with the departure from northern Iraq of local employees of U.S.-funded and/or U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations and their family members," a State Department spokesman acknowledged during a press briefing. "We are concerned about the well-being of these people."

That statement represents a major victory for the Western aid workers, who have sought the evacuation of their Kurdish colleagues with increasing desperation.

"I think what you are seeing here is the administration reacting to some rather intense pressure from the (aid) community," a diplomat in Turkey told the Washington Times. "(They) want very much to get their people out, and they have apparently made a convincing argument."

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For three months the Kurdish workers have faced the threat of retaliation from Saddam Hussein because they had worked with U.S. or foreign-sponsored relief groups. At the end of August Saddam sent troops and agents into the region, which was supposedly protected by the United States and its Gulf War allies. The Iraqis were invited by the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), which wanted help fighting a rival faction.

U.S. government personnel based in northern Iraq quickly exited the area, reluctantly followed by most Western relief workers, who had worked there despite Iraqi threats and attempts on their lives. Four Southern Baptists and their children fled the area Sept. 3 after discovering U.S. personnel had left for the Turkish border at dawn.

Within days U.S. forces evacuated Kurdish workers and dependents directly employed by "Operation Provide Comfort," the five-year-old American-led effort to help the Kurds. But they left behind thousands of Kurdish employees, spouses and children connected with Western aid groups. Despite the murder or harassment of a number of Kurdish aid workers by Iraqi forces, U.S. officials claimed most of the workers faced no real threat from Saddam.

The aid groups vehemently disagreed.

The Kurdish workers are "closely identified with the Americans and are considered traitors by Saddam," said Paul Smith, a Southern Baptist from Eufaula, Okla., who worked in northern Iraq until his recent retirement. "We all know very well what Saddam will do with traitors."

Smith and others began an intensive campaign -- first publicly, then behind the scenes -- making repeated trips to Washington to appeal for the Kurdish workers' rescue. The effort gained support at various levels of the government, but faced opposition from Attorney General Janet Reno and FBI officials, who reportedly feared terrorists might enter the United States among the evacuees.

The break came after the presidential election, when word came that President Clinton had approved the evacuation. Reno finally agreed, on the basis of exhaustive security clearance of each Kurd to be evacuated.

Smith and other relief group representatives were summoned back to Washington once again in late November to meet with FBI and immigration officials. "We went through every individual on our list, and talked about them, and had to sign off on every one of them," Smith said.

Smith already has lined up a number of Southern Baptists willing to sponsor the evacuees when they reach the United States.

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**FMB sends \$150,000
to resettle refugees**

By Marty Croll

**Baptist Press
11/27/96**

KIGALI, Rwanda (BP)--While many agencies are clamoring to offer immediate relief to the half-million Rwandans streaming home from refugee camps in Zaire, Southern Baptists will help them start over once they return.

The Foreign Mission Board expects to spend \$150,000 on farming supplies and household goods, plus other needs as they are identified, to help speed the process of rebuilding their lives.

The Rwandans, who fled genocide in 1994 during the country's civil war between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, started moving in masses out of Zaire in late November after the militias that had ruled refugee areas were run out.

"Riding through the mass of people was like going back in time," said Stan Lee, a Foreign Mission Board missionary in Rwanda. "As far as one could see before and behind and to the side, were people -- men, women and children all carrying something on their heads."

The scene reminded him of the 1994 exodus out of Rwanda, when thousands died starving along the road, unable to secure food and water. Only this time the people are only tired from days of trudging -- not faced with death.

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Hundreds of relief agencies are vying to get work started in Rwanda as refugees return. But Lee and several other Foreign Mission Board workers have labored with Rwandans all along -- before and during the latest upheaval -- at their homes in Rwanda, and in refugee camps in Tanzania and Zaire.

Almost since the refugees fled, Baptists have been preparing for their return. Working with the Baptist convention in Rwanda and other Baptist partners from outside the country, they will help refugees re-establish themselves in the communities they left -- starting with virtually nothing.

"People are returning home at an amazing rate," Lee said. "Within a few days everyone will be back in their home communes. Most of them have lost everything they own."

Lee told of coming across many friends among the masses of humanity passing his car. One young father, a Christian leader from Mukoma who was feared dead, greeted Lee. And he had more good news: He was traveling back with one of Baptists' first church musicians, a gifted composer and director of traditional Rwandan Christian songs.

