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Baptists Hammer and Saw  
Out Definition of Missions

By Larry Jerden

SALAMA, Honduras (BP)--The Florida construction worker, sweating under a blistering, tropical, Honduras sun, physically sawed and hammered out his own personal definition of missions.

It was missions--mainly with hammers, picks and shovels--for contractor Bill Kines and some 20 Florida Baptist Men and Royal Ambassador (RA) boys, along with a revival at night and personal Christian witnessing and medical care during the day.

The men and boys in the Baptist Brotherhood organizations, mostly members of North Park Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla., made the trip to Honduras to pipe water from a mountain spring to the village of Salama, about 80 miles east of La Ceiba, where Southern Baptist missionary Hoyt Roberts is stationed.

Roberts coordinated the week-long project, which the Florida men originated on a previous trip when they were in the country to help rebuild after Hurricane Fifi.

While on that trip, they discovered that Salama, a village of about 1,200 people, lacked an adequate water supply. They used a small river for washing clothes, bathing, cooking and drinking.

The Baptist men promised the people of Salama they would return and pipe spring water to the village.

"I came because of what Jesus has done for me," said Kines, a layman from First Baptist Church in Hialeah, Fla. "I don't have the eloquence of a pastor or the fire of an evangelist--but 23 years ago I came to the foot of the cross. I was saved to serve," he said.

More than 3,000 feet of plastic pipe, furnished by the Honduras Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries), was stored in the village's Baptist church--which the Floridians built in 9½ days the year before.

North Park Baptist Church bought and shipped a trencher for the project. And the church's pastor, D. J. Abernathy, accompanied the men and preached at night. All the men and boys paid their own transportation and food, and slept in sleeping bags.

Despite 16-hour work days and overcoming obstacles, the water was not to flow through the pipes that week. Twice in one day, the trencher chain broke. Plywood to build forms for the reservoir was too thin, and the nails for it were too big. Even locating the spring was not a simple matter.

The spring was well-enough known, but there was hope of a better source higher up the mountain. A search produced nothing.

Even getting to and from Salama had been a bone-jarring, hot, dusty, daylong undertaking. The road was unpaved, narrow, rutted and dusty.

Why take on such a project?

"I love these people," Kines answered. "We can present Christ to them through our gifts."

Kines' pilgrimage to service in Honduras began two years ago when he saw a headline in the Florida Baptist Witness, state newspaper for Florida Southern Baptists. "Wanted, Men to Go to Honduras." He read the article "about a doz n times . . . Two of us from

Hialeah came with these guys and built this church."

Kines was home 10 days then went back to Honduras. He went to Antigua twice to build mission stations. When the Baptist men left there, some 250 people were holding Sunday School and church services.

Kines and Bill Hewett, a deacon and RA director for North Park Church, were previously disenchanted and skeptical about missions giving through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget. Now they have a different perspective.

"About seven or eight years ago," Kines said, "I became disenchanted with the Cooperative Program. I still feel there is waste, but . . . after this experience I wouldn't stand in the way of one dime reaching the mission field."

Hewett, who owns a window repair business and has been on three Honduras mission trips--two at his own expense --said:

"I was a real skeptic about how our money was being spent in missions . . . but . . . this has really opened my eyes. The money is well spent . . ."

As an RA director, Hewett was excited about the chance to teach missions to boys through firsthand experience.

Another project team member, Robert Kerstan, Ph. D., an engineering dean, entered the RA program about eight years ago as a coach and decided he was not going to "just babysit" for anyone.

"That's when we took up camping and hiking," which are integral parts of the Southern Baptist RA program. North Park RAs who went to Honduras had already notched 150 miles on the Appalachian Trail, climbed 12,000-foot Mt. Baldy in Arizona and mastered 24-hour survival hikes.

But the Salama project story has a couple of sad endings. The week after he returned to Florida, Kerstan was hospitalized with numbness and some paralysis from his neck down. He spent 17 days in traction and his speech was affected. Tests proved it to be a reaction to a malaria shot booster.

