



## BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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January 13, 1970

### Baptists Pledge Aid As Biafra Surrenders

**RICHMOND (BP)**--As the war-torn Biafran section of Nigeria fell to federal troops, H. Cornell Goerner, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board secretary for Africa, announced that Baptists expect to play a vital role in the massive relief and reconstruction program which will be necessary in the devastated areas.

"It is impossible to estimate the amount of money that will be called for in the relief project which should be put underway just as soon as conditions permit," Goerner said.

"Relief money sent to the Foreign Mission Board will be channeled through the Nigerian Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries) to help ensure that the hungry will be fed and the needy clothed and that the homeless will soon be able to sleep under a roof," he said.

A relief team of four missionaries of the Nigerian Baptist Mission has been stationed at Port Harcourt for several months. They have assisted in feeding the hungry and helping to rehabilitate uprooted families.

Other Baptist missionaries have conducted relief operations in the Enugu and Benin City areas.

Approximately \$1,000 per month has been required in both areas, and the missionaries in Port Harcourt recently requested \$5,000 per month. However, Goerner expects that needs will escalate as refugees who had fled return to their homes.

He estimates that at least \$10,000 per month will be needed for the first half of 1970 to meet the needs of Baptists directly involved in relief work.

Goerner expects that other missionaries will now join those already actively engaged in relief operations. No Southern Baptist missionaries are directly involved at present in the distribution of food and drugs on the Biafran side of the battle line.

Until shortly before the capture of the Uli airstrip, Missionary J. Bryant Durham, working in cooperation with other church-connected agencies, was assisting with the distribution of food and medicine not far from the airstrip.

When it appeared that this source of supply would be cut off, Durham flew out with other relief workers. He is expected to be reunited shortly with his family in Rome, Ga.

Baptist churches close to the battle zone on both sides of the conflict have often held services within sound of gunfire. Groups driven from their homes by the fighting have gathered in new localities to hold Bible study and worship services in temporary quarters.

"Reconciliation and reestablishment of unity and cooperation must be achieved," said Goerner, "if Nigeria is to take her place of leadership once again among the free nations of Africa.

"It is our hope that the Nigerian Baptist Convention will be a means of spreading peace, good will and the gospel of Christ throughout the vast nation."

More than 215 Southern Baptist missionaries are under appointment for service in Nigeria, a country with a population of more than 61 million. There are about 80,000 Baptists in Nigeria, according to statistical reports from the Baptist World Alliance.

Currently, about 150 Southern Baptist missionaries are in Nigeria, which has been granting visas to medical personnel but not to general missionaries for several months prior to the surrender of Biafra. Missionaries who have been out of Nigeria for more than one year (except medical personnel) have been denied re-entry visas to Nigeria. It is not known what the end of the war will do to visa policies.

Graham To Help Launch  
New Oklahoma Agency

OKLAHOMA CITY, (BP)--Evangelist Billy Graham will help launch a new ecumenical agency formed by Baptist, Catholic, and Protestant leaders here in order to provide an interdenominational cooperative ministry to meet human needs in the city.

Graham was invited to speak at a rally here Feb. 3 to kick off the Agency for Christian Cooperative Ministry by a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Herschel H. Hobbs, pastor of the First Baptist Church here.

Hobbs, a member of the steering committee for the interdenominational agency, said that the major purpose of the rally was to install the executive board of directors for the agency, after which the organization will become incorporated.

Hobbs said that the steering committee, in issuing the invitation to Graham, left Graham free to speak on any subject, but did request he relate the message to "this sort of cooperation between Christians."

Earlier, in an interview, Hobbs had said that the new agency was not a council of churches, but would sponsor community projects involving churches and individuals participating on a voluntary basis.

"This approach won't compromise our (Baptist) churches," Hobbs said. "None of these projects will involve the matter of doctrinal belief. It is an open way for Baptists to cooperate where we have a mutual concern for community needs."

A telephone poll conducted by the Baptist Messenger, Baptist state paper in Oklahoma, disclosed however that only one Southern Baptist church in Oklahoma City had joined the new agency, and it was the First Baptist Church where Hobbs is pastor.

In a press conference here to outline plans for the rally when Graham will speak launching the agency, three Oklahoma City ministers gave a summary of steps leading to formation of the agency. The three included Hobbs, a Catholic priest, and a Christian church minister.

Plans call for the rally to meet at the 12,000-seat State Fair Arena, with arrangements being made for an overflow crowd into adjacent auditoriums. Graham has not spoken in Oklahoma City since conducting a crusade here in 1956.

One of the ministers, Ken Forshee of Highland Hills Christian Church, said that the main innovation of the new program would be "its great flexibility and selective participation, plus the fact that its program would be focused on the needs of the city and not on the organization itself."

Another minister said in the press conference that all-encompassing ministry is anticipated for the entire city, with more than a score of projects already proposed. Such projects include a nursing home ministry, a program for prisoners, a ministry to young people, a child development center, and a more coordinated radio ministry.

Hobbs said that the agency envisions "a more effective evangelism ministry with an impact over all the city." Hobbs added that new ideas for the agency had been presented to him almost daily since news of the cooperative ministry was first announced.

Persons from a variety of denominations attended an informational meeting last October, including those from Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, Nazarene, Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Mennonite, Friends, National and Southern Baptist churches. Persons from five Southern Baptist churches attended that meeting, but only one church has since joined the agency.

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Bisagno Called To Houston

1/13/70

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--John R. Bisagno, pastor of the First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., which has led the Southern Baptist Convention in the number of baptisms for the past two years, has resigned to accept the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Houston.

Effective February 15, Bisagno will begin work with the 3,700 member Houston church. During nearly five years here, the Del City church has increased from about 1,600 members to more than 4,000 members and is building what is reported to be the largest church auditorium in the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Adult Sunday School Editor  
Named at Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)--Wallace H. Carrier, formerly pastor of Harrodsburg (Ky.) Baptist Church, has been named editor of adult materials in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday School department.

Carrier, a native of Tennessee, is a graduate of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

He has also served as pastor of the First Baptist Churches of Rockwood, Tenn., and Hartsville, Tenn.

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Padgett Named Consultant  
In Children's Sunday School

1/13/70

NASHVILLE (BP)--Dan Padgett, formerly minister of education for Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla., has been named consultant in the preschool and children's section of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday School department.

Padgett, a native of Florida, is a graduate of Florida State University, Tallahassee, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

He served the Florida Baptist Convention, Jacksonville, as associate in its Training Union department, 1965-67 and was pastor of Thomasville Road Baptist Church, Tallahassee, 1958-65.

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Lee Takes Leave To  
Write Jordan Bio

ATLANTA (BP)--Dallas M. Lee, associate editor of Home Missions Magazine and news director for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, has taken a five month leave of absence without pay to research and write a book on the story of the Koinonia Farms in Americus, Ga., and its founder, the late Clarence Jordan.

Jordan was the controversial Baptist preacher and Greek New Testament scholar who founded the interracial community patterned after Jordan's concepts of Christian fellowship and service. Jordan died in October.

Lee had been a close friend of Jordan's and was chairman of the board for Koinonia Partners, a new organization founded by Jordan shortly before his death. The book will be published by Koinonia Partners and marketed as one of its products.

While writing the book, Lee will live in the small house at Koinonia Farms once occupied by Jordan.

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Texas Woman Named To  
Kentucky WMU Position

1/13/70

LOUISVILLE (BP)--Miss Mary Kathryn Jasper, admissions counselor for Houston Baptist College in Texas, has been named the new executive secretary of the Woman's Missionary Union of Kentucky, effective in September, 1970.

Miss Jasper will assume the post upon the retirement of Mrs. George R. Ferguson in October.

A native of Somerset, Ky., Miss Jasper previously was Baptist Student Union director at Eastern College, Richmond, Ky., and at Mississippi State College for Women, Columbus, Miss.; youth director for First Baptist Church, Owensboro, Ky.; city-wide Baptist Student Union director in Jackson, Miss.; and director of activities and admissions, Memorial Baptist Hospital School of Nursing, Houston.

She is a graduate of Eastern College, and the Woman's Missionary Union Training School, (now merged with Southern Seminary), Louisville.

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