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Devaluation Elicits
Executive's Concern

RICHMOND (BP)--The announcement of U.S. dollar devaluation immediately presents serious financial problems for missionaries overseas, members of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board were told here by their executive secretary.

Reporting to the board, Baker J. Cauthen emphasized that "as American citizens we support the steps which have been taken to meet the financial crisis. However," he said, "severe financial pressures on missionaries as a result of those steps lay before Southern Baptists the challenge to reinforce the cause of foreign missions."

Cauthen said that with an overseas budget of approximately \$35 million, a possible loss in buying power of more than 3 million dollars could result from dollar devaluation.

He explained that the amount of local currency exchanged for dollars in many foreign lands will be immediately reduced by 10 per cent. In other words, the cost of all the goods and services purchased by missionaries in those countries will rise by 10 per cent because they have less currency to use.

He added that, if continued, the current inflationary spiral being experienced in many parts of the world will compound the problem.

"We are fully confident that Southern Baptists will respond to this situation, Cauthen said, "through intercessory prayer, increased giving through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, and deeper determination to press forward in a worldwide task."

Cauthen assured board members that "very careful administrative measures will be taken to meet future realities," and that all aspects will be scrutinized to "give full consideration to situations which must have emergency attention."

He reminded board members that there had been calls for 800 new missionaries in 75 foreign fields and an upsurge in mission volunteers.

Previously he had reported a projected increase in missionary appointments for 1973 with expectations of processing well over 200 missionary candidates. "These anticipated appointments will require additional resources at a time in world history when advance in foreign missions is so urgently necessary," he added.

Dollar devaluation was President Nixon's second attempt to quell an international monetary crisis. The last such move, 14 months ago, prompted the SBC Foreign Mission Board to make extensive adjustments in missionary support.

Continuing his February report to the board, Cauthen told of the trip he and his wife took in late January to India, Iran and Bangladesh.

Board members elected to missionary service Mrs. Charles P. Cowherd and reappointed her husband who has 26 years' tenure as a Southern Baptist Missionary. The Cowherds, currently of Louisville, Ky., expect to be assigned to Hong Kong.

In other actions, the board extended an invitation to Ernest Loessner of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, to serve for one year as professor at Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary following his retirement in Louisville next summer.

Baptist Work Secure
In Most of Vietnam

RICHMOND (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries report that the Vietnam cease-fire has stabilized security in most areas where they work, but that Communist violations of truce terms have directly threatened at least one Baptist congregation.

James F. Humphries, missionary associate, says that on the morning the cease-fire was to become effective, Ai Lien Baptist Chapel near Bien Hoa was taken over by the Viet Cong.

Bien Hoa is approximately 20 miles northeast of Saigon in the Southern part of South Vietnam.

The congregation felt that at last, without fear, they could gather in fellowship and love, and they gathered to offer prayers of thanks for a long-awaited peace, Humphries continues. Their peace did not last long if, indeed, it began at all.

Three hours after the 8 a.m. cease-fire, lay pastor Dinh Ngoc Chau, his wife, their seven children, and a group of new converts were startled by Viet Cong soldiers who surrounded the chapel.

The troops ordered the South Vietnamese flag lowered, and in its place the Viet Cong flag raised.

The commander of the VC told the congregation, "We are the new peace team for this area. We have come to live with the people. You will stay here and not leave. From now on you obey us."

The "peace team" blew up the bridge behind them as they left to claim other areas for the VC, hoping to prevent the people from escaping, Humphries says.

Despite threats and orders not to leave, the little group of Christians made their way over rough terrain to South Vietnamese soldiers on a nearby hillside. Once again they had become refugees of war in their country--when war had supposedly ended.

At last report, Humphries says, lay pastor Chau and the pastor of his mother church were on their way back to Ai Lien to see if the VC had vacated the area.

"The chapel was started by the Faith Baptist Church of Gia Dinh near Saigon during a time of war," Humphries reflects. "The question now in the minds of the people is, will it survive the peace?"

While Humphries was reporting that the members of Ai Lien were trying to return to their chapel, Lewis Myers of Danang, in the other extreme of Vietnam was reporting optimism about peace.

"The cease-fire is beginning to take hold in almost every province. Inspection teams are on the spot now. We will just trust the Lord and wait and see," Myers says. "One thing for sure is that we will have two or three months of spreading the gospel to many areas where we have not been before."

Myers relates that the cease-fire has already allowed him to travel to two villages in Quang Tin Province. His first stop was at a village just south of Danang.

"We have had no witness there, but about a year ago I went for a one-shot Bible study with relatives and friends of Danang Christians. We left them with gospels of John thinking we would return in a few weeks."

When recent conditions finally made it possible for Myers to return, 20 family heads there told him: "We have already believed; help us grow."

On the same day, Myers continues, he had the opportunity to visit a village at the invitation of its chief and to meet with 500 of its residents. The chief had been exposed to the gospel at Love Baptist Church in Danang.

"We praise God for these new openings," Myers concluded.