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Baptist Response Rising
On Worldwide Hunger

Compiled for Baptist Press
By James Lee Young

"Christians in America must face one basic, startling reality about our world and its suffering--most of humanity is hungry."

Southern Baptists have long been aware of the truth in this statement by Sen. Mark Hatfield (R., Ore.), but recently this awful reality has struck home with new impact.

Sen. George McGovern (D., S.C.) said at a recent national Christian Life Commission seminar in Louisville, that the United States cannot expect to feed the entire world but noted that is no excuse for slacking up on our efforts.

At least 2 million people will die of starvation by the end of summer, 1975, unless adequate foreign food aid is provided, some authorities claim.

One-fifth of the world's population faces malnutrition or starvation.

Baptist efforts to help the world's starving and needy range from missing a meal occasionally and giving the savings to disaster relief, to statewide projects to challenge masses of people to give money and materials.

There has been some criticism that the denomination has moved too slowly in the direction of disaster relief, but interest and action have definitely accelerated, observers note.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, which serves as a central distribution agency for Baptists' special gifts to world relief, reports that in January and February people in the denomination gave more than $182,000 to help alleviate suffering.

During 1974, $458,347 was made available for world relief through the Foreign Mission Board. An additional sum of $447,645 was contributed by various Baptist groups and distributed in 1974 through the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).

In response to requests from the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Foreign Mission Board, the Southern Baptist Executive Committee in its February meeting named eight persons as an advisory committee to help speed up response to disaster, including food shortages.

Also in February, the Foreign Mission Board took steps to strengthen it's structure for world relief. Eugene Grubbs was named as the board's disaster response coordinator, a board sub-committee on world hunger and relief was appointed, and each overseas mission organization was urged to designate a disaster response coordinator and a relief committee.

Baptist state conventions report response to large scale appeals has been good to excellent.

In North Carolina, where unemployment recently reached 10 per cent, Baptists gave over $200,000 in two months, with receipts still coming in.

Marse Grant, editor of the Biblical Recorder, said:

"In my 25 years of editing a Baptist paper in this state, I have never seen North Carolina Baptists move so quickly and so generously...In addition to money, they gave clothing through Church World Service."

Texas Baptists' relief mobile unit returned from disaster-stricken Honduras recently after serving more than 120,000 meals to victims of hurricane Fifi and to relief workers.

"Hundreds of decisions for Christ were recorded in areas where the unit served, noted James H. Landes, executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

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Landes, warned, however, that the food crisis in Honduras is still to come.

Texas Baptists have launched a long range plan to help alleviate world hunger. The 192-member board of the Texas convention recently directed its staff to provide "hunger" offering envelopes to enable such giving throughout the year.

A special emphasis in churches across Texas was planned for the four Sundays following Easter.

The Texas Christian Life Commission has designed a packet on world hunger, including scriptures, quotes from experts, answers to objections, a suggested diet for people concerned about world hunger and other helpful information.

Florida Baptists designated March 23 as World Hunger Sunday and received a statewide offering. A final offering figure was not available. The Florida convention also encouraged Baptists to fast and pray for world's hungry, to miss a meal a week and give money above regular tithes and offerings.

Alabama Baptists recently reported more than $55,000 given for world hunger relief. The Alabama convention early became a leader in the SBC in moving to combat world hunger.

Several other state conventions followed suit. In Kentucky , for example, Southern Baptists rallied around a Helpers for Hunger Club, giving up meals periodically and contributing the cost to world relief.

Some Baptist groups have sponsored simple meals, such as rice and water, donating what money might be saved to world hunger.

One Baptist Student Union poverty meal in Arkansas yielded more than $400 for world hunger. The meal, for statewide Arkansas BSU, is usually a gala affair, but not this year.

Everyone at the banquet was served soup, but only one person per each table of 12 was served steak. At one table, no one would eat the steak.

"We were hurting so much for the hungry people of the world," a student said.

Southern Baptist agencies are informing their publics on the need for action.

A Foreign Mission Board pamphlet and poster on world hunger for example, will be distributed the first week in April to all Southern Baptist pastors and other denominational leaders. The pamphlet emphasizes the board's role as a channel for world relief response and answers questions about the use of relief funds given through the board.

The convention's Radio and Television Commission, for example, was cosponsoring with NBC a live Easter Sunday service, (9 a.m. central daylight saving time) with James Harris, the pastor of University Baptist Church in Fort Worth, to speak on the urgency of feeding the world spiritually and phsically.

In 1976, the Radio-TV Commission's "Dimension" series will include a film, "Aribati," a study on starving children in the African Sahel.

Woman's Missionary Union and the Brotherhood Commission have been cooperating with the mission boards in drawing Southern Baptist attention to world hunger through greater coverage in their publications.

WMU and Brotherhood have developed studies on how missionaries are coping with hunger in their assigned missions. Baptists are being encouraged through these publications and through the Baptist state papers to give generously for world hunger and other relief.

The Baptist state papers have been the primary channel of disseminating information on disaster relief and the need for such.

Responsibility related to overseas disaster relief was assigned the Foreign Mission Board by SBC "messengers" meeting in 1966.

Money received by the board for relief is immediately placed at the disposal of missionaries in the devastated area for approved relief projects, spokesmen say.

The board insists that there are no overhead costs in its relief program.

"No other agency or avenue of relief provides Southern Baptists as direct a channel to needy people overseas, " a board statement notes.

