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October 13, 1969

Home Mission Board Names  
 Seven New Missionaries

438

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board here appointed seven new missionaries and accepted the resignation of staff member Bill Amos.

Amos, assistant secretary of the department of Christian social ministries, will become pastor of the Portland Bridge Mission in Louisville, and adjunct professor of weekday programs at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Amos expressed excitement at returning to a local ministry. "I feel that what I have to offer can best be used on the local scene," he said. Portland Mission is a ministry of Crescent Hills Baptist Church, a large urban congregation.

"The pastor, John Claypool, and I want to unwind the over-under concept of a big church and a small mission. We would like to see one church worshipping in two communities. It will be a long struggle but we believe it can happen," Amos added.

A native of Charleston, S.C., Amos joined the board in 1968 as consultant for church community weekday ministries and Baptist centers. He became assistant secretary in March of 1969. Previously he was director of weekday programs at 23rd and Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville. He is a graduate of Carson-Newman College and Southern Seminary.

The board also appointed seven missionary candidates to full-time service. Lyndon Wells Collings will become superintendent of missions in Gary, Ind., and will be assisted by his wife. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Potts will serve under the department of rural-urban missions; Mr. and Mrs. Weldon Stevens were appointed language missionaries to Anadarko, Okla., and Carol Ann Tesseneer now working at the Baptist Good Will Center in Greenville, S.C., has been given missionary status.

Collings, a native of Spence County, Ky., graduated from Georgetown College and Southern Seminary. He has held four pastorates and is presently minister of Halteman Village Baptist Church of Muncie, Ind. He will serve under the department of metropolitan missions as superintendent of the Gary-Hammond area of Northern Indiana.

Potts, a native of Tulsa, Okla., remains as pastor of the First Southern Baptist Church of Trinidad, Colo., but is now a mountain missionary under the department of rural-urban missions. He graduated from Northeastern State College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth. Previously he was a pastor in Parkhill, Okla.

Mrs. Jo Lynn Potts, also a Northeastern graduate, will serve with her husband. Formerly she was a high school teacher in Hurst, Tex.

Stevens was appointed to the Indian Capitol Mission of Anadarko, Okla. A native of Weatherford, Tex., he graduated from Hardin-Simmons University and Southwestern Seminary. He has had three pastorates in Texas and Oklahoma.

Mrs. Velma Jean Stevens, born in Larned, Kan., will assist her husband. A sociology graduate of Hardin-Simmons, she has been a field worker with the Texas Department of Public Welfare and a case worker with the Tarrant County Welfare Department.

Carol Ann Tesseneer will become assistant director of the Good Will Center which she has served since June of 1968. Miss Tesseneer is a native of Shelby, N.C., and graduated from Carson-Newman College and Southern Seminary. She has also been group worker at the Boyce Baptist Center in Louisville.

Camille's Jolt Stirs  
 Relief Fund Discussion

by Dallas Lee

10/13/69

ATLANTA (BP)--Hurricane Camille's Gulf Coast devastation shook loose some new thinking here about the most effective way to administer the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's

575

\$250,000 disaster relief fund.

Many Baptist people locally responded with leadership and compassion after the storm bombed the Mississippi and Louisiana coastlines and flooded parts of Virginia last August.

Denominational resources, however, were stalled by confusion, poor communication and lack of coordination according to T. E. Carter of the Home Mission Board.

"Disasters present an opportunity for Baptists to act out the gospel of Christ in meaningful ways of helpfulness," Carter said. "Time and again Baptists have done just this since Hurricane Camille.

"Yet at the same time one of our greatest problems is that other Baptists will not do anything with anybody except other selected Baptists or Baptist property, and thereby miss one of life's most unique ways of witnessing for Christ through concrete expressions of love, compassion and concern," Carter said.

If the denomination is to be effective in disaster relief work, Carter observed it must minister to any who are in need and must cooperate with others who deal with disasters.

Carter is exploring the possibility of a relationship with the American Red Cross, which would establish the fact of Baptist availability in the time of crisis, provide standing credentials to Baptist officials to enter disaster areas, and possibly even result in a standing assignment for the denomination in times of disaster.

If this works out, Carter said, at least some of the denomination's disaster relief resources will be set in motion by the disaster itself instead of awaiting decisions based on post-disaster communications.