The Foreign Mission Board money will buy seed, tools such as hoes, household goods and food for the short term. Other more specific needs will be determined as local teams survey areas around the Baptist convention's 56 churches, which will serve as distribution points.

Rwanda's next planting season begins in January, so workers consider it urgent to put farming supplies in the hands of returned refugees. They also want to help children re-enter schools as quickly as possible.

The Foreign Mission Board will fund a seminar to train church leaders in helping returned refugees feel at home, relieve their fears and become reinvolved in their communities.

Missionaries have been assessing needs in Rwanda since the end of the war, which killed at least 500,000 people. Local Baptist pastors already have located returned widows and orphans and distributed food supplies, cooking pots, soap and blankets to them. Southern Baptist world hunger money has provided thousands of pounds of powdered milk, sugar, sorghum flour and beans for the Rwandans who stayed.

With Foreign Mission Board money, Baptist workers have also distributed foot-powered sewing machines and provided sewing classes. They also bought goats and, in an effort reminiscent of the Old West, drove them to villages inaccessible by road. And they have set up seminars to teach veterinary medicine to local residents.

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**Conference centers described as
places of renewal, refreshment**

By Linda Lawson

**Baptist Press
11/27/96**

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Describing Glorieta and Ridgecrest Baptist conference centers as "places of regeneration, renewal and refreshment," former Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry pledged his commitment to leading a capital campaign for the conference centers.

Speaking at the first meeting of the 40-member campaign steering committee Nov. 15 at Glorieta, N.M., Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., and chair of the campaign cabinet, said, "God blesses us for us to be able to bless what he's doing."

He told of a dying man who, in addition to tithing through his church, had given to numerous Christian causes. The man reflected with great satisfaction that he had "had a piece" of institutions and organizations to which he had contributed.

"What a privilege to walk through life, get to the end and have a piece of places where spiritual things happen," said Henry, who served as a summer staffer at the Ridgecrest, N.C., center in 1953. "It's an offering to God."

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A day earlier, the 17-member campaign cabinet held its fourth meeting to report on progress in finalizing organization for the campaign. Solicitation of major donors capable of making large contributions will begin in January 1997. The goal of the campaign, "Renewing the Place of Renewal," is to upgrade and add facilities, improve programming and increase scholarships to position the conference centers for ministry into the 21st century.

In addition to Henry as cabinet chair, vice chairs are Glenn Wilcox, chairman of Wilcox Travel in Asheville, N.C., and Fred Roach, president of The Leadership Center of the Baylor Health Care System, Dallas. Prospect review chair is Warren Hultgren, retired pastor of First Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla. Jess Moody, retired pastor and adjunct professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, is awareness chair and Chuck Snyder, vice president of The Maryland Group, a Brentwood, Tenn., public relations agency, is public relations chair.

"Glorieta and Ridgecrest have been more than places," Baptist Sunday School Board President James T. Draper Jr. told the steering committee. "They represent places where people have met God and met each other.

"The strength of Southern Baptists is not in our structure," Draper continued. "We have to have structure, but our strength is our relationships. One of the few places where Southern Baptists can just be Southern Baptists is Glorieta and Ridgecrest."

Draper said his aunt, Ruth Baker, was on the committee of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico which, on faith, purchased the land for Glorieta even before the Southern Baptist Convention had voted to locate a second conference center in New Mexico. He recalled his father stopping the car on the highway by the Glorieta site and telling him that someday Southern Baptists would have a conference center there.

He acknowledged events held at the conference centers could be held at other locations such as hotels.

"But it's not the same," Draper emphasized. "These are sacred grounds. These are grounds that have been prayed over.

"How much is that worth to us?" he asked. "Where else can we find the opportunity for healing, reconciliation, surrender and relationships. I cannot think of anything more important than this."

Mike Arrington, BSSB executive director for corporate affairs, reiterated that the campaign will be targeted to about 1,500 donors with the capacity to make a large gift. No funds will be accepted that otherwise would go to the Cooperative Program. Churches will not be solicited.

Throughout the two days of meetings, cabinet and steering committee members shared testimonies of ways their lives have been impacted by the conference centers.

Greg Horton, president of Sunrise Enterprises Inc. and a Southern Baptist layman from Simpsonville, S.C., said he attended Ridgecrest every summer as a teenager.

"I was a Christian sitting on the back row at Ridgecrest," he said. "If that pew is still there, I know there are fingerprints in that pew where I sat every summer and didn't make a decision I should have."

