

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5461
RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

September 10, 1975

75-141

1975 World Relief Gifts
Exceed \$1 Million Mark

RICHMOND (BP)-- The announcement that Southern Baptist gifts for world relief, channeled through the Foreign Mission Board, have topped \$1.2 million during the first eight months of 1975 highlighted the board's September meeting here.

The board also appointed a missionary to Spain, appropriated \$99,285 in response to flood damage in Brazil and set aside \$85,000 for work with refugees in Angola, Thailand, Portugal and Ft. Chaffee, Ark.

Baker J. Cauthen, the board's executive secretary, commenting on the \$1.2 million that Baptists have channeled through the board this year, said, "The response of Southern Baptists to world hunger and disaster is bringing help and encouragement throughout the world. It is a magnificent expression of love and concern on the part of people deeply committed to our Lord's Great Commission."

Everett L. Deane, the board's treasurer, reported that the relief figure at the end of August totaled \$1,259,493. Of this amount, more than \$1 million has been appropriated by the Foreign Mission Board or was designated for specific purposes by donors.

Of the \$99,285 appropriated in response to the flood that hit Recife, Brazil, in mid-July, \$11,000 is for relief of human suffering, \$16,000 is for repairs to Baptist churches and other property, \$35,000 is for repairs and replacement of missionary houses and cars and \$37,285 will cover personal losses to missionaries.

"This has been a hard blow for most of the missionary families stationed in Recife, as well as many of their Brazilian friends," said Frank K. Means, the board's secretary for Eastern South America.

"It has not been easy to avoid discouragement and a sense of frustration when most of their personal belongings have been destroyed or seriously damaged," Means said. "Nevertheless, they have faced up to the circumstances with wisdom, promptness and a remarkable amount of courage."

To aid refugees in politically-troubled Angola, the board appropriated \$50,000. Missionaries Harrison H. Pike and Curtis Dixon have returned to Angola to administer relief efforts. W. Eugene Grubbs, the board's disaster response coordinator, also is visiting the Central African country to review relief needs.

Other assistance includes \$20,000 to aid refugees in Thailand, who have fled Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; \$5,000 to assist Angolan refugees in Portugal; and \$10,000 for ministries among Vietnamese refugees in Ft. Chaffee, Ark.

Also during the board's September meeting, 13 work groups, each composed of board members and staff members, met to discuss special topics assigned to their group as part of a long-range strategy study in which the board is engaged.

The board will extend its October meeting two full days to allow the groups to complete their studies and make their reports. These studies are a part of the process of foreign missions strategy planning which will result in a report to the 1976 convention in Norfolk.

Joe S. Vasquez was appointed as a missionary to Spain, assigned to general evangelism. Born in Mercedez, Tex., he also has lived in Refugio, Tex., Sunnyside, Wash., and Seattle, Wash.

Louisiana College Head
Urges State Aid Refusal

PINEVILLE, La. (BP)--The president of Louisiana College, a Baptist school here, said he will recommend that the trustees not accept \$137,000 in financial aid offered by the state.

Robert L. Lynn said taking public money for a Baptist college would violate ethics set forth by the Louisiana Baptist Convention, which supports Louisiana College.

A final decision won't be made until the Louisiana College trustees meet at the first of the year, but Lynn said several trustees with whom he had discussed the matter individually "were confident the board would vote to reject the aid."

The money would come from a \$1.5 million fund set up by the last state legislature, which offers private colleges \$125 per semester for each student who completed high school in Louisiana.

Though the Baptist college may not take the cash, the state's seven other private schools, including some church affiliated ones, have no such inhibition.

Louisiana College is the only private school that will take the money.

-30-

The Evangelist Today:
Popular and Controversial

Baptist Press
9/10/75

By Toby Druin

Scores of Southern Baptist preachers and musicians--maybe hundreds--respond each year to a call into "fulltime evangelism" or the "evangelism ministry."

An estimated 500 are now in the business as professional or vocational evangelists and almost twice that many are listed in the Southern Baptist Convention Annual. The Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists now lists about 400 members, up almost 800 percent over the last 10 years.

But in spite of the calling and apparent increasing popularity of the office, it is a controversial one.

