



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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## 'Signs Not Encouraging for Renewed Mission to Vietnam'

RICHMOND (BP)--Does Vietnam's willingness to return the bodies of a dozen Americans who had been listed as missing in action signal the beginning of a new opportunity to have missions work in that country?

William R. Wakefield, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for Southeast Asia, thinks not.

"I do not see the returning of the bodies as an encouragement toward the hope of Vietnam being opened to missionaries again," he said. "There doesn't appear to be an opportunity under the present government for the return of missionaries."

Wakefield compared the Vietnam situation with that of China. "While we have had a great desire to re-enter and begin sharing the gospel again in China, this has not been possible. Communist countries generally have not been willing to grant visas to missionaries," he added.

"While we hope and pray this may some day change, there is no evidence at the present time that Vietnam will be an exception to this rule," Wakefield noted.

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## North Brazil Seminary Celebrates 75 Years

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RECIFE, Brazil (BP)--The North Brazil Baptist Theological Seminary celebrated its 75th anniversary in week-long ceremonies here.

Baker J. Cauthen, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's executive director, was the main speaker for the event celebrating the founding 52 years ago of one of the oldest Baptist seminaries in South America.

The institution was founded April 1, 1902 in the home of Southern Baptist Missionary Solomon Ginsburg. Today, it offers degrees in theology, religious education and sacred music. The seminary has a day school, night school and correspondence courses. Students from every Brazilian state and some from Portugal are enrolled in the correspondence courses.

Southern Baptist missionary David Mein of Georgia is the seminary's president.

Cauthen, accompanied by Mrs. Cauthen, was to visit other areas of Baptist work in Brazil, including Brasilia, Salvador, Fortaleza, Manaus, and Belem, before returning to Richmond, Va.

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## Missionaries Make Changes In Troubled African Areas

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RICHMOND (BP)--Adapting to meet Africa's changing conditions, Southern Baptist missionaries have evacuated from one area in Rhodesia but are returning in a limited way to work in Uganda.

Davis L. Saunders, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for eastern and southern Africa, described the changes as he returned from a three-week tour of his area.

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Political activity in the Sessami area of northwestern Rhodesia led three Southern Baptist missionaries to close the mission station in Gokwe, Saunders said. Missionary nurse Carolyn Roberson of Texas and Mr. and Mrs. Karl D. Babb of Florida have left Gokwe and will operate out of neighboring Sanyati. The Babbs, appointed for religious education work, have been in language study in Sessami.

A Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) couple at Gokwe, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Steiger, also evacuated, Saunders reported. Steiger flew out the MAF plane which had been used by Southern Baptists to operate clinics in the Sessami area. The clinics will still be operated from a base at the Baptist hospital at Sanyati, with the plane also being based there.

In Uganda, Southern Baptist missionaries have returned, where possible, in order to keep the door open for future work and to encourage the Baptist people there, Davis said.

G. Webster Carroll of West Virginia, one of three missionary men who went back into Uganda on March 13, has been given a special three-month pass to remain in the country while his new work permit is being processed. Carroll's wife and children are still in Kenya.

Harry B. Garvin of Texas came back out of Uganda on March 17 but plans to go in and out of Uganda from time to time to assist in work in Soroti. He and his family are temporarily meeting a need for missionary personnel in Embu, Kenya.

Mr. and Mrs. James L. Rice of Virginia, whose work permit from the Uganda government is good for another two years, were scheduled to return from Kenya in late March to continue their work in Jinja. Rice is business manager and treasurer for the Uganda missionaries.

The missionaries reported that worship services at the Uganda Baptist churches are continuing without interference.

The three Southern Baptist couples serving in Uganda were out of the country in late February when Ugandan President Idi Amin ordered all Americans to report to him at a mass meeting. Later this meeting was postponed, then apparently canceled, but the Southern Baptist couples decided to remain temporarily in Kenya until the situation stabilized. Both the Carrolls and the Garvins have children attending school near Nairobi, Kenya.

Amin has been linked to the death of Anglican Archbishop Janani Luwum and with persecution of Christian tribesmen. He has denied that he was responsible for Luwum's death.

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Over 114 Million Scriptures  
Distributed in U. S., 1976

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NEW YORK (BP)--Scripture distribution in the United States through the American Bible Society (ABS) reached 114,769,046 copies in 1976, according to its annual report to the Southern Baptist Convention, released here.

The U. S. figure alone represents an increase of 5,299,625 over 1975 and helped to push the worldwide member United Bible Societies total to 340 million--a new record, the report noted.

The ABS report lauded Southern Baptists' role in producing of the "Good News Bible," in Today's English Version, "a style of language readily understood by most people."

It was in November 1961 that M. Wendell Belew of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board suggested a need for Scriptures "translated for the fourth grade level." A month later, the project was underway under the direction of Robert G. Bratcher, a Southern Baptist.