Horton, who just completed his 13th mission trip to Romania, expressed gratitude that, years later, God has allowed him to be a missionary.

Bill Tanner, retired executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, said his late father-in-law, Kyle Yates, gave him and his wife, Ellen, the money to attend the first conference at Glorieta, Pioneer Week, in 1952. Tanner also has preached at numerous events at both conference centers.

Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss., estimated he has attended 35 events at Glorieta, beginning when he was a west Texas pastor and borrowed a trailer from the local high school coach to take his family to the conference center. His son became a Christian during a Glorieta conference.

In addition to the capital campaign, an awareness effort, "Second the Motion," was launched at the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans. Southern Baptists are being asked to submit testimonies of ways their lives have been impacted by Glorieta and Ridgecrest and second the motion of support and affirmation.

The testimonies will be used as Glorieta and Ridgecrest celebrate their 45th and 90th anniversaries in 1997.

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(BP) photos of participants from individual states will be mailed to the following state Baptist newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press. The states are: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Kansas-Nebraska, Louisiana, Maryland-Delaware, Michigan, Minnesota-Wisconsin, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Northwest, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Utah-Idaho, Virginia. A complete list of conference center campaign cabinet and steering committee members is posted in the SBCNet News Room.

**Progressive Baptists may give
D.C. convention 3-way alignment**

**Baptist Press
11/27/96**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The possibility of adding the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., for a "triplex alignment" of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention was reported to 390 delegates at the DCBC annual meeting, Nov. 18-19 at First Baptist Church, Wheaton, Md.

A three-member ad hoc committee was approved by the convention's executive board at its October meeting to explore the possibility.

Currently, the DCBC is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

The predominantly African American Progressive National Baptist Convention, with headquarters in Washington, was founded in 1961 and now encompasses 1,072 churches nationally.

The DCBC executive board directed the committee's three members be named by outgoing President Mattie Robinson, retired headmistress of the Nannie Helen Burroughs School in Washington, which is affiliated with the Progressive National Baptist Convention.

The committee's chairman will be Joseph Smith, pastor of Tacoma Park Baptist Church, Washington. The other members will be C.J. Malloy, pastor of First Baptist Church, Georgetown, and former executive director of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, and Ruby Shepherd, a member of Calvary Baptist Church, Washington.

No time frame was assigned to the committee; the executive board's next meeting will be in March.

In other action, two new churches were received in affiliated fellowship, bringing the convention's total to 88 churches and 11 missions -- marking the first time that more than half its congregations are predominantly African American.

Delegates approved a \$1,184,098 budget for 1997 which represents less than a 1 percent increase over the current year. However, gifts to the SBC Cooperative Program and to ABC/USA United Missions will increase by 2 percent of budget, for a total of 31 percent of all undesignated monies going to missions. Expected 1997 Cooperative Program receipts should exceed \$163,000.

The increase marks the third consecutive year the convention has increased its mission giving by 2 percent of budget, said Jere Allen, DCBC executive director/minister.

Charles Worthy, pastor of Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church, Washington, was elected president without opposition. Worthy is a former SBC foreign missionary who felt called to serve in D.C. and came to the area before a place to serve opened.

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John Munson, a layman from First Baptist Church, Silver Spring, Md., was elected vice president, also without opposition. Munson serves as ABC/USA election district representative-at-large for the DCBC.

LaTricia Jones, a layperson from Georgetown Baptist Church, was elected to a fourth term as recording secretary.

Among various reports received by delegates, the DCBC Blue Ribbon Crisis Committee awarded five "Operation Koinonia" grants to churches involved in projects for community development and/or economic self-help projects targeting the most economically depressed parts of the Washington area.

Funding for the three-year Operation Koinonia came from the DCBC missions offering, ABC/USA and the SBC Home Mission Board. Several other churches plan to submit applications.

Allen, in his address to the convention, asked, "What are we (DCBC) about?" answering the DCBC is a "family of churches united in reconciliation ministry to the poor, evangelism and prayer." Among other featured speakers: Lloyd Ogilvie, U.S. Senate chaplain, whose message focused on the importance of one-to-one evangelism.

Next year's annual meeting will be Nov. 17-18 at First Baptist Church, Washington.

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Wyo. Baptists mark 20 years
by John Thomason, Charles Crim

Baptist Press
11/27/96

GILLETTE, Wyo. (BP)--John Thomason and Charles Crim of the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention were honored for 20 years of service during the convention's annual meeting, Nov. 13-14 at Antelope Valley Baptist Church, Gillette.

Thomason has been the convention's executive director 14 years, serving the previous six years as director of teaching and training with the former Northern Plains Baptist Convention. Crim has been the convention's director of associational missions 14 years, previously serving in the same post with the Northern Plains convention six years.

Thomason, prior to his convention work, was pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Billings, Mont., from 1968-76. He was president of the Montana Southern Baptist Fellowship in 1971 and chairman of the Northern Plains convention's finance committee from 1974-76.

A native of Phenix City, Ala., Thomason is the author of "Small Sunday School Director's Guide" and recipient of a 1993 distinguished alumnus award from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., where he was pastor of Tower View Baptist Church from 1960-68.

Crim, prior to convention missions work, was pastor of Monroe Avenue Baptist Church, Green River, Wyo., from 1970-76. He was chairman of the former Wyoming Southern Baptist Fellowship from 1973-74; president of the Northern Plains pastors' conference in 1975; and first vice president of the Northern Plains convention in 1976.

The oldest of his three grown children, David, is a pastor in Cheyenne, Wyo. Crim is a native of Henderson, Texas, who was pastor of several churches in Texas from 1955-70.

Messenger registration at the Wyoming annual meeting totaled 94, representing 16,000 Southern Baptists in the convention's 96 churches and missions.

A renewed partnership with Missouri Baptists was approved through the year 2000.

A 1997 budget of \$1,007,000 was adopted, roughly the same as the current year. Of anticipated Cooperative Program giving by the churches of \$340,000, 29 percent will be allocated to Southern Baptist Convention national and international ministries, up a half-percent of budget over the current year.

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Messengers approved resolutions opposing abortion and the late-term partial-birth abortion procedure, gambling and homosexual marriage.

New officers are: president, Edger Bryan, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Powell, elected over William Sirman, pastor of Round Top Baptist Church, Thermopolis, who was then elected first vice president as the lone nominee. Also elected as the only nominees for their offices: second vice president, Lester Fatheree, pastor of First Baptist Church, Kemmerer, and recording secretary, Mary Anne Hart, a member of Antelope Valley church.

Next year's annual meeting will be Nov. 12-13 at College Heights Baptist Church, Casper.

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He'll trust Jesus in jail 3 more years than planned

By Craig Bird

**Baptist Press
11/27/96**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--All they heard was the song. No testimony, no explanation. Just Jeffery Macklin, a prisoner from the Ferguson Unit in the Texas prison system, singing "about a life that was changed."

He stood in the spotlight before 5,000 messengers to the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting, in his all-white convict uniform. He sang, "Thank You for Giving to the Lord," a contemporary Christian hit about a person who is surprised when he arrives in heaven by all the people he unknowingly has had a part in bringing to Christ.

After Macklin sang, the crowd stood en masse and applauded. Not a few cried.

If they had known all the circumstances, tears would have been even more numerous.

Macklin, 30, in prison in Huntsville, Texas, since June 1991, was expecting to be released in December. The judge in his case had reduced his sentence from 40 to 25 years because of his character and work as a minister in the prison. "He even wrote a letter to put in my file about the reasons he was reducing the sentence," Macklin said afterward.

But Macklin was not even called in for an interview before the parole board, and he was given a three-year "set-off," which adds 36 months to the time he must stay in prison.

"I was eligible for release because of good behavior and the time served," he said. "We don't know what happened, but my wife and I are just praying that God's will will be done. Sometimes we don't know why things happen, but we just have to trust Jesus."

He said he was raised in the church by his mother but "walked away" as he grew older.

In October 1990, Houston law enforcement officers arrested him on charges of aggravated robbery. Eight months later, he was found guilty and sent to Ferguson. But even before his trial, he had returned to the faith of his childhood.

"I can remember it so clearly, I was talking to my wife on a pay phone from the jail and it felt like the whole world was on my back. I got to thinking about God, and right there I sincerely and honestly asked Jesus to come into my life and be my Lord and Savior."

Macklin is one of 11 convicts who are allowed to preach in the prison worship services as well as being allowed to travel outside to sing. He has completed 2,500 hours of ministerial training along with four seminary extension courses from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

"My wife, Sabrina, and our three kids (ages 9, 7, and 5) are active at Mount Corinth Missionary Baptist Church in Houston," he added proudly. He had hoped to join them worshipping there by Christmas.

"I'll just keep praising and trusting the Lord," he said. "He's taken good care of me so far."

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