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-- FEATURES
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77-70

Vietnam Today--
A Clouded Picture

By Leland Webb

RICHMOND (BP)--What's happening in Vietnam today?

"We just hear rumors," laments Southern Baptist missionary Peyton M. Moore, formerly assigned to South Vietnam and now in Hong Kong. "I wish there was some way we could get an honest report of conditions. We hear on one hand that churches are still meeting, but we also hear that these meetings are really political rallies.

"We hear there may be some Christians now working for the national political body. This doesn't surprise me. I'd be more surprised to learn our churches had never been infiltrated. Most of us realized that probably our churches had communists either attending regularly or even as members," Moore says.

"I believe a number of churches and mission points will cease to function or merge with other groups, as persecution or restriction sets in," if it hasn't already happened, says missionary Robert C. Davis, now back in the United States:

"But there should be a good number of small groups that can continue to function under almost any conditions."

Religious freedom is assured in Vietnam, but Christians often are not able to use it, reports missionary Samuel M. James, now the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's field representative for East Asia. "In some areas they are undergoing rather severe pressure," sometimes in subtle form," James notes.

The communist government, James states, wants all Protestant churches under one organization and, thus, easier to control. Fear also limits church attendance, he said, because the people don't know what to expect from the government and are afraid they will be punished for worshipping.

"I wonder why more isn't exposed in the public press," ponders Moore. "...Maybe because of our national sense of guilt we are trying to forget unhappy experiences. But the American press isn't interested in getting the truth about Vietnam today, as it was back in the days when there was reporting about defoliation and napalm," he says.

A nationally syndicated columnist recently reported on the bleak outlook today in what was South Vietnam. The columnist quoted a French Canadian who had lived in Vietnam for more than 25 years and who had stayed in South Vietnam for more than a year after the nation came under communist control.

The Observer reported that productivity had declined because of the loss of incentive due to heavy taxation and that under government regulations arrest is easy because, "Everyone is always a little guilty." He described the communist regime as showing "continual hardening" and estimated that as many as 400,000 citizens had been sent to "re-education camps."

According to Mrs. Moore, "We think of the Christians in Vietnam daily. Many times I have had peace in my heart because I believe God's word tells us he is always with us. Just as he was with our missionaries through all of our Vietnam experiences, I feel he is with our Christians still there. I have faith to believe they are continuing to worship and to witness."

Some Vietnamese Christians asked before the missionaries left, "How do we go underground?" recalls Audrey (Mrs. William T.) Roberson, now in the Philippines.

"There will be some falling away," Moore acknowledges. "This has been true," he says, "in any society where Christianity has been put to the sword. But . . . others will remain true. The church will undergo a certain purging, but it will come forth with a smaller, and, perhaps, a truer representation."

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James Bobo, now assigned to Kowloon, Hong Kong, notes that "one of the strongest Christians among Baptists is still in Vietnam. I hope and pray he is an underground person and still strong in the faith. Perhaps, in a secretive way, he can share among other Christians."

Moore muses, "I'm wondering if we as Southern Baptists are doing all that we can and ought to do to make contact with Baptists still in Vietnam."

" . . . If there is any way we could give moral, spiritual and financial aid to Baptists still in Vietnam, we owe it to them," he says.

-30-

Adapted from The Commission, monthly magazine of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Leland Webb is managing editor of The Commission.

(BP) Photos dated 4/11/77 mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Sullivan Gives Resolutions
Procedure for SBC

Baptist Press
4/18/77

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Daniel Grant, president of Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., has been appointed chairman of the committee on resolutions which will report to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), which meets in annual session here, June 14-16.

SBC President James L. Sullivan of Nashville appointed the committee in consultation with SBC vice presidents Dotson M. Nelson of Birmingham and Mrs. Carl E. Bates of Charlotte, N. C.

Sullivan urged all persons submitting resolutions to (1) do so in advance in writing, wherever possible, to help streamline the procedure; (2) check resolutions passed by previous conventions (in convention annuals found in many church offices) to avoid repetition; (3) consult whenever possible, with the chairman or members of the resolutions committee before a resolution is submitted to the convention; (4) be prepared to turn in a written copy of the resolution at the platform if it is made from the floor.

"These simple steps will avoid confusion and overlapping," Sullivan said.

Resolutions to be submitted should be sent as soon as possible to Daniel Grant, SBC Resolutions Committee, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark. 71923.

Time and place of the committee's pre-convention session will be announced.

Other committee members, besides Grant, are Al Shackelford, editor Baptist and Reflector, Brentