



BAPTIST PRESS

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75-77

Three Baptist Missionaries Stay in Laos; Families Exit

VIETIANE, Laos (BP)--Three Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) missionary men remain here in the face of the recent governmental shift toward total Communist control. Other missionaries and their children have been evacuated to Bangkok, Thailand.

"We do not see this as similar to the Vietnam situation in that there is no fighting going on and, at least for the time being, it appears we can continue our ministry in Laos," said R. Keith Parks, the SBC Foreign Mission Board's secretary for Southeast Asia.

"We are hopeful," Parks continued, "that we will have the opportunity to do as much as we can for as long as we can. We do feel a great sense of urgency in light of all that's happening in Southeast Asia."

The J. Murphy Terry family, assigned to Laos, are in the States on furlough as will be the Jerald W. Perrill family after May 20. When Perrill leaves, Jack W. Kinnison Jr. and Douglas G. Ringer will remain in Laos.

Missionary journeyman Miss Andrea Bass and the families of Perrill, Kinnison and Ringer are in Bangkok.

Parks will go to Laos to confer with missionaries and assess the situation in terms of security and of continued service there. Parks said the American Embassy indicates the present situation seems stable and Americans are free to move in and out of the country.

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Angolan Missionaries Face Danger; Worship Continues

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LUANDA, Angola (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries report they are safe and "unafraid" in the midst of fighting between the three political factions here but have faced several narrow escapes.

Meanwhile, worship by missionaries and Angolan Baptists has continued as they join together in the presence of violence.

Three missionary men went in a land rover on a rescue mission into the area of the city where white people were burned out in July and August. Anyone trying to go into the area has been subject to robbery, stoning or death, according to Mrs. Harrison H. Pike, a missionary.

Their mission was to rescue an Angolan pastor and his family trapped there in the parsonage next to the church while shots, rockets and mortar exploded all around them.

"It was a matter of accepting a responsibility, and the words of Esther (in the Old Testament) 'And if I perish, I perish,' became very real to them," said Mrs. Pike. One man, James V. Holland, went with one arm in a cast, saying that he could at least carry out one child.

"What a joy it was for all of us to see the land rover returning with the three husbands in the front, the back end piled high with what little household goods they could wisely bring out, with a mattress over the heads of the mother and children. The pastor and his brother were hanging on behind," Mrs. Pike wrote.

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Another brother, a pastor from Carmona, came to the Pike's home to see his two brothers. The three had fled in different directions when the trouble began in 1961 and had not seen each other since.

The Pikes later had another narrow escape during a trip to Carmona. A passing car fired a shot through their windshield.

"No one was hurt," said Mrs. Pike, "but it could have been a different story. We know God was there."

The night after they returned to Luanda, a Saturday, the Pikes had 17 people in their home, stranded travelers and refugees seeking shelter. As she prepared dinner for the group, Mrs. Pike could hear the fighting and shooting behind her house.

Another missionary family, the Curtis Dixons, could not sleep that night because of the shooting nearby. Missionary Journeyman Miss Tress Miles and the Hollands had similar experiences.

Early reports that one of the missionaries' ministerial prospects was taken prisoner proved incorrect. His family, forced to choose their lives over their belongings, had watched their house emptied and their Bibles burned. All were safe, although a seven-year-old boy was separated from his parents and spent the night alone in the house with shots firing overhead.

The next day more than 100 people made it to church and there was rejoicing that "our family in Christ" was protected, Mrs. Pike said. Some had no material goods left; some had witnessed horrors beyond compare. Hundreds remain unaccounted for, but, Mrs. Pike said, "The same God who had his hand on us is their protector."

That night the church worshipped in home fellowships throughout the city, rather than risk being on the streets. Twenty-nine people worshipped in the Pike home. They included Angolans, both black and white, refugees from Zaire and American missionaries. Prayers were offered in Portuguese, French, African dialects and English.

To close the meetings all over the city, each group sang "God Will Take Care of You," read the 23rd Psalm and sang "Blest Be The Tie That Binds."

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Stewardship Commission Sets
Budget; Elects Officers

Baptist Press
5/15/75

MEMPHIS (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission participated in a 50th anniversary celebration of the denomination's Cooperative Program unified budget, approved a 1975-76 budget of \$857,399, and elected Paul D. Faircloth, a Bladensburg, Md. pastor, as their chairman in a two day annual meeting here.

The new budget is \$104,162 above the current budget \$753,237

Faircloth, pastor of Central Baptist Church and representative of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, replaces Paul Cates, a Lubbock layman who had served two terms as commission chairman.

Harry G. Bonner of Portland, Ore., stewardship secretary for the Northwest Baptist Convention, was elected vice chairman; and Lyle E. Garlow of Oklahoma City, associate executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, was elected secretary.

Rudy Fagan of Nashville, the Stewardship Commission's executive director, was re-elected treasurer of the commission.

Chosen committee chairmen were James M. Tyler, a layman of Richmond, Va., Cooperative Program promotion; Dillard S. Miller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Mena, Ark., stewardship development; and Charles E. Peterson of Jacksonville, director of promotion for the Florida Baptist Convention, endowment and capital giving.

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The three officers and three committee chairmen make up the commission's executive committee.