At last report, he was recuperating well, looking toward complete recovery.

And even though the reservoir was completed, 3,000 feet of pipe laid and numerous spigots installed in Salama, the people still have to walk to the water source to carry water back on their heads.

Time simply ran out, Hewett said. "The reservoir gave us the problem. We couldn't get the water level high enough to flow through the pipes. . . Since arriving back in the States, we feel we have the problem solved. . ."

The final obstacles appear to be time and Kerstan's health. The crew wants him to be able to go back with them to Honduras.

"Long after they've forgotten our names, Kerstan said during the week in Salama, "They'll know that someone, some Christian folks, came and put in a water system. They'll know it every time they take a drink of water."



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Missionary Released  
From Jail in Colombia

TULUA, Colombia (BP)-- Daniel H. (Dan) Rupp, Southern Baptist missionary who was involved in an accident in which two Colombians died, was released from jail here.

Rupp was freed Dec. 21 on an "unconditional release," according to J. Bryan Brasington, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for Western South America.

"Many who are involved in accidents of this nature and are released have to report back every few days," Brasington said. "The very fact that Dan was released unconditionally indicates the accident was not his fault."

The deaths occurred on Dec. 16 when a 42-year-old woman and a four-year-old boy darted out from behind a truck and into the path of Rupp's automobile.

"There will be a trial sometime in the future," Brasington stated, "but there is a good possibility a favorable settlement can be made out of court."

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Million Volunteers Needed  
To Win America to Christ

Baptist Press  
12/29/76

HONOLULU (BP)--The possibility of a million volunteers working to evangelize America was raised here during the annual meeting of Southern Baptist state evangelism directors.

"It would not be impossible to have one million volunteers participate in this effort to evangelize and congregationalize our nation for Christ," Roy Edgemon told the state directors of evangelism.

"The people want to go out. They want to pay their own way. They want the necessary training to go effectively," added Edgemon, director of volunteer projects correlation for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Evangelization and congregationalization are the twin facets of the Home Mission Board's emphasis in Bold Mission Thrust (BMT), the strategy designed to win America to Christ by the end of the decade.

Bold Mission Thrust--the board's part of the Southern Baptist Convention's Bold Mission emphasis--is designed to give everyone in the nation a chance to hear and accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and the opportunity to share in the witness and ministry of a New Testament fellowship of believers.

Conference participants also were introduced to an innovative method of witness training, heard reports on nationwide evangelism training strategies and were challenged to open their lives to a "personal awakening and renewal."

The conference was sponsored by the Home Mission Board's evangelism section, headed by C. B. Hogue. In his address to the directors, Hogue noted baptisms for 1975-76 totaled less than 400,000 for the first time in six years.

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"We do not want to dwell morbidly over the decline, but these statistics represent people still lost," he said of the decline.

"During 1976, the Bicentennial year and an election year," Hogue declared, "it would have been marvelous if we had said, 'Lord, you have given us 200 of the best years of a country. In grateful appreciation, we are going to do our best to win this nation for you.' But we didn't; and that opportunity is lost."

Edgemon, in his report concerning volunteers, said some 80 letters are "pouring into my office every week from people wanting a place to serve. Many want to give the rest of their lives to this effort--others want to give a month or so. And we have not begun to try to get the word out about what we're going to try to do in this area of volunteers."

The innovation in witness training was introduced by Robert Saul, director of the personal evangelism department. He said of the system that utilizes a film cartridge and audio projector: "We see this as revolutionary in training Southern Baptists to share their faith in Jesus Christ.

"This method of 'decision response learning' is extremely effective. Industry, business and education communities have benefitted from it for years. We are using it for a different purpose, but our testing has been overwhelmingly positive."

According to Saul, churches of all sizes and types can use this approach to witnessing training on a continuing basis. He said training programs are being developed in lifestyle evangelism, visitation and specialized evangelism. The materials are now available through Saul's department.

