

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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76-102

Baptist Missionaries Stay As
Some Americans Flee Lebanon

FMB

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries are staying in Lebanon in spite of U.S. President Gerald R. Ford's advice to all Americans to evacuate the war-torn nation.

A cable from missionary James K. Ragland, received at Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board headquarters after the kidnapping of U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Francis Meloy Jr., reported, "All well, busy, hopeful." Following news of the murder of the ambassador, Ragland cabled that Southern Baptist missionaries would remain in Beirut.

On orders from President Ford, the U.S. Embassy has already evacuated some of the nearly 2,000 Americans who were remaining in Lebanon.

Ford's suggestion for Americans to leave followed the slaying of the ambassador, his economic counselor and his Lebanese chauffeur.

Among the first to be evacuated, according to reports, were 116 Americans rescued along with 147 Britons and other Europeans who were transported by U.S. Navy landing craft three miles out to sea, put aboard the Navy transport USS Spiegel Grove and taken to Athens.

"The main reason the missionaries are remaining is out of a sense of mission, of obligation to Lebanon, and of love for the Lebanese people," explained J.D. Hughey, Foreign Mission Board area secretary for Europe and the Middle East.

The situation in Beirut does not look hopeful, but with missionaries and other people there who are hopeful we cannot help but be also."

The only reported casualty among the Southern Baptist missionary family was a slight injury to Miss Emma Cooke's hand when her house was hit, probably by a mortar shell, Hughey said.

Beirut's Arab Baptist Theological Seminary completed its session May 14. The Beirut Baptist School, now temporarily closed, has remained open much of the time. It is expected to open soon, according to Finlay M. Graham, Southern Baptist missionary on furlough who recently returned to the United States from Lebanon.

"The activities of the missionaries and Lebanese Baptists have been limited, but what they have done has great significance," said Hughey. "We are thankful that the witness by Baptists and other Christians has continued during this time of national crisis and sorrow."

Southern Baptist missionaries remaining in Lebanon are Dr. and Mrs. Ragland; Miss Cooke; Miss Mabel Summers; and Dr. and Mrs. David W. King and their two children, Jonathan and Jeanne. The Finlay Grahams left May 18 on a four-month furlough. The W.O. (Bill) Hern family left June 12 for a month in Cairo, Egypt, where he is serving as the fraternal representative of Southern Baptists.

-30-

HMB Proposes Vast Plan
To Take Gospel To NationBaptist Press
6/21/76

By Catherine Allen

SBC/WMU

NORFOLK (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (HMB) with a heritage intertwined with the roots of the nation proposed a plan to give every person in the nation an opportunity to hear and accept the gospel of Jesus Christ.

During the board's bicentennial report closing the 119th session of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) here, messengers honored Arthur B. Rutledge, the HMB executive director for 12 years, now, six months from retirement.

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Rutledge is the architect of the board's three-year bold mission advance strategy which aims to give every person in the nation an opportunity to hear and accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and to become associated with a congregation.

"Here is the starting place for reaching the whole world for Christ," Rutledge said, referring to goals adopted by the convention for a 25-year missions advance plan.

Rutledge said that more than half the nation's people do not "truly know Christ." "We live in the midst of one of the largest evangelism fields," he said. "What happens to the soul of America will affect the whole world."

Rutledge said the board will attempt to plant churches in many of the 670 counties in the United States that have no Southern Baptist witness or ministry.

The strategy will focus heavily on cities and on assistance to some 2,000 Southern Baptist churches thought to be in crisis because of a changing community context, Rutledge explained.

Young people in the board's summertime traveling musical drama group tunefully conveyed the idea that home missions will help build a lasting nation, while they constructed a frame church on stage.

The Centurymen, 100 Southern Baptist ministers of music sponsored by the SBC Radio and Television Commission, joined the young people in musical thanksgiving for what the nation can yet become.

Rutledge, aided by sounds and images generated through the convention's video system, traced the parallel development of home missions and national history. He cited the military chaplaincy, ministries and evangelism among Indians, blacks, and language groups, and development of churches as the population spilled into new territories.

When Southern Baptists formed a board to direct missions in the USA in 1845, only seven million of 20 million people were within its target territory. In the first year of operation, six missionaries were commissioned to work in five states on a budget of \$1,824.

The HMB's 1976-77 budget is \$22.9 million to support about 2,200 missionaries. Last year Southern Baptists designated \$17 million for home missions and sent 2,100 missionaries into 50 states and Puerto Rico to work among a population of 215 million.

Rutledge was hailed for his leadership in cementing Southern Baptists relationships with blacks and ethnic groups. During his tenure a Mexican-American was named to direct the language missions department and a black was named to lead cooperative ministries with National (predominantly black) Baptists.

Nearly half of the home missionaries work with 30 language groups, and Rutledge said that Southern Baptists now worship in more than 20 languages every Sunday.

Rutledge was also praised for laying down patterns of cooperative work between the national and state missions programs in the United States.

"His interest is in people, in evangelism," one observer said.

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Pastor Who Protested at SBC
Arrested for Bomb Threat

Baptist Press
6/21/76

By Dan Martin

HMB

ATLANTA (BP)--A Georgia pastor underwent psychiatric observation after charges of "making a terrorist threat and acts" were filed against him here.

Herschel Arnold Markham, 42, pastor of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in Fairburn, Ga. was arrested in downtown Atlanta about 5:45 a.m., Friday (June 18) after holding police and FBI agents at bay for more than an hour when he claimed to have a bomb in an attache case.