In other action, the trustees promoted three commission staff members. They are Paul Darden, from publishing supervisor to director of publishing services; Ernest D. Standerfer, from assistant director to associate director of stewardship development; and James L. Powell, from assistant director to associate director of Cooperative Program promotion.

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Bicentennial Convocation
Slated in Nation's Capital

Baptist Press
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WASHINGTON (BP)--"Baptists and the American Experience" will be the theme of a Baptist National Convocation on the Bicentennial in Washington, D. C., Jan. 12-15, 1976, according to James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

More than two years ago, the North American Baptist Fellowship (NABF) determined that the nation's bicentennial observance provided various Baptist groups with an opportunity to cooperate in a joint celebration.

The NABF, an alliance of Baptist bodies on the North American continent (including Southern Baptists), asked the Baptist Joint Committee to take the lead and coordinate plans for the observance at the Shoreham Americana Hotel in Washington.

Since that time, an ad hoc committee of leaders from several conventions and conferences of Baptists in the U. S. has met five times with the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee to lay the groundwork for the convocation.

Wood's announcement indicated that the convocation will focus not only on the past, but on the present and future as well. "While Baptists have had a significant role in the development of America," he said, "we feel that we must not dwell primarily on our past. Rather, the speakers and the seminar groups will address themselves to the present and the future as we seek on the occasion of the bicentennial to discern the role of Baptists in the life of the nation."

Under the general theme, five plenary sessions are planned, each of which will deal with a distinct element of the Baptist contribution to the religious and social fabric of the nation. Topics for the plenary sessions include: "Baptists, Liberty, and the American Revolution;" "Baptists and Human Rights in the American Experience;" "Baptist World Mission Outreach and American International Affairs;" "Religious Liberty and Public Policy," and "Baptist Pluralism and Unity."

Besides attending the plenary sessions, participants will be divided into four seminar groups on three separate occasions for discussion.

Preceding the first plenary session, a keynote speech, "The Meaning of Liberty in the American Experience," will be delivered by a major figure in public life.

Another highlight of the convocation will be a mass worship service at the National Baptist Memorial Church, a church built jointly in 1906 by the Southern Baptist Convention and the Northern Baptist Convention (now the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.) and dedicated to religious liberty. The occasion will feature special bicentennial music and preaching.

Among major speakers who will appear during the convocation are Winthrop S. Hudson, Colgate professor of American Christianity at Colgate Rochester Divinity School, Rochester, N. Y.; Edwin S. Gaustad, professor of history at the University of California, Riverside; Gardner Taylor, pastor of the Concord Baptist Church of Christ, Brooklyn, N. Y.; James Ralph Scales, president, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N. C.; C. Penrose St. Amant, president, Baptist Theological Seminary, Ruschlikon-Zurich, Switzerland; and

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W. Morgan Patterson, dean of graduate studies and professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

Invitations to the convocation are now being sent out to a large number of Baptists throughout the nation. An open invitation to the Baptists of the U. S. will be extended in June.

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Blackwell Sets 1976
Furman Retirement

Baptist Press
5/15/75

GREENVILLE, S. C. (BP)--Gordon W. Blackwell, president of Furman University here, will retire in the summer of 1976. He will reach 65, the Southern Baptist-related school's administrative retirement age, next April.

A search committee has been asked to report a recommendation for Blackwell's successor not later than May, 1976, according to James P. Craine of Anderson, S. C., Furman's trustee chairman.

Blackwell, who will step down after 11 years in the Furman presidency, was president of Florida State University, when he came to Furman in 1965.

A summa cum laude graduate of Furman, he earned a doctorate in sociology from Harvard.

He taught and chaired the sociology department at Furman, 1937-43, before joining the University of North Carolina for 13 years, where he directed the Institute for Research and Social Science. He has also served as chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, visiting professor for two summers at Columbia University and lecturer for five weeks at Oxford University in England.

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Ukraine Court Rejects
Georgi Vins' Appeal

Baptist Press
5/15/75

LONDON (BP)--An appeal charging the trial of imprisoned dissident Baptist Georgi Vins was illegal has been rejected by the Supreme Court of the Ukraine, the Keston News Service said here.

The news service, of the Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism, said Lidia Vins, Georgi's mother, wrote a letter dated March 26, 1975 to the Human Rights Committee and Amnesty International in which she told of the Soviet court's action and apparent hostility.

Mrs. Vins' letter reported the Ukraine court heard Vins' case on March 6 and rejected the appeal, the news service said.

Mrs. Vins, in her letter, noted the family was not informed that the hearing took place and was not told of the decision until March 19, even though they inquired daily.

The family later discovered Vins was in the hospital through it all but that fact had been hidden from them, the news service said.

Mrs. Vins' letter, the London report noted, said the family was refused a copy of the official verdict by the Kiev City Court on grounds that "they only wanted a copy in order to send it to the CIA."

The judge, named Tyshel, described the family as "enemies of the people" and "hoodlums," the report said.

An "official note" from Mrs. Vins received by Keston News Service stated her son "is to serve the rest of his sentence in the Yakutsk Autonomous Republic (Eastern Siberia). His health was reported to be "satisfactory."

Mrs. Vins, the news service said, continues to appeal for help in opening a re-examination of her son's case.

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