The New Testament was published in 1966 and the entire "Good News Bible" in December 1976. One million copies of the new translation were circulated in December alone, one month after publication, and ABS officials expect distribution to soar to a record 10 million copies within the first year. Strong support for distribution has come from Southern Baptist churches, conventions and agencies, the report indicated.

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The ABS budget for 1976 was \$13.6 million, the largest in its history, which was an increase of \$675,000 over 1975.

Income from churches was \$1.7 million of which \$275,631 came from Southern Baptists, who continued their "steady leveled of support," according to the report. The denomination was second in ABS giving at the yearend for the first time since 1963. The American Lutheran Church topped all groups supporting the ABS, with contributions of \$343,627 for 1976.

Other ABS activities in 1976 included:

--Publication of "Selected Passages from the Bible," containing the New Testament and selected passages from the Old Testament in the King James Version, in large print;

--11.47 million Bicentennial selections for the country's 200th birthday celebration; 15.2 million scripture imprints, of which 4.6 million were requested by Southern Baptists;

--Bible-a-Month Club, with 208,427 members enrolled and pledged to contribute at least \$3.00 monthly to provide Bibles.

--A new volunteer program was launched to find local church representatives for the ABS, with 9,650 enrolled. By yearend 1976, 25,382 men and women were ABS volunteers, "bringing scriptures to churches, hospitals, nursing homes, schools and businesses all over the country." Volunteers now operate 1,545 Scripture Courtesy Centers, the report cited.

The ABS contributed \$5,649,892 to the United Bible Societies World Service Budget in 1976, much of which is "assisting missionary activities of Southern Baptists" in other countries.

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First Southern, Denver  
Votes to Disband

Baptist Press  
3/29/77

DENVER, Colo. (BP)--First Southern Baptist Church here, an inner-city congregation housed in a former Jewish Temple, has voted to disband.

The disbanding of the church came in the face of declining support from church members, according to a report in the Rocky Mountain Baptist, weekly newspaper of Colorado Baptists.

"The church had been growing steadily weaker, and families were moving to suburban churches," said George Gaskins, director of the Denver Baptist Association who served in recent weeks as supply pastor for the church.

Plans are underway, Gaskins said, to continue the church's ministry to the inner-city elderly. The church has sponsored a senior adult lunch program, providing meals for between 90-150 persons twice a month. Other churches have been enlisted to continue the program until the First Southern building is sold, he said.

Gaskins noted that in its first report to the association in 1956--the year after First Southern, Denver, was organized--the church recorded 165 resident members and had an average Sunday School attendance of 111.

"The high point came in 1961, when average Sunday School attendance reached 183," Gaskins said: "It has declined steadily since then."

The congregation will continue as a legal entity until its next business meeting April 13, Gaskins told the Rocky Mountain Baptist.

"This will permit them to transfer title to their building back to the Colorado Baptist Loan Corporation," take care of members' church letters and of other legal matters, he said.

Steinem Sees Positive Signs  
In Church, Cites Problems

By Debbie Stewart

WACO, Tex. (BP)--Journalist Gloria Steinem said here that women, blacks, and other groups that have suffered discrimination should be "part of a large and leading world-wide movement against castes or systems that divide us."

The noted minorities' advocate and editor of Ms. magazine was at Baylor University, a Baptist school, for Woman's Day as the Frances B. McCall Lecturer. The annual lecture series is funded from a fund in memory of the first wife of Baylor University President Abner V. McCall, a school spokesman said.

One of the goals of the continuing "human rights revolution," Steinem said, is to elevate the position of each person as a unique and valued human being.

"When we look at the background of religions," she said, "we see that in most of their origins they stop to understand the value of each individual human being."

However, Steinem said, the church was influenced later by development of patriarchal society with political motivations for power. Thus, according to Steinem, some religions have "tended to make sacred the power structure on earth," in order to encourage people to "obey particular political dictates now for life after death. We need to reemphasize that there is a presence of something sacred in each human being."

Positive signs within the church, Steinem said, include the increased voice and vote of women in some denominations, the rewriting of some religious literature with the idea that "God has no gender" and the ordination of women.

Church history, she added, shows that the status of women in the church declined as the status of the male priesthood increased.

"Women in the church now are working very courageously and I greatly admire them for it," Steinem said. She recalled that farm labor organizer Cesar Chavez has described two kinds of churches--of buildings and people.

"There are women and men seeking churches of people . . . women and men trying to democratize the church," Steinem said:

"Most of these people are working" to rescue what is universal and good in the church."

Concerning her own church background, Steinem said that she was affiliated with the Unitarian Church "to the extent that I was raised in any religion." She said that her family background includes both reformed Jews, who fled Russia to avoid the orthodoxy of the Jews" and "European Protestants."

She continued her remarks on world-wide discrimination--based on sex, race or religion--by saying that the human rights revolution could be a very unifying force which "just might make love possible for the first time."

The natural order of society and religion do value individual human worth, Steinem said.