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August 24, 1970

**Seminary Students Sing
While Cleaning Up Flood**

by Martha Hairston
Southern Baptist Missionary to Brazil

RECIFE, Brazil (BP)--We could hear them harmonizing the school song, "Happiness in His Service," as they trooped down the street toward the campus. Spattered with clay from head to foot, they were swinging mud-covered dustpans and buckets.

Under normal circumstances, local customs would discourage the young girls from getting on a public bus with so much as an oversize package, but circumstances were not normal.

The Capibaribe River, which courses through the city of Recife, had overflowed its banks, driving hundreds of families to refuge in the early hours of the previous day.

The girls, known as "SECistas" because they are students at the Seminary for Christian Educators (SEC) here, had gone out early on the day after the flood with the equipment they needed to rebuild the adobe walls of Senhor Antonio Evangelista's house.

Senhor Antonio, handyman for the seminary kitchen and dining room, had been hospitalized for more than a month when the flood swept through, leaving only the skeletal remains of his house. His wife and 11 children got out safely, but they had to leave most of their possessions behind.

Now the SECistas returned, wearing the tags they had quickly lettered and pinned to their blouses that morning to guarantee admittance on city buses with all their equipment. The muddied tags said "Operation Cleanup."

That afternoon my missionary colleague, Doris Penkert, and I were able to reach the flooded houses of two seminary professors, missionaries Ray Fleet and Barbara Brock. At each house we left two SECistas with equipment for cleaning up.

The water had receded, leaving a thick blanket of sticky mud. As Mrs. Brock waded across her porch and unlocked the front door, we saw that the current had forced open the windows and overturned even the piano and refrigerator.

Next morning I drove to the Evangelical hospital, where water had stood five feet deep on the ground floor. I asked the house director and supervisor of nurses if the SECistas might help.

Pointing to the mud-coated floors and furnishings, they answered, "this is what we have to do!"

Soldiers had already raked out the deepest mud. The cleanup would begin around noon if repairs on the water system were completed by then.

The first two carloads of volunteers arrived at the hospital around noon. The rest of that day and the next our students raked out mud, forced open jammed doors, scrubbed floors and walls, washed and replaced furniture.

Starting in the operating room, they ended their work the next evening in the chapel and morgue. Patients were being returned from another hospital to which they had been evacuated in ambulances, boats and cars.

As the last students left, the nursing supervisor--she had worked almost around the clock--stopped me to reiterate what our 36 volunteers had done during those two days. "Your girls are fantastic!" she said.

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Harnish, a past president of the American Baptist Convention, spoke during Home Missions Week at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly here, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

He said youth are calling for a new spirit in interdenominational relationships. "They are concerned that the body of Jesus Christ, the Church, be the leaven and the lump of society, but they don't see that in us too often."

Harnish, who characterizes himself as a conservative evangelical, said youth are not caught up in the present church union movement, because they look beyond it. Harnish is serving on the American Baptist Convention's church union committee, but said he does not favor the Consultation on Church Union (COCU).

Earlier in his message, Harnish expressed concerns that the youth revolution in America is in the process of devaluation.

"It started out on the high, altruistic level of brotherhood, but is slipping to elitism, a 'we're in, you're out,' attitude," he observed.

"There is also a slip from idealism to nihilism, from courage to terror, from sacrifice to suicide," he said.

Harnish warned that there is a danger that the current student power movement could degenerate further and create a situation similar to the youth support that put Hitler into office in Nazi Germany.

With the coming of giving the right to vote to young people, "the youth movement will be a decisive factor in the politics of the country, which those of us over 21 have had all our own," he observed.

Harnish said he sees a shift in the balance of power between youth and older people, and this, added to the absence of values "brings young people to anger, frustration and to rebellion."

There is developing a "universal youth culture," because "students have an instant feel for each other, the world over. They are sensitized to hot issues as never before," Harnish said.

