



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Vietnam Baptists Join Hands
In Social Services Ministry

SAIGON, Vietnam (BP)--Many South Vietnamese people live in "homes" made from ammunition crates, cardboard boxes, plastic or anything else that will serve as makeshift shelter.

For the past two decades, thousands of these refugees have fled and relocated, not once but several times, in order to escape war, destruction and death.

In order to ease the hardship conditions, the Vietnam Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist Missionaries) has organized the Baptist Social Services Ministry, under the direction of Gene V. Tunnell, Southern Baptist missionary.

Tunnell, a professionally trained social worker, serves to strengthen the cooperation and coordinate the United efforts of Baptist churches and missionaries in the country, according to press representative, William T. Roberson. The thrust of the service, he says, is to assist the Vietnamese in harnessing the talents and time of Baptists throughout the country to produce relief for refugees, educational facilities, child care and medical attention.

The Baptist Social Service Ministry, during 1974, opened a halfway house, began a temporary residence for children in crisis situations and opened a day care center for 100 children near Saigon.

In addition to their mobile medical program, serving patients in the Saigon area, they have begun a resettlement program near Quinhon, which has helped 43 families secure land to begin farming.

They have also built a rice mill for the blind center in the Quang Ngai province, representing the first Baptist effort to assist in economic self-development.

More than 2,000 children receive educational benefits through programs sponsored by the Vietnamese Baptist churches, while hundreds of adults are seen each week through the various training, medical and relief programs offered by Baptists in several provinces.

Recently, Phan Quang Dang, South Vietnam's deputy vice premier and minister of social welfare, spoke at the dedication ceremony and open house of the new headquarters building of the Baptist Social Services Ministry. Dang, the first high-ranking government official to participate in a function of the Vietnam Baptist Mission, commended Baptists for their compassion and concern for the Vietnamese people.

Roberson concluded, "For the first time in many years these families are viewing the future with hope and expectancy because they have both a house and land which they can call their own. But this is only a microscopic beginning in terms of the total need."

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state paper editors.

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Manhattan Tenement House
Now Puppet, Bible Center

By Mary Wimberly
For Baptist Press

Renovating a vacant storefront on Manhattan's Lower East Side is an undertaking for only the most hearty--or the most dedicated.

A group of Samford University (Birmingham, Ala.) students proved themselves equal to the task, however.

Due to their efforts, what was once a non-descript room on the ground floor of a tenement house is now a cheerful place for youngsters to enjoy Bible stories and puppet shows.

The 19 students were members of a class in mission externship offered during a short academic term between the regular fall and spring semesters at Samford, a Baptist school. The class attended indoctrination lectures by Samford religion professor, W. T. Edwards, before embarking on their mission trip with Mrs. Esther Burroughs, Samford director of religious activities.

Armed with hammers and paint brushes, the students installed paneling and flooring, re-wired the room, and added plumbing. The exterior was painted and decorated with the center's new name: "Graffiti." The lower portion of the walls was deliberately left blank to conform to the lifestyle of the neighborhood.

"We knew that the walls would be written on anyway," said student Rex Hammock, "so we just left plenty of room and called it Graffiti."

How the students found the New York mission opportunity is a story in itself.

The children's community center, sponsored by the Metropolitan Baptist Church, grew from a neighborhood "vest pocket" Bible school begun last Summer by Bruce Schoonmaker, a student at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

Schoonmaker realized the children in the predominantly Puerto Rican neighborhood could benefit greatly from a center of their own, so he located a vacant room and put out an appeal for help. Gradually, the seminarian's appeal filtered southward to Mrs. Burroughs through a mutual friend, Gene Bolin, director of campus ministries in Maryland.

Funds for the trip came from churches throughout Alabama. Lumber and other building materials were bought at discount prices through arrangements made by local suppliers.

"After we got up there, we found that we needed \$200 more than the \$1,125 we had," said Hammock. A quick phone call was made to relay the problem to Edwards, who soon phoned back that a Birmingham church had committed the money.

The students were housed in the New York Baptist Associational Building.

New Yorkers, Hammock said, "were surprised we were there and very interested in the fact that a group of students would go all the way from Alabama to New York to renovate a building."

If the students had any doubts about why they were in New York, they got their answer the final day of the stay when 33 children and their parents turned out for the first puppet show. Bright eyes and youthful laughter say a lot.

Although the renovation project is complete, the students' commitment isn't.

They decided to raise \$600 to send two campus missionaries to help with the project next Summer. (BP)

Charles Harvey to Receive
Doctor of Divinity Degree

DALLAS (BP)--Charles E. Harvey, a Louisiana pastor and current chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee will receive a honorary doctorate at the spring commencement of East Texas Baptist College, Marshall, Tex.

