

Nov mber ¹⁴24, 1974

Banglad sh--'Land of Death
Needs to Know God of Life'

By James F. McKinley Jr.

74-81

DACCA, Bangladesh (BP)--I often find myself dreaming for Bangladesh. My dreams call for a day when her people will be free in every way--especially free enough to enjoy good food and to have the privilege of knowing Christ.

I don't expect those days to come easily, but I think they are quite possible. Some Bengalis will die of starvation without even hearing of Christ, but some will hear and receive, then die.

That is why we missionaries are here--to give food, food for the body and food for the soul. Both are essential. We are here so that those who receive and live can live to share.

Recent floods destroyed one harvest and delayed planting another until the season was too late in some areas.

Today the greatest difficulty is food for the more than 75 million people (15 million lost everything they owned in the floods). It is almost impossible, for example, to buy feed for chickens, because chicken feed can also be used for human food.

Cattle get only leftovers--which isn't much--and grass by the roadsides. There is no such thing as pasture land. Land is used to grow rice or other food for human consumption. Wasteland is a thing of the past. Land means life, if there is money to buy seed and fertilizer or if there is money to pay the price for fuel for irrigation.

But the people of Bangladesh are tough. How tough, this time of trouble will tell. Most of them have a will to live. They will not give up easily. They know well the difficulties of life because they have faced them all before.

Three million of their people died in a bloody civil war in 1971 that left 20 million refugees--10 million here and 10 million in India.

For some this is the fourth time their homes have been destroyed in the last four years. It began with a tidal wave in 1970 that killed 500,000. It happened again at the beginning of the civil war.

Some of the refugees returned home and rebuilt during the war, to see their homes destroyed a third time. Now a flood has put two-thirds of the nation under water, destroying some homes for the fourth time.

So, we live in a new era. We live in a new nation, a nation beset with problems that some times seem too great to overcome.

In the midst of these times, as we see people suffer and often find ourselves unable to help, we long for them to know the God of life.

May one Christian mean another Christian and may one church mean another church. All people have a right to have the opportunity of knowing Christ. I cannot help but feel that people who have known little other than suffering have an added right to know Him.

-30-

James F. McKinley Jr. is a Southern Baptist missionary, stationed in Dacca, Bangladesh.

(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2855
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

November 14, 1974

**Georgians Kill Attempt to
Rap Index Over Editorials**

74-81

MACON, Ga. (BP)--One of its "most harmonious" annual meetings in years, according to observers, saw the Georgia Baptist Convention uphold "freedom of discussion" rather than honor an attempt to censure its news publication, The Christian Index, for recent editorials on bus ministry.

The weekly publication in recent months has run editorials warning Baptists about excesses and gimmicks and excessively-young converts through the bus ministry. James F. Tisdell, the pastor of Pine Forest Baptist Church in Macon, asked the Georgia convention to censure the Index.

But the motion was referred by registered "messengers" to the resolutions committee, which, the next day, asked the convention to resolve that "each church is free to pursue this or any form of witness under the leadership of the Holy Spirit" and to urge convention agencies to "strengthen this and all other means toward effective evangelism."

The resolutions report also stressed that "freedom of discussion on the part of any concerned Christian in relation to this or any other method of evangelism should be supported. Only through free and open exchange can methods be examined and kept in harmony with the spirit of Christ's message."

Tisdell challenged the report and debate ensued. But the resolutions committee report was adopted by an overwhelming majority of messengers, observers reported.

The only other item of controversy, observers said, involved a motion that a committee be appointed to study the biblical posture on the charismatic movement (a term often used in reference to the use of glossolalia--or speaking in tongues--and certain other so-called "spiritual gifts") and report back to the Georgia convention in 1975.

After brief but "spirited" debate about the convention's right to deal with doctrinal questions, the motion was tabled.

In other activity, a two-hour multi-media presentation commemorated the 20th anniversary of Searcy S. Garrison as executive secretary-treasurer of the Georgia Baptist Convention. He and his wife were given an engraved plaque.

The celebration of Garrison's anniversary emphasized Georgia Baptist commitment to the Cooperative Program, the basic unified budget of Southern Baptists.

Georgia Baptists' observance of the 50th anniversary of the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program was launched when Garrison and other Georgia leaders signed a Declaration of Cooperation to the Cooperative Program. They called on Georgia Baptists to increase average local church gifts to the Cooperative Program to 15 percent by 1976. Current average for Georgia churches is 7.6 percent.