As it stands now, there seems to be some question whether or not Home Mission Board relief action is governed by the state agreements that define other mission actions within state convention territories.

"We should not have to be asked to go into action in a disaster but should have well-developed procedures for keeping informed and for activating the disaster program," Carter said.

"The Red Cross had long recognized the need for cooperation from other organizations in carrying out its responsibilities and seeks to serve as a channel for the generosity of the American people," he added.

The Southern Baptist Executive Committee's administrative committee, which originated the request in 1966 for the disaster fund to be established, is appointing a subcommittee to work with the Home Mission Board to review the policy.

Chairman R. F. Smith of Durham, N.C., agreed with Carter's concern for fast, cooperative response.

"We've got a tremendous organization but we can't seem to get it off the ground when we need it," he said. "We need to be plugged into other disaster agencies and be ready to move. As it is now, we can't do that."

Smith said he did not think the agreements state conventions have with denominational agencies, in which both parties must make decisions on mission activity, were workable for disaster relief.

"We need to respond immediately," he said, "and we need to put people before property."

The \$250,000 fund was used in 1967 to provide about \$50,000 for Baptists in the flooded Fairbanks, Alaska area. Most of the money was used for church buildings, although some went to give relief to the families of Baptist pastors.

Last August, \$5,000 was sent immediately to both the Mississippi and Louisiana Baptist conventions, and more was available on request from the state conventions. Mississippi Baptists later requested and received \$50,000 more.

Virginia Baptists, who had to contend with severe flooding due to Camille, did not request money although the fund was available to them.

The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission and the Home Mission Board mobilized about 100 construction volunteers after the Fairbanks disaster. Volunteers were contacted and put on standby to go into Mississippi and Louisiana, but by mid-October the state conventions had made no decisions to mobilize this resource.

Virginia Baptists Help  
In Flood Cleanup Effort

LOVINGSTON, Va. (BP)--On two successive weekends, volunteer workers from Virginia Baptist churches rolled up their sleeves and went to work, rebuilding homes and churches damaged or almost destroyed by floods caused six weeks earlier by Hurricane Camille. 986

Eighty-one volunteers, on two successive weekends, did the equivalent of what it would take one man, working a regular 40-hour week, 14 weeks to accomplish, said John Gordon, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church here and chairman of the Piedmont Baptist Association's committee for flood relief.

So much damage was done by the floods dumped on Nelson County by Camille's clouds that Gordon said the people aren't sure if they would be able to complete the work of rebuilding by this time next year, even with the help of volunteers.

While Hurricane Camille's devastation of the Mississippi and Louisiana Gulf Coast drew national news coverage informing the nation of the extent of the damage, destruction to the mountainside communities of Virginia is hardly known by the general public, said Gordon.

The damage, caused by an estimated 27 inches of rainfall in a three-hour period turning normally placid mountain streams into raging torrents of mud and water, is just as unbelievable as the scenes pictured from the Mississippi Gulf Coast, though entirely different, Gordon said.

In a report on the extent of the destruction prepared for Baptist Press, Albert Sims, pastor of Rivermont Avenue Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va., about 30 miles southeast of the stricken area, said that estimates indicated that more than 20 billion cubic feet of water fell on the 471 square miles of Nelson County within six hours.

"The earth absorbed all it could and then the water poured down the mountainsides, turning tiny streams into roaring rivers," Sims reported. "The earth gave way from the solid rock mountains beneath and great trees and tons of stones and soil washed into the valleys below with irresistible force." Some of the stones washed down the valleys "like bowling balls" were as big as an office desk, Sims said.

After the resulting floods, 140 persons were listed as dead or missing. The body of one child was found more than 35 miles downstream from home. A part of the roof and a sign from the Roseland, Va., post office was found at the mouth of the James River at Norfolk, 200 miles away.

Hardest hit, reported Sims, a member of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, was the Davis Creek community. Of the 80 persons who lived there, 55 are now gone, including 20 still missing. The community was so thoroughly destroyed that only two possible building sites have been located.

No one is able to say what the total property loss is, Sims added. Estimates range in the neighborhood of \$200 million.

Two Baptist churches in the county were completely destroyed--Rockfish Baptist Church at Rockfish Station, and Massie Memorial Baptist Church, Massie's Mill, Va.

Two other churches badly damaged by the flood, Piney River Baptist Church with an estimated \$3,000 to \$4,000 damage, and the Midway Baptist Church with an estimated \$2,000 to \$3,000 damage, were among the two churches and numerous homes rebuilt by the teams of Baptist volunteers.

Five Baptist pastors of the hardest-hit area of Nelson County estimated that members of the seven churches they serve lost buildings, furnishings, equipment and other property valued at \$1½ million, not including loss of automobiles or farm land ruined by the flood.

The loss to Baptist churches was not so much in property, but in terms of people, Sims said. The Oak Hill Baptist Church building at the mouth of the valley was not damaged, but 18 church members were drowned along with many children and others who often attended.

The caretaker of the Piney River church walked home from his nighttime job at a nearby manufacturing plant (the road was impassable and his car flooded) to find his house, his wife and his children gone.

He later learned that they had elected to stay in the house, had climbed to the attic with a flashlight and a Bible, and then had "ridden" the house on the flood waters for a quarter-mile. When the house came to a rest, they climbed into a tree and clung to it for six hours while the house collapsed.

When the caretaker found his family, he declared: "My house and furniture and automobiles are all gone; by I'm a millionaire--my wife and child are safe!"

Another nighttime worker in the valley came home and found his home and family washed away. Searching for some trace of them, he found three miles down the creek where his house had stood, a picture of his wife and baby lying face up in the mud.

Not far away, the pastor of the Jonesboro Baptist Church, Hugh Boyd, said that 12 families of his church lost their houses entirely, 37 other families suffered serious property losses at their homes, and 10 members of the church were drowned, along with many other people who looked to the church for spiritual nurture.

The Jonesboro church is near the little village of Massie's Mill, Va., where only three of the community's 30 buildings escaped almost complete destruction including the Presbyterian church. More than one of every six residents was drowned.

The pastors themselves often suffered serious property damage. Wilson Crady, pastor of the Piney River church, estimated his property damage at \$3,000. Over at Glasgow, Va., the Baptist parsonage was flooded to a depth of 2½ feet. Gene Campbell, the new pastor, and his wife had just moved in the day before the flood. They escaped safely.

Throughout the area, church buildings that were not damaged often were used to feed survivors and serve as distribution centers for truckloads of clothing and furniture which began to pour in.

Volunteers, such as the ones from seven churches of the Fredericksburg Baptist Association, and from Bellwood Baptist Church in Richmond, have helped with rebuilding homes of people in the community and churches.

Baptist Student Union members from colleges and universities in Virginia have also volunteered to work in the rebuilding effort, said Gordon.

Their efforts are invaluable, for there are no workers available in the county to be employed to rebuild homes or churches, Gordon added.

Meanwhile, the two churches completely destroyed have not yet decided to rebuild. The few people left from the Rockfish Baptist congregation have decided to wait perhaps a year to decide whether to reconstruct their building, Sims said.

Many Virginia Baptist churches have held special offerings for the flood victims, and to date, about \$18,000 has been contributed, Gordon said. He added that money from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's disaster relief fund had not been requested because they had not yet been able to determine needs for it.

One unidentified pastor quoted by Sims said that "a lot of our churches are not going to apply for help."

The pastor added that "we have lost eight families that have moved away, besides two families nearly wiped out. We know that our gifts from these amounted to around a thousand dollars last year, and our budget was around \$13,000. We have adopted the same budget for this next year. I don't know how we can make it, but we're going to try," the pastor said.

The work of the volunteers, enlisted by the department of Baptist men for the Virginia Baptist General Association, is making the funds go much further than they otherwise would, Sims added.

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--by Jim Newton

#### C O R R E C T I O N

On BP story mailed 10-10-69, headlined "Criswell Observes 25th Anniversary As Pastor," one key word was omitted in graph 18 of story (2nd graph, page 2). Please make 2nd sentence this graph read: "It would not be a pious assembly of people who just sit down." Leaving out word "not" reverses the meaning.

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On Bp story mailed 10-9-69, headlined "SBC Stewardship Commission To Lead Kansas Fund Campaign," please change the lead paragraph by eliminating the figure \$1½ million so that sentence reads: "The Executive Board of the Kansas Convention of Southern Baptists approved a proposal here that the Stewardship Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention be requested to lead the financially-troubled convention in a major fund campaign!" (Use word "major" instead of the amount.) The board did not approve the amount of the campaign.

--Baptist Press