Harvey, the pastor of Sunset Acres Baptist Church in Shreveport, La., will be awarded the doctor of divinity degree. He is a former president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

Pat Neff Groner, administrator of Pensacola (Fla.) Memorial Baptist Hospital, will also be honored in the May exercises.

Groner is the son of Frank S. Groner, Sr., who served as president of the school, (1928-42).

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Heinz Reintroduces Tax
Credit Bill; Wood Reacts

Baptist Press
2/28/75

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Pennsylvania congressman reintroduced a measure which could spur giving to churches and other charitable organizations by providing an income tax credit for such gifts.

The proposal drew immediate fire from James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here, who termed the action of Rep. H. John Heinz III (R., Pa.) as "most regrettable."

The Heinz proposal, H. R. 3785, is identical to a bill he introduced last summer which languished in the House Committee on Ways and Means and died with the adjournment of the 93rd Congress in December.

Only the title of the Pennsylvania congressman's bill has changed from that of last year. The new proposal is called the Religious and Charitable Donors' Tax Justice Act.

According to a news release from Heinz' office, the bill would allow a "better tax break" for individuals or families contributing to a wide range of religious and charitable groups. Under the plan, a person filing an individual income tax form could claim up to \$500 credit against taxes due, while those filing a joint return could write off up to \$1,000.

More specifically, the measure would allow a couple giving \$2,000 during a year to subtract \$1,000 from the total tax due the federal government after all other deductions had been claimed.

The present law allows taxpayers to claim gifts to churches and charities as deductions, but not as tax credits.

An aide to Heinz told Baptist Press that response to last year's bill was "very favorable" and that support for the measure was "interdenominational and bipartisan." The only persons likely to oppose it, the aide said, are taxpayer groups who would point to the loss in tax revenues the bill would cause.

Wood, who last year expressed strong opposition to the bill, reiterated his views when informed of Heinz' new action. "Interestingly enough," he said, "The expressed purpose of this legislation is to give additional financial aid to the churches themselves and to charitable institutions in spite of previous court rulings prohibiting tax credits for parents of children in parochial schools."

Wood also scored Heinz' failure to recognize distinctions between the nature of tax deductions and tax credits. "In the former," Wood said, "the government recognizes the principle of voluntary contributions for charities and nonprofit institutions, while the latter provides for reimbursement by the state for contributions made to churches and charities."

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The Heinz aide underscored the congressman's view that inflation is likely to force severe decreases in giving to churches and other charitable groups, particularly on the part of middle and lower income individuals. He cited statistics claiming that between 1966 and 1970 persons in those categories decreased their giving by more than half at a time when the inflation rate was less than half what it is today.

Heinz' strategy, according to the aide, will be to seek support for his bill within the powerful ways and means panel in the hope of attaching the measure as an amendment to any tax reform legislation the committee might take to the house floor.

If that effort fails, the spokesman continued, "we're going to try to push it across on its own." He acknowledged, however, that "it's not easy to change the tax code."

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Baptists Attend Briefing
On Congressional Issues

Baptist Press
2/28/75

WASHINGTON (BP)--Fourteen Southern Baptists attended a legislative briefing on key issues before the first session of the 94th Congress here.

The briefing featured such well-known legislators as Rep. George McGovern (D., S.D.), Sen. Edward Kennedy (D., Mass.), Rep. John Anderson (R., Ill.), Rep. Morris K. Udall (D., Ariz.), Rep. Barbara Jordan (D., Tex.), and a Southern Baptist, Rep. John Buchanan (R., Ala.) among others. Represented also were religious leaders of several faiths and denominations.

C. Welton Gaddy, director of Christian Citizenship Development for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, said Southern Baptists invited consisted of some national, state and associational leaders "who will be able to help communicate what they learned to the mass of 12.5 million Southern Baptists." Southern Baptist participation was restricted by a quota set by the briefing's sponsor, IMPACT, a legislative information and action network of religious organizations.

"Baptists were encouraged in the briefing to raise consciousness and precipitate action on the issues discussed," Gaddy said.

A special, separate session with the Southern Baptists, hosted by the Christian Life Commission, provided opportunity for participants to discuss ways in which issues presented at the briefing are affecting or will affect the lives of Southern Baptists.

Special attention, Gaddy said, in the Baptist session was given to long-range legislative needs relating to the world food crisis.

Two key points, he said, related to the food crisis came out of the Baptist caucus:

"One was that there needs to be immediate relief to the hurt caused by the food crisis. The other need is long-range. Immediate solutions must be complemented by the passage of legislation and the formulation of policies which get at the basic causes of the problem."

Other issues discussed in the legislative briefing included the economy, the energy crisis, U. S. impact on the Third World, "how to" seminars on dealing with Congress, military spending, the environment, National Health Insurance, integrity in government/justice in society, among others, Gaddy said.