The Georgia convention also approved a 1975 Cooperative Program budget of \$7,475,000, an increase of 5.7 percent over 1974. After deduction of 10 percent in shared promotion and administration costs, all receipts will be divided equally between Georgia Baptists and national Southern Baptist causes.

In other action, the Georgia "messengers" elected James W. Waters, pastor of Mabel White Memorial Baptist Church in Macon, as convention president.

In a pre-convention meeting in Macon, the Georgia executive committee voted to establish a disaster relief ministry as part of the convention's state missions program. Garrison explained that it would involve having funds, trained personnel and other resources organized and on call to minister in case of any major natural disaster.

-more-

The committee voted to begin the ministry with \$50,000 from the 1975 Georgia Baptist State Missions Offering.

The 1975 meeting will be held November 10-12 at Municipal Auditorium, Columbus, Ga.

-30-

Hawaii Baptists Meet
In "Spirit of Aloha"

11/14/74

LAHAINA, Hawaii (BP)--The 32nd annual Hawaii Baptist Convention meeting here at the Maui Surf Hotel adopted a record \$398,785 budget.

The 43-church, 10,664-member convention of Southern Baptists, meeting in what observers called a "spirit of aloha," also elected James Baggett, pastor of First Baptist Church, Waipahu, as president, succeeding Allen Au, a layman from Honolulu.

Of the \$398,785 budget, \$144,000 is anticipated from Hawaii Baptist churches through the state's Cooperative Program unified budget. The remainder comes from supplements from such sources as the SBC Home Mission and Sunday School Boards. Twenty-five percent of the state Cooperative Program figure will go for world missions through the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program.

Registered "messengers" heard a report that the SBC Foreign Mission Board will phase out all financial support of Hawaii projects at the end of this year and all missionary personnel, now "on loan," by the end of 1975.

In 1960, the Foreign Mission Board turned over its administrative responsibilities in Hawaii to the state convention, in recognition that it was an integral part of the United States. Over the past 15 years the board has gradually phased out financial support and missionary personnel.

Currently, seven missionaries are still on loan. Six will be reassigned and one, Miss Bertie Lee Kendrick, a missionary in Hawaii since 1945, will retire. The convention recognized her for 29 years service in Maui mission work.

Hawaii Baptists' executive secretary-treasurer, Edmond Walker, called attention to the reorganization of convention program assignments and personnel adopted by the state convention's executive board last October.

Other reports indicated that enrollment in Sunday School and Woman's Missionary Union, which had been declining for several years, showed substantial increases.

Clyde Martin, pastor of Olivet Baptist Church, Honolulu, in the closing session, challenged Hawaii Baptists to win the islands to Christ now.

"We've already built a foundation that will hold the largest structure in the state. If you're going to build a chicken coop on that foundation, God help you," he exclaimed.

-30-

Maryland Baptists Adopt
Budget; Vote for Skycroft

11/14/74

GLEN BURNIE, Md. (BP)--The Baptist Convention of Maryland adopted a \$1.5 million budget at its 139th annual session in this Baltimore suburb and registered a 40 percent attendance increase over last year's meeting.

Some 1,122 registered "messengers" voted 261-90 to construct Skycroft, a proposed convention facility for conferences, retreats and camping, which would cost about \$600,000.

Messengers also granted approval to borrow up to \$500,000 for the facility, although that amount, observers reported, would be lessened by a statewide fund raising campaign, conducted by the Southern Baptist Convention's Stewardship Commission, which has raised \$270,000 to date.

-more-

The facility will be scheduled to begin as soon as possible, although it may be delayed, a spokesman said, because of concern over the nation's economy.

The record budget includes \$1.15 million anticipated in Cooperative Program unified budget receipts from Maryland churches, with 40 percent of that amount going to world missions through the SBC's national Cooperative Program.

Charles Casey, a pastor in suburban Washington, was elected convention president, and one of two vice presidents elected was Mrs. Cecil Anderson, wife of the pastor of First Mill Baptist Church in suburban Washington.

The convention celebrated the 125th anniversary of its statewide Baptist newspaper and recognized the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Cooperative Program by signing a Declaration of Cooperation.

Next year's convention is set Nov. 10-12, 1975, at First Baptist Church, Frederick, Md.

-30-

Virginia Baptists Avoid Controversy Over Schools

11/14/74

ROANOKE, Va. (BP)--Expected controversy over the status of two Virginia Baptist colleges failed to materialize here as the statewide Baptist General Association of Virginia completed its 151st annual session.