Evangelists are praised by some for their ability to lead persons to professions of faith and to other commitments. But they are criticized by others who malign their methods, especially those used in getting the decisions and the heavy emphasis by many evangelists on the offering plate dollar.

There are several scripture references in the New Testament concerning evangelists--Acts 21:8, 2 Timothy 4:5, and the one most quoted as the basis of their calling, Ephesians 4:11, "It was he who 'gave gifts to men'; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers." (TEV)

Evangelists are proclaimers of the Evangel--the good news of the gospel of Christ--though their methods vary. Some specialize in church revivals; others confine their activities to large crusades. Some are pulpit-pounding exhorters; others are low-key teachers. And, of course, there are some who are a little of both.

James Robison, the 31-year-old Texas-based evangelist who claims to have preached to more persons for a man his age than any other man in the history of Christianity, told a Norcross, Ga., crusade audience last spring:

"I am not an entertainer. I'm a preacher, and I'm going to preach at you. I'm an evangelist, and to many of you that means a reaper."

"Reapers" they are. Some 1,500 decisions were recorded during Robison's week at Norcross and 1,004 of them were professions of faith. In 400 meetings during his relatively short evangelistic career, Robison has tallied 250,000 professions of faith.

-more-

Few evangelists can match those statistics, but many others are having somewhat similar responses, though on smaller scales. There probably are more evangelists preaching today than at any time in history and they are reporting more results.

Don Womack, executive officer of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists, the organization which exists primarily to stage an annual parade of speakers and singers before pastors at the Southern Baptist Convention and to provide a directory of evangelists, claims evangelists have played a significant role in the surge in baptisms in recent years.

Interviews with some 40 pastors across the nation showed that while their opinions differed about the role of the evangelist today, most respected the "distinct gifts" the evangelist possesses.

"They know how to organize, to give an invitation, and preach a message that will appeal to people in a revival meeting," said Luther Mann, pastor of Applewood Baptist Church, Denver, Colo.

Owen Brown of Manger Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla., said, "They do a good job and leave a good taste in people's mouths." Brown added he thought evangelists were increasing in number and respectability and "are here to stay."

James Semple, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Paris, Tex., praised professional evangelists.

"We sometimes get better results from them," Semple said. "Usually they're good at what they do, know how to handle the services and don't worry about what to preach. And often they bring good suggestions on how best to reach people."

Most pastors surveyed said they feel full-time evangelists draw larger crowds than pastors do in revival meetings or crusades and get more response. They indicated that evangelist-led revivals in their churches had netted 12 to 256 baptisms while meetings led by pastors had yielded 6 to 35.

Some said they used both evangelists and pastors for revivals or crusades, often alternating them from year to year.

But others said they consciously avoid evangelists and some said they were adamantly opposed to full-time evangelists.

James Hadley, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., said he prefers pastors for revivals because he feels the pastor has a deeper appreciation for the life of the church and is more keenly aware of the needs of individuals, families and the pastor.

Russell Dilday of Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Atlanta, said he harbors no anti-evangelist feelings; he just doesn't know any well and usually has pastors or seminary professors as revival preachers.

Cecil Sherman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Asheville, N. C., criticized the work of evangelists he knows as "not consistent with the gospel I know." He hit evangelists extended emotional preaching" and "over-emphasis on some parts of the gospel without looking at all at other parts."

Others were more vehement. James Stertz of First Baptist Church, Greenville, S. C., said he was interested in seeing his church "warmed," not in "collecting scalps." And William Lancaster of First Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga., labeled evangelists as "superficial or downright fraudulent" and hit at their use of "guilt" in getting decisions.

Many pastors expressed concern about the "stickability" of revival converts, especially those who make professions of faith in evangelist-led meetings.

However, many evangelists conduct follow-up efforts, though most are brief. Robison's associate, T. D. Hall, teaches a 12-hour discipleship training course. Some others have similar plans, but most simply turn over decision cards to pastors or churches and leave any follow-up to them.

One evangelist, Manley Beasley, who now is president of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists, said he has sensed a growing feeling among pastors that they want an evangelist in church revivals who will "deepen" the church. "I'm really finding a great deal of satisfaction that the pastors are looking for something more than just a number," Beasley said.

First in a two-part series on Evangelists. (BP) Photo mailed to Baptist State Papers.

Others on request.