

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Baptist Relief in Angola
Temporarily Discontinued**

LUANDA, Angola (BP)--Southern Baptist relief efforts to refugees in war-torn Angola have been forced to at least a temporary close by a breakdown in transportation lines across that nation.

Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to Angola met with W. Eugene Grubbs, disaster relief coordinator for the Foreign Mission Board, and voted to suspend relief operations until freight and shipping lines could be opened for goods to be received.

Three major political groups, divided primarily along tribal boundaries, have been fighting for control of the soon-to-be independent overseas state of Portugal in a civil war that likely will continue until one group has gained complete domination.

The Carmona area, north of Angola, harbors the greatest concentration of displaced persons, including refugees reentering the country after fleeing to Zaire, the African nation to the north of Angola. Although more Baptists are in this area than in others, some Baptists are among all three groups. The National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) controls the area.

The middle of Angola and the seaports of Lobita and Luanda are controlled by a second political group, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

The eastern area of Angola is controlled by the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). This area includes Nova Lisboa, where several thousand Portuguese people are now gathered awaiting flights to their homeland aboard charter airplanes before Angola receives total independence, November 11. Portuguese soldiers remaining in the country will leave with these refugees.

All three groups are unwilling to make the agreements needed to allow relief supplies to pass beyond the area they control. Well fed refugees become potential enemies.

"We have cancelled all immediate plans for relief," said Davis L. Saunders, secretary for eastern and southern Africa, "but we're still probing, trying to find out what we can do. The situation gets worse everyday."

Grubbs said 50 or 60 tons of food had been distributed before the political situation became so tense.

Harrison H. Pike, missionary to Angola for eight years, said the situation is pitiful. "They are starving; and we have food, money and medicines which we can't get to them."

Pike feels the situation is critical, and his assessment is backed by other relief agencies trying to provide aid to the displaced.

Baptist relief efforts will resume when the political climate stabilizes, allowing freedom to ship and distribute relief supplies, according to the Foreign Mission Board.

Agency Expands Services;
Discusses Current Issues

WASHINGTON (BP)--An expanded program of denominational services will be provided by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, according to an announcement made at the semi-annual meeting of the committee here.

In addition, the committee addressed itself to a number of church-state issues that are alive on the national scene. Among them were: public funds and parochial schools, pending legislation affecting lobbying activities in Congress, the right of privacy and false rumors that periodically are spread through the nation.

Stan L. Hastey was named the new coordinator of denominational services for the Baptist Joint Committee. Since January, 1974, Hastey has been assistant to W. Barry Garrett, director of information services.

In this new capacity, Hastey will have special responsibilities in denominational services, will serve as managing editor of Report from the Capital, the Baptist Joint Committee publication, and will continue to provide press coverage from Washington under the supervision of the director of information services.

James E. Wood Jr., as part of his duties as executive director, will become the editor of Report from the Capital, which, for the past several years, has been edited by Garrett.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is a denominational agency located in the nation's capital. It is maintained by nine Baptist denominational bodies in the United States and Canada, including the Southern Baptist Convention. Its special assignment is to work in the areas of religious liberty, church-state relations, and public policy that affects or is affected by denominational concerns. Arthur B. Rutledge, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, is the chairman.

John W. Baker, director of research services for the Baptist Joint Committee, in his report on public aid to nonpublic schools, pointed out the four tests of constitutionality that have been developed by the Supreme Court. They are: 1) Primary purpose: The primary purpose of the government in providing aid to schools must be secular and not religious. 2) Primary effect: The primary effect of government aid to schools must be secular rather than religious. The question here, according to Baker, is: does the state action inhibit or advance religion or is that action essentially neutral religiously? 3) Excessive entanglement: Does the state action lead to an excessive entanglement of government with religion? Does it require that the state be involved in such activities as participation in administration, in supervision of programs, etc.? 4) Divisiveness: Does the state action create a divisiveness among citizens along religious lines?

