



**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Colorado Flood Victims  
Report Financial Needs

By Celeste Loucks

LOVELAND, Colo. (BP)--Praying came easy, said Bill Griffing, after a 19-foot wall of water burst through his front door and left him clinging to the day-bed floating in his living room.

As the water level rose, "I could see I was getting closer to the ceiling," recounted Griffing. "I was just wondering if I was going to be pushed against the ceiling and the air would be shut off."

Griffing was one of thousands caught by the churning waters of the flash flood which ripped through Colorado's Big Thompson Canyon near Denver late July 31.

"It was easy to pray," said the elderly man.

"I never did ask for my life to be spared. I prayed the publican's prayer: 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' Save my soul for Christ's sake."

In the wake of the flood, bodies of more than 130 dead--campers, tourists, residents--have been recovered.

A rescue team dug Griffing out of thigh-high silt which trapped him in his home after the flood waters receded. A helicopter airlifted him to Loveland hospital.

Griffing was safe. But his problems had just begun. Like many living along the Big Thompson River, he is retired, living on a fixed income. His children are scattered.

The RedCross provided emergency medical care. Several civic and religious groups around the state raised some money and offered canned goods and clothing. The Corps of Engineers now is clearing debris from property.

But damages are estimated from \$30 million to \$50 million. The flood destroyed 328 residences, 95 mobile homes and 52 businesses. At least 100 small private bridges were wiped out.

And one month after the disaster, people like Griffing are stranded without homes and tangled in the red tape of obtaining federal money to be loaned at 5 5/8 percent interest.

Colorado Baptist leaders contacted the Red Cross at the time of the flood to determine needs of victims. Inundated with canned goods and clothing, the Red Cross discouraged further assistance.

The Colorado Baptist General Convention will distribute \$8,000 sent by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board for flood relief.

Roy Owen, state missions director for Colorado, said few Colorado Baptists have responded with money or help. "We haven't known what the needs are," he explained.

Problems following the flood are on-going and will require long-range solutions, he thinks. "It's not the kind of thing you can take care of overnight."

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While state leaders maintain their watch-and-wait stance, some Colorado Baptists responded from the beginning.

In Loveland--only a few miles from the flood area, Charles Murray, the pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, led his members in a prayer chain the night of the flood. The following week, he worked day and night, identifying bodies and counseling families of flood victims.

His church members provided food and clothing. Later, they opened their homes to the homeless. Griffing, who had no church affiliation, moved into the home of a Trinity Baptist couple after he was dismissed from the hospital.

Trinity members David and Linda Conner, whose own home and property along the river was miraculously untouched by the flood waters, have been instrumental in obtaining names and needs of area flood victims who will share the Home Mission Board funds in the state.

Conner, whose next door neighbor died in the flood, took off work for several days and moved up and down the river, offering help and counseling for devastated neighbors.

As the initial shock of the disaster is wearing away, Conner notes an underlying desperation: "People are independent around here. They are shy to take money at first. They have said others need the money much worse than they do.

"But I think they are getting over that. Now they say what they need is money," Conner said.

And, he said, "when they come down to the realization of what the government is going to do--it isn't much." His wife added, "there is a lot of anger at having to go through the paperwork--and not getting much money."

Many of the retired people--in their sixties and seventies--cannot afford the loans. And, across the board, young families and old depleted their savings in the first month.

"When we hear of a need, we send someone to meet it, whether it is financial or spiritual," said Murray about the 300-member congregation. "We could use ten times more, but the money (coming from the Home Mission Board) will help.

"We're just doing what we can, with our limited resources. I believe a month from now is when the real crisis will be."

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(BP) Photos will be mailed to state Baptist papers.

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90-Year-Old Prof Talks  
To Students About Future

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By Michael Duduit

LOUISVILLE (BP)--When a 90-year old professor speaks to an audience of young seminary students, what does he talk about?

Why, the future, of course.

At least that was what Gaines S. Dobbins, emeritus professor of religious education, discussed recently with a crowded chapel audience at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

The pioneer religious educator, who has returned to Louisville this fall to resume his teaching duties at the seminary's Boyce Bible School, issued a challenge to students and faculty to respond to the needs of a changing world.

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"The seminary of the past and present must become the seminary of the future," the well-known author of 32 books said. "The churches of tradition must become the churches of action; the ministry of the irrelevant pulpit must become the ministry of dynamic change."

The next 25 years could determine the shape of the next 100 years, Dobbins told the young ministers.

"On you will fall the tremendous burden not only of a fruitful ministry during your brief lifetime but of determining the course of the next century," said Dobbins, whom many Southern Baptists believe is the denomination's greatest teacher in religious education.

Dobbins sees a revolution taking place today in the breaking down of rigid divisions between the "clergy" and the "laity." This return to the New Testament concept of "the priesthood of all believers," he told the seminarians, makes their future call to service a call to be a "learner leader," not a "loner leader."

"By 2001 world population, at the present rate, will have doubled, so we'll be right where we are now; and a multiplied force of ordained 'clergy' and appointed missionaries will be all but helpless in the face of insuperable difficulties of Christianizing the multiplied masses of unsaved," he asserted.

With clergy and laity working together, however the world can be reached for Christ, Dobbins believes.

"For the first time since Christ gave the commission it is now literally possible to go into all the world with the good news of salvation for all who will believe," he declared. "For the first time there are enough Baptists alone and enough money in their possession to obey the commission. For the first time the breakdown of the pagan religions and the repudiation of ritualistic and sacramental religion in many lands have created a vacuum into which the simple but powerful Baptist faith can be welcomed."

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Ratliff Joins  
Seminary Staff

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LOUISVILLE (BP)--F. William Ratliff Jr. has been named director of admissions and financial aid at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here, according to dean of student affairs Arthur Walker.

A native of Gallup, N. M., Ratliff was an instructor in Christian philosophy at the seminary last year. He is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy and Southern Seminary, where he earned the doctor of philosophy degree in 1975.

The former pastor and campus minister is a member of the American Academy of Religion.

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Mercer Buys INA Property  
To House Law School

Baptist Press  
9/7/76

MACON, Ga. (BP)--Mercer University, a Baptist school here, will purchase a historic building owned by the Insurance Company of North America (INA) and valued at \$4 million for \$1 million to house the university's law school.

INA will write off the remaining \$3 million as a gift to Mercer.

The three-story, 90,000 square foot Georgian Colonial building atop Macon's historic Coleman Hill features a replica of the tower and clock at Independence Hall where the INA was founded in 1792. The 15 columns in front of the building represent each of the states which formed the U. S. at that time.

Mercer officials said it will cost between \$500,000 to \$850,000 to convert the facility, which will allow an eventual law school enrollment increase from the present 250 to some 425.

The school will take possession of the building, which was completed in 1955 at a cost of \$2 million, on Jan. 1, 1977. But it will be some months before the law school actually moves in, pending interior modifications.

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