"The Cooperative Program (unified budget) enables administrative costs to remain at zero. The missionaries are already there."

Based on current projects in Bangladesh, $1.00 sent through the Foreign Board to Bangladesh, for example, will feed a person for about 10 days; $6.00 will feed a family for about 10 days; $36.50 will feed a person for a year.

A $100 gift will furnish a sewing machine, board spokesmen say. A gift of $1,000 will provide permanent housing for a family of six; and $5,000 will feed 25 families in Bangladesh for a year.

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Baptist College Ante'lopes'
To NAIA Basketball Title

By Paul Barnes

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--What is it like to be Number One?

Ask Gerald Ford.

Or Ben Lindsey.

Ben who?

Yeah, Ben Lindsey. He's the veteran coach of the Grand Canyon College Antelopes here--the nation's number one NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) basketball team.

The 25-year-old Baptist college's team almost "loped" their way through the recent five-day endurance contest known as the 38th Annual NAIA Tournament in Kansas City, Mo.

The Antelopes defeated the Midwestern University Indians of Texas, 65-54 for the crown and were the first championship team in the NAIA tournament's history to also take home the Coaches Sportsmanship Trophy.

Earlier opponents for the Antelopes were Williamette University of Oregon, Illinois Wesleyan College, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, and Alcorn State University of Mississippi.

Grand Canyon College was the third smallest school represented in the 32-team national tournament.

When Lindsey deplaned in Phoenix, 12-hours after his team had "taken all the marbles," he was all smiles.

"It was no one-man thing," he said. "They did it as a team. I watched it all happening and just tried to help out where I could."

All-American Center, 6-10 Bayard Forrest of Grand Canyon was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

Forrest was a first team, all-tournament selection, while Mike Haddow, a 6-5 guard was a second team all tourney choice.

Grand Canyon College, owned and operated by the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, belongs to the 71-member Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools and is the only accredited four-year private liberal arts college in Arizona.

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Paul Barnes is assistant to the president and director of development for Grand Canyon College in Phoenix, Ariz.

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Billingsly Accepts Post
In Utah-Idaho Convention

SALT LAKE CITY (BP)--C. Clyde Billingsly Jr. has been named missions and Brotherhood director for the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention.

The convention's executive secretary, Darwin E. Welsh, previously had responsibility for missions and Brotherhood work and will continue to direct the convention's language missions work.

The Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board will share financing with Utah-Idaho Southern Baptists for the new post.

Billingsly, a graduate of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex., has served as pastor of churches in Knoxville Tenn., and Azle, Tex. He also has spent eight years in evangelism, concentrating in "pioneer" or new-work areas of the Southern Baptist Convention and has served as an evangelism consultant for the Utah-Idaho Convention.

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Eight Former Brotherhood
Commission Staff Find Jobs

MEMPHIS (BP)--Eight of the 12 employees who lost their jobs when the Southern Baptist Convention's Brotherhood Commission retrenched in February because of a financial deficit have found employment.

The remaining four are considering job offers or are in the process of completing interviews, according to Glendon McCullough, executive director of the SBC agency for work with men and boys.

The commission reports that the cutback and other reduced spending will eliminate the d ficit (which exceeded $146,000 over the past two years) within 18 months.

McCullough said the commission has been working with the employees, on their request, to help them find new work. He expressed deep concern about the persons involved in the staff cutback, saying that the commission has been doing everything possible to help them find jobs, continue insurance coverage and take care of other financial matters.

"We have hurt with them and tried in every way possible to let them know of the concern of the commission members and staff," he said. "The cutback we have been forced to take has not been easy for any one individual, and the hurt has been felt by our commission leaders and staff, along with the former employees. We care about people as persons and have taken the initiative in providing assistance wherever possible."

Among the eight professional and four clerical employees terminated, all four clerical workers have accepted new jobs. Two professionals have taken new jobs, one elected to take early retirement and another will continue his education.

W. J. Isbell, director of the Baptist Men's division, was employed almost immediately in Dallas as lay ministries director for Texas Baptist Men, auxiliary for men's and boys' work for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Controller E. M. (Buddy) Coleman, 63, a 23-year commission employee, took early retirement. McCullough said the commission made financial arrangements with the SBC Annuity Board to assure Coleman, who was two years short of retirement, of full retirement benefits equivalent to those he would have received if he had continued on the staff until age 65.

Dennis Murray, order processing supervisor, has been called as minister of music and education at First Baptist Church of Southaven, Miss., a Memphis suburb, and Jim Frazier, staff artist, will study at the Art Center in Los Angeles, a nationally-prominent school for illustrators.

The four still considering job possibilities are Jay Chance, director of the commission's Royal Ambassador division; Ben J. Connell, director of the mission support department in the Baptist Men's division; John Pate, director of the operations department; and Steve Wall, associate editor and photographer, World Mission Journal. Wall had been on a leave-of-absence from the commission since Oct. 1, 1974.

The Brotherhood Commission honored a five-month study leave for Chance which began at Mississippi State University, Starkeville, prior to the termination, and will end May 9.

All clerical personnel accepted jobs in Memphis. They are: Miss Beverly Beard, secretary in the service division; Ricki Green, mailing assistant; Mrs. Margaret Wilkerson, mailing services clerk; and Miss Dawn Weir, periodical services clerk.

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