Wood, speaking to the issue of public aid to church schools, warned the committee that in spite of Supreme Court decisions denying such aid the parochial and private school interests are continuing to work to discover constitutional ways to obtain public funds for their schools.

A number of proposals are before Congress, according to Baker, designed to define more precisely the requirements for lobbyists. These proposals, if enacted into law, he said, could seriously affect the work of the churches in exercising their influence on the formation of public policy.

Consequently, the Baptist Joint Committee passed a resolution asking Congress to exempt churches, associations churches or conventions of churches from certain tests that might be used by the Internal Revenue Service to restrict the tax exempt status of charitable agencies seeking to influence legislation.

In discussing the right of privacy, Wood and Baker pointed out that the Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579) is a most important legislative victory for the right of privacy. Baker explained, "This act provides for the safeguarding of individual privacy against the misuse of federal records, including the right of an individual to have access to his record, to challenge items therein, and to have the records corrected when necessary."

Earlier this year, at its March meeting, the Baptist Joint Committee approved a policy position that "the right of privacy is the foundation of civil and religious liberty." The committee appealed to the President and to Congress "to set limits on and standards for the collection and dissemination of information dealing with the private affairs of individuals and groups and to exercise diligent oversight of information-collecting agencies."

In another paper presented to the committee, Garrett reviewed false rumors relating to government and religion. "Many people, hearing these rumors, become alarmed, circulate petitions, and otherwise become disturbed over what they think is government action against religion," he said.

He urged people, when they hear such rumors, to double-check with responsible sources of information before they come to their conclusions and before they waste their energies seeking to stop the supposed government action that never was a threat in the first place.

-30-

Church Tax Privileges
To Remain, Corman Says

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10/8/75

WASHINGTON (BP)--A member of the House Ways and Means Committee told the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here in its semiannual session that any tax reform law in the present Congress will not include changes in the deductibility provisions for gifts to churches and other charities.

Rep. James C. Corman (D-Cal.) also expressed the view that the tax reform measure will not alter current tax laws which allow gifts of appreciated property to charitable institutions and permit ordained ministers tax-free use of church-owned parsonages.

Corman, who has long pushed for a comprehensive tax reform package, said that "no matter what I do," the provision for appreciated property gifts will be left unchanged. Corman opposes that provision of tax law, but assured the Baptist group that "there just isn't anything I can do to get the law changed." He described that provision as "one of the more scandalous tax shelters that will be left" following the expected passage of some tax reform bill during this Congress.

Corman also told the Baptist Joint Committee that his proposed "Health Security Act," a bill calling for national health insurance, would remove "all financial barriers" to adequate health care for every American.

The measure, known as the Kennedy-Corman Bill, is being sponsored in the House by Corman and in the Senate by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.). It calls for a broad-based compulsory program of national health insurance to be financed in part from the treasury's general fund and in part through payroll deductions similar to the present Social Security deductions.

The California congressman said that although federal programs such as Medicare and Medicaid help the aged and very poor and were steps in the right direction, the present health care delivery system is "fragmented" and "unfair." He accused the medical profession of "charging what the traffic will bear."

The Kennedy-Corman plan would set up about 200 health care regions across the country, with financing provided from the federal government on an equitable basis. A board of trustees would negotiate with doctors, hospitals, and other health care deliverers in each region to establish fees schedules.

Corman predicted that if the plan were to go into effect, doctors and hospital administrators would be "reasonable" in helping establish a workable program. He said also that the objection of national health insurance opponents that such a system would inevitably be abused by over-use is without foundation in that over-use occurs now and is actually encouraged by many physicians.

The Baptist Joint Committee, composed of representatives from nine Baptist bodies in the U. S. and Canada, declined later in its meeting here to adopt a resolution endorsing the concept of national health insurance. The proposed statement, which referred to adequate health care as "a basic human right," was tabled when it became apparent that the group could reach no consensus on the issue.

-30-