Ron Dunn, vocational evangelist and Bible conference speaker, told participants: "We seem to be seeking more what the Lord can do for us than we are seeking the Lord. We must realize that activity will not draw us to spirituality. We are running around like we know there is no powder at the end of the fuse we keep burning.

"It is not so much to serve the Lord as it is to seek him and then serve him as a result of the seeking that we must emphasize. We must set our heart to seek the Lord and not settle for anything less."

The participants of the conference also heard a report on their national "Growing an Evangelistic Church" seminars held in Atlanta during 1976. Some 248 persons attended three seminars conducted by the evangelism section. The seminar presents the central strategy of the section.

A number of the workshops will be held during 1977.

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

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Prayer Day For Carter, Ford  
Called for by Ala. Church

Baptist Press  
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BIRMINGHAM (BP)--A Southern Baptist church here has called for January 16 to be designated a national day of prayer for the U. S. President.

The 750-member church has already proclaimed the day as National Prayer for the President Day, stating "its desire that the administration of President-elect Jimmy Carter should walk into office on a "nationwide carpet of prayer."

J. L. "Lindy" Martin, the church's interim pastor and national chairman for the effort, told Baptist Press the congregation is encouraging people across the nation to prayer not only for Carter and his administration but for outgoing President Gerald Ford and his staff.

Martin, an American Indian from Pembroke, N. C., said he has written to Ford assuring him of the church's prayers and asking the President to declare Jan. 16 as National Prayer

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for the President Day. The minister has also written to governors of all 50 states asking them to proclaim the day of prayer in their respective states. It was too early to determine response, he noted.

Some 15,000 pieces of mail have been sent to religious leaders and churches across a wide spectrum of faiths nationally, with 10,000 more yet to be mailed, said Martin, who is dean of student services at Samford University, a Baptist school here.

"We're hoping the news media will pick up on this to give the effort wide exposure," Martin noted. "We're asking churches and individuals across the country to declare their National Prayer for the President Day and observe it with us on Jan. 16."

The prayer day movement has coordinators in each of the 50 states from a wide cross section of faiths, Martin said.

"We want the new administration to go into office tuned in to God's leadership," Martin explained. "We believe that the good things in our nation's heritage have come from dependence on God. We need this kind of trust today."

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Carter, Plains, Ford at SBC  
Dominate Baptist Top 10

Baptist Press  
12/29/76

By Robert O'Brien

NASHVILLE (BP)--The unprecedented religious dimension of the U. S. presidential victory of Southern Baptist Jimmy Carter over Episcopalian Gerald Ford dominated the balloting for the top 10 Baptist Press (BP) stories of 1976.

Both the candidacy and victory of Carter, whose "born again" Christianity cast an unprecedented national media spotlight on the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and evangelicals, collected 36 first place votes (including two ties) out of 41 ballots received in the annual (BP) poll of 33 state Baptist newspaper editors and the (BP) national office staff and six (BP) bureau chiefs. Only one editor failed to vote, resulting in a probable record 97.6 percent return.

The controversy surrounding the racial confrontation at Carter's home church in Plains, Ga., finished an equally dominant second, and Ford's appearance as the first incumbent U. S. President to address the annual Southern Baptist Convention meeting was uncontested in third place.

The U. S. presidential race showed vote getting power in at least two other national religious year-end ballots, finishing first in the Religious News Service's top 10 (ahead of the Episcopal Church's approval of women priests) and second in the Religious Newswriters Association's top 10 (close behind the Episcopal decision).

After the top three in the (BP) poll, which collected 381.2, 240.8 and 220.5 points respectively in (BP)'s numerical system of rating individual ballot rankings, nine stories ran a hotly-contested race for the remaining seven spots.

The continuing Baptist controversy over the charismatic movement (1975's number one story and 1974's sixth place finisher) took a fairly comfortable fourth place finish in 1976 with 169.8 points.