Markham also caused a stir at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Norfolk, Va., Thursday (June 17) as he made a determined effort to have the convention hear him read from social studies curriculum materials for fourth and fifth graders now in use in public and private schools.

In Atlanta, Markham reportedly waved his arms and said, 'I have in this briefcase a time bomb of information,' police said.

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Officials said he "raved incessantly about the world's problems" as he waved the case. Police quoted the pastor as saying; "Crime and violence are one of the bombs of the city,"

The officers said Markham spoke into the microphone of a cassette tape recorder as he stood on the downtown street. He was in front of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) building, which is next door to a site where the old Georgia Baptist Convention building formerly stood. The convention offices are now in another part of the city.

One FBI agent squatted close to Markham and thumbed through a Bible as Markham spoke. When officers determined the case could not be detonated from the outside, they rushed the minister. It took six officers about two minutes to wrestle Markham to the ground. As he was subdued, Markham shouted, "It was a literary bomb in every school," officers said.

As he was being led away, handcuffed, Markham shouted: "you made a fool of yourselves before God and the world." Then he broke into a rendition of the "Doxology" and sang several other hymns, police said.

As he was put in the police car. He said "I'd like to get out of here by Sunday. We're celebrating our 111th anniversary Sunday (at the Fairburn Church)."

Police took the case and suitcase to a special bomb trailer but said the "bomb" turned out to be "harmless papers."

Markham's bond was set at \$1,000 and he was ordered to undergo psychiatric evaluation.

He was not with his church--about 25 miles south of Atlanta---on Sunday (June 20). A spokesperson at the church, where Markham has been pastor five years, told Baptist Press: "The church was shocked. We had a good service. It was homecoming day and it was planned far in advance. Things were not normal, but we had a good service."

She said Markham's plight was not mentioned specifically except to tell the congregation that the pastor needed prayer.

"The church has mixed emotions about this," she said. "Some think he's sick but others think there may be other things involved...He's been in the fight over books..."

Mrs. Markham, reportedly has said she attributed the incident to the fact her husband was exhausted, that he had been riding the bus all night.

FBI agents confirmed that Markham arrived in Atlanta from Norfolk shortly before the incident.

At the convention, Markham set off a hostile debate over reports of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission (CLC) and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs (BJCPA) on social studies curriculum called, "MACOS (Man: A Course of Study)."

Markham called the materials, "luciferian, satanic, devil-filled" and wanted to read sections to messengers.

At one point, he stood in the Norfolk Scope convention center, shouting in defiance at convention officers on the platform.

He finally was allowed to speak to messengers after President Jaroy Weber of Lubbock Tex., was voted down by messengers as he attempted to adjourn the session.

Markham's objection was to a section of the CLC report on the materials in the 1975 convention. Messengers referred the MACOS materials to the CLC and BJCPA for study.

Staff members of both agencies studied the materials and recommended neither endorsement nor condemnation. Markham accused the agencies of not fulfilling their assignments and of "speaking with a forked tongue."

At one point in his attack, Markham threatened to sue the convention if he were not allowed to speak further.

He told a reporter he would take the matter all the way to the Supreme Court, if necessary.

Another reporter questioned him, but Markham said he would divulge no further details and to "talk to my attorney." He refused, however, to reveal his lawyer's name.

Messengers heard Markham for several minutes before a Cincinnati, Ohio, pastor, Johnny Tallent moved the CLC report be adopted, saying Markham had been given sufficient time to make his case but had failed to do so.

The motion passed overwhelmingly.

As the session adjourned, Markham patted Weber on the arm and said: "I love you brother."

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Festival Draws 4,000
To Washington Cathedral

Home of

Baptist Press
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WASHINGTON (BP)--More than 4,000 people, the largest ever to participate in worship at the Washington Cathedral, according to reports, took part in a Southern Baptist-sponsored "Bicentennial Festival of Praise" here.

The two-and-one-half-hour festival of choirs, congregational singing, a recital of American organ music, and a concert on the Cathedral's carillon was conceived by the Baptist Convention of Maryland as a climax to its music enlargement campaign, a convention spokesman said.

Cooperating in the festival were the Baptist Conventions of Pennsylvania-South Jersey, New York, District of Columbia, Virginia and Georgia, the church music department of the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, the spokesman said.

Greetings to the Baptists were brought by Dean of the Cathedral Francis B. Sayre Jr.

A 1,000-voice choir, the Centurymen (Radio-TV Commission's national chorus of Southern Baptist ministers of music), and Georgia's Sons of Jubal, a singing ministers of music chorus, were among highlights. Choirs came from as far as Colorado and Mississippi to participate.

To climax the event, the 4,000 participants sang the festival anthem, "Let Christ's Freedom Ring," also the event's theme. The anthem was composed by William J. Reynolds, who heads the church music department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville.

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New Orleans Adds
Two to Faculty

Home of

Baptist Press
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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Billy E. Simmons and Carlton Winberry were named to the faculty of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary by its trustees in special session here.

Simmons, to become associate professor of New Testament and Greek at the seminary, is currently professor of religion at East Texas Baptist College in Marshall.

Winberry who will assume responsibilities as assistant professor of New Testament and Greek, is associate professor of religion for Baptist College at Charleston, in Charleston, S.C.

Both Simmons and Winberry are graduates of the doctor of theology program at New Orleans Seminary.

Simmons is married to the former Miss Florene Abernathy of Bolton, Miss. The Simmons have a daughter, 14, and a son, 9.

Winberry is married to the former Miss Sarah Ann Hatten of Louisiana, and they have two sons, ages 14 and 10.

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