Registered "messengers" to the three-day meeting set a record budget of \$6.1 million and elected Joseph Smiddy, chancellor of Clinch Valley Community College, as president.

Thirty-eight percent of budget receipts from Virginia Baptist churches will go to worldwide missions through the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program.

Messengers accepted an earlier action of the state convention's general board to refer the controversy over charter changes at Virginia Intermont and Averett Colleges to the board's executive committee for study. The committee will make a special report in April.

Earlier in the year, trustees of the two Baptist schools changed their charters to qualify as technically "non sectarian" so their students could receive state tuition grants.

Changes included elimination of Baptist church membership as a requirement for the office of trustee and reduction of the number of trustees nominated by Virginia Baptists. The changes were approved by Virginia Baptists' Honorary Members of the Corporation, created in 1947 to approve charter changes and real estate sales by Virginia Baptist institutions. New charter changes also would eliminate the role of Honorary Members of the Corporation in relation to the two schools.

A resultant ruling by Virginia's attorney general that Averett and Virginia Intermont technically qualified as non-sectarian drew protest from Virginia Baptists and the action by the general board.

Administrators at both colleges say they view the charter changes as technical matters which have not affected their desired continued relationship to the denomination.

In other developments, messengers endorsed opposition to the revocation of the tax exempt status of religious organizations and recognized the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Cooperative Program and endorsed the \$150 million goal for the anniversary year in 1976.

Messengers also voted to set aside days in 1975 observing the "importance of wholesome media presentations" and deemed "appropriate local decisions to exercise economic sanctions against those violating moral principles in media presentations."

A report of the convention's long-range planning committee was accepted. It included a recommendation that Virginia Baptists seek to "strengthen and enrich ties with other Baptist organizations in Virginia."

-more-

Other points in the report called for priorities in evangelism, strengthening local churches, stewardship, ecumenical concerns and ministries for aging, children and youth and students.

Priorities of ministry to the aging, a spokesman said, will include a study of the needs for additional facilities in Virginia.

Next year's convention will meet in Richmond, Va., Nov. 11-13, in conjunction with the three black Baptist conventions in Virginia.

-30-

La.: \$6 Million Budget,
Resolution on Charismatics

11/14/74

WEST MONROE, La. (BP)--The Louisiana Baptist Convention meeting here adopted a record \$6 million budget and passed a resolution on the so-called charismatic movement, stating that certain practices and teachings of neo-Pentecostalism "lack sufficient scriptural support."

The record budget for Louisiana Baptists provides for a basic Cooperative Program (unified budget) of \$5.2 million, an advance goal of \$319,796 and a challenge goal of \$500,000.

Basically, the budget breakdown provides 31.5 percent of the state Cooperative Program funds from Louisiana churches to national Southern Baptist causes and 68.5 percent to state causes.

Meeting in the First Baptist Church of West Monroe, with one evening session at Civic Center Arena in Monroe, the Louisiana "messengers" elected Emory Wallace, the pastor of First Baptist Church in DeRidder, La., to a second term as convention president.

The resolution on the so-called charismatic movement (a term used to denote the practice of speaking in tongues and certain other so-called "spiritual gifts") stated:

"Whereas Baptists have traditionally believed in religious freedom, the freedom of worship and expression and the competency of the individual interpreting his religious experience.

"And, whereas, Baptists have traditionally believed in the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity and the gifts and leadership of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life and ministry,

"And, whereas, we well know that there are always forces seeking to alienate the committed Christian from his faith and commitment,

"Be it therefore resolved that we, the messengers of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, call on all our people to give serious and concerted study to the Bible as God's holy Word, and we call on all our people to examine personal experience, experiences of worship and doctrinal practices by the teaching and authority of the Bible.

The convention further resolved, "that while we make no judgment on the validity of any person's experience or practice of worship, and while we accept all who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour as our brothers in Christ, we believe that certain practices and teachings of neo-Pentecostalism--more commonly known as the charismatic movement--lack sufficient scriptural support for acceptance in our churches.

The convention therefore exhorted "all our churches to be aware " of the dangers of any "practice, profession, principle or precept not sufficiently supported by the infallible Word of God."

One woman, identified as a member of the host church in West Monroe, but not a convention messenger, said, in defense of the charismatic movement, that many "preachers" were not feeding the people nor giving them what they wanted. She specifically exempted her pastor from that charge.

She had asked permission to speak from the convention floor, following the passage of the resolution, and was permitted to do so.

-30-