The SBC's Bold Mission objective to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the entire world by 2000 and double missionary forces (to a total of 10,000) at home and abroad by that time ranked fifth with 160.7 points, including two first place votes.

In close voting for the sixth, seventh and eighth places, the controversy on several fronts about governmental interference in church and denominational institutions collected 143.20 points for a sixth place finish.

The controversy surrounding the discovery by Baptist Press that the ultraconservative, independent "Baptist Literature Board" (BLB) was using non-denominational Scripture Press literature, rather than literature "produced by Southern Baptists" as advertised, was ranked seventh with 140.6 points. The BLB was organized by some members of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, an independent organization dedicated to ferreting out Southern Baptist "liberals."

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Escalation by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board of disaster relief efforts abroad, including appropriations of relief funds from a record \$1.67 million given by Southern Baptists for that purpose, finished eighth with 139.4 points. It received one first place vote.

Events surrounding the controversy over television and morality finished ninth with 125.1 points. The subject includes a federal court decision that TV's "Family Viewing Time" is unconstitutional, adverse reaction by broadcasters and Baptist leaders to that decision, the announcement by the National Association of Broadcasters and at least two networks that the decision will be appealed, a series of public hearings on television and morality across the nation by the SBC Christian Life Commission, and actions by state Baptist conventions lashing TV sex and violence.

The tenth ranking went to the continuing dramatic story of SBC missionaries ministering amidst trouble, tension and turmoil in such areas as Lebanon, Rhodesia, Ecuador, the Philippines and Indonesia.

That story collected 117.6 points to edge out events surrounding the SBC's racial "growing pains" (111.9 points) and the burgeoning growth of SBC educational institutions (106.5 points), which have shown a 28 percent enrollment increase in the past five years, including record seminary and Seminary Extension enrollments.

The "growing pains" issue involved a series of stories showing a mixture of positive and negative elements of black-white relationships among Southern Baptists. Southern Baptists have had a 76 percent growth in black SBC congregations over the past three years, elected blacks to leadership positions in several areas and confronted crises in some places in which blacks have apparently been excluded because of race.

One such crisis, at Plains Baptist Church, was resolved when members of Carter's home congregation approved the motion of Southern Baptist missionary W. Jerome Ethredge, a former deacon chairman at the church, to drop racial barriers.

That story overlapped with the continuing story of SBC race relations. In fact, the top three stories, which the (BP) staff decided were important enough to merit separate places on the ballot, were definitely entwined.

One editor ranked the Carter election, the Plains controversy, and the Ford appearance at the SBC in a three-way tie for first and wrote that they should have been given one place on the ballot under the heading of the unprecedented national media exposure the three--in combination--brought to Southern Baptists.

Another editor tied the Carter election and Plains for first, noting that he found it impossible to separate the two.

Indeed, it was a landmark year for Southern Baptists as Jimmy Carter, a deacon and Sunday School teacher in Plains and trustee of the SBC Brotherhood Commission, became the first Southern Baptist active in denominational affairs and the second Southern Baptist to win the U. S. presidency.

Ford's appearance at the SBC and the Plains controversy took on increased significance because of Carter's near miraculous climb from obscurity to the Democratic presidential nomination. They may have been the result of that candidacy--especially Plains when a non-Baptist black minister sought membership in the closing hours before the election. SBC leaders, although they faced criticism for the political ramifications of Ford's invitation to speak at the SBC, said he was invited as a U. S. President in the Bicentennial, not a candidate. Whether he would have accepted the invitation if a prominent Southern Baptist had not been his opponent is another question.

So, although each of the top three stories had their own fascinating aspects, from the debate and analysis over a "born again" Southern Baptist seeking the presidency, to the impetus given race relations by the soul-searching at Plains, to a President speaking to the SBC in an election year--or any year for that matter.

It was a year to remember.

**(BP)**

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