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BWA Joins In Hosting
Clergymen from Russia

Baptist Press
2/28/75

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist World Alliance joined with five other denominational groups in hosting a Washington agenda for 18 Soviet Union clergy on a three-week tour of the United States at the invitation of the National Council of Churches.

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The ecumenical Soviet delegation, hosted by the BWA at a luncheon at the Columbia Baptist Church in Falls Church, Va., included Alexsei M. Bichkov, general secretary of the All Union Council of Evangelical-Christians-Baptists, a member of the BWA Executive Committee, and the only Baptist in the Soviet delegation.

The Soviet group includes officials of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church of Lithuania, Armenian Apostolic Church, Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Latvia and Estonia.

Besides Baptists, denominations that helped plan the Washington portion of the Soviets' tour included United Methodists, Orthodox, Episcopal, Roman Catholics and Presbyterians.

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Charles King, SBC VP
Dies In Lexington, Ky.

Baptist Press
2/28/75

LEXINGTON, Ky. (BP)--Charles King, 79, second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the convention's first national officer who was black, died unexpectedly here the afternoon of Friday, Feb. 28, 1975.

King, who was the pastor of Corinthian Baptist Church in Frankfort, Ky., and former first vice president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, had been reported in satisfactory condition just two days before by a spokesman for St. Joseph Hospital here, where the minister was being cared for following a severe stroke suffered several weeks ago. King had been previously reported in critical but stable condition. Funeral arrangements were pending at Smith Funeral Home in Frankfort.

King was elected second vice president of the SBC in Dallas, in June, 1974, later telling a friend that it was "a highlight of his life." The church for which he was pastor 24 years commemorated his 24th anniversary on October 27, 1974. King suffered one stroke sometime in late 1974 but recovered and was able to walk then enough to attend the groundbreaking service for his church's new sanctuary in December.

He never fully recovered from his last stroke in January.

SBC President Jaroy Weber, contacted in Lubbock, Tex., was shocked to hear of King's death, saying, "Southern Baptists mourn the homegoing of Dr. King. His election was a milestone in fulfilling the biblical concept of all people being one body in Jesus Christ. He has served a very unique purpose and our Heavenly Father has called him home to be honored."

Stewart Simms, first vice president of the SBC and the pastor of First Baptist Church, Greer, S. C. said: "My immediate reaction would be the desire to express sympathy for myself personally as a fellow officer of the SBC and in behalf of the constituency of the convention who elected him. We will be greatly disappointed that he will not be able to share in the opportunity of presiding at the convention in June."

A native of West Point, Miss., King held the doctor of divinity degree, earned the master of education degree from the University of Cincinnati and was graduated from Fisk University in Nashville with the bachelor of arts degree.

He had done post-graduate work on the doctor of philosophy degree and studied at Yale University.

He was a former chemist for the American Maize Manufacturing Co. in Chicago where he was foreman of the analytical laboratory there.

He taught at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. A former newspaperman, King was an editor for the Cincinnati Call-Post, former publisher of the Cincinnati Voice and managed the American Baptist of Louisville while managing also a printing plant in that city.

King had been a teacher at Mayo-Underwood School in Frankfort and served as principal of a school in Hamilton County, Ohio. He was a former public relations officer for French-Bauer Co. in Cincinnati and held a similar position with Kentucky State University in Frankfort.

Active in civic affairs, he was a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). And he was on the board of directors for the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Executive Committee of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and was a chaplain for the Kentucky General Assembly (state legislature).

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King was a former member of the American Legion, was on the board of directors for Phi Beta Sigma, was a Disabled Veteran of World War I and an Honorary Colonel of the Kentucky State Police.

He was chairman of the Civil Service Board of the City of Frankfort and was chairman of the Mayor's Advisory Council of Frankfort.

King was elected to the Kentucky Baptist Convention vice presidency in 1971, after having been named "pastor of the year" by Baptist pastors in the state. His church is affiliated jointly with the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Baptist General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, a black Baptist body, and with the SBC.

King's first wife died several years ago. He remarried and his second wife died a few years ago, a friend said. A stepson, George Scott, of Gahanna, Ohio, survives.

King's death was reported to Baptist Press shortly after it occurred, by his friend Herman Bowers, the pastor of First Baptist Church in Frankfort, who said he nominated King for the SBC vice presidency in Dallas.

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(BP) Photo will be mailed on request.

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CORRECTION

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE

In BP mailing dated 2/27/75, story headlined "Trustees Retain President of Troubled Baptist College," 6th from last graph, line 4, should read--the original offer and sales price of \$10,000--(instead of \$10,125)--also, delete--The land was assessed then at \$10,000.

Thanks

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