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Henley Named Top Press Aide
To President's New Committee

8/24/70

WASHINGTON (BP)--Wallace Henley, former religion editor for the Birmingham News, has been appointed as the top press man for President Nixon's new Cabinet Committee on Education.

Henley, a Southern Baptist, will be a key person in working with the seven state advisory committees President Nixon has organized to smoothe out desegregation problems in the deep South.

A graduate of Samford University in Birmingham, Henley also did graduate work at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. During his student days in Fort Worth he was minister of youth at Travis Avenue Baptist Church.

Prior to joining the Birmingham News as religion editor and an editorial writer, Henley was director of public relations and student recruitment for Mobile College (Baptist), Mobile, Ala.

As assistant director for the President's Cabinet Committee on Education, Henley will be responsible for all press relations, information service and public affairs for the committee. The assignment will cover liaison with newly-formed education committees in North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi and Louisiana.

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One of Recife's most popular television reporters saw the SECistas at work and began taking pictures. He had met them a year earlier when the seminary handbell choir and chorus were featured on a TV program. A few weeks later they had played and sung for his wedding. At the hospital he was impressed to see the bell ringers wielding mops and scrub brushes.

That night it was pouring rain as our car headed for the campus. Someone on the back seat said, "We are tired, but it was worth it." Then she and her companions did what is most typical of the SECistas: They burst out singing.

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EDITOR: Martha Hairston has been a Southern Baptist Missionary to Brazil since 1951 and Director of the Seminary for Christian Educators, a Baptist seminary for women, since 1953. She is a native of Warren, Ark.

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Corpus Christi Baptist Leader
Expresses Thanks for Celia Aid

8/24/70

WACO, Tex. (BP)--The superintendent of missions for the Corpus Christi Baptist Association, William H. Colson, wept as he thanked Baptists for aiding the people of his area ravaged by the winds of Hurricane Celia.

Speaking to the annual Woman's Missionary Union House Party, a statewide gathering of Baptist women in Texas, Colson referred to the state convention's efforts at raising \$150,000 for disaster relief, mostly through special offerings in Texas Baptist churches.

"Our city is torn all to pieces, but you're sending us \$150,000 to help rebuild churches and homes," he said.

Colson told the women that more than 20,000 people in his area have no homes. "You don't know what it is like. Eleven (Baptist) churches met Sunday following the hurricane without auditoriums," he said.

Two weeks after the hurricane hit, relief contributions had passed the \$70,000 mark and "are really just starting to come in," according to R. A. Springer, treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Another Texas Baptist official who is coordinating the relief effort, Charles McLaughlin who heads the convention's State Missions Commission, unveiled a new missions thrust aimed at Texas' 23 metropolitan areas, and said the new program has already started in Corpus Christi as a result of Hurricane Celia.

McLaughlin told the Baptist women that three years of emphasis on the convention's Rio Grande River Ministry have resulted in "innovations that would equip us for a missions thrust in the great population centers" in Texas.

McLaughlin said population studies show that 80 per cent of the Texas population will be in 23 metropolitan areas in the next few years, and observed that the challenge to Christians is to reach the masses in the huge, impersonal cities with the gospel.

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Conservative Churches Said
Pushed By Student Discontent

8/24/70

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Today's Christian student pushes a strong tide of discontent against the evangelical, conservative church, an American Baptist educator told Southern Baptist home missions workers here.

J. Lester Harnish of Philadelphia, said that active, concerned students of Christian colleges are calling churches to end racial discrimination, to be more active in political affairs, to be more concerned on war and peace, to be flexible in program and to use their large resources for others.

"I hear students calling churches to stop building buildings and put their resources in the programs that will meet the needs of people, and they say the first need is evangelism, to meet eternal needs, but almost equally as strong, to meet social needs," he said.

The president of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and College in Philadelphia also said young people want to have a part in the decision making process. "They want in, and they are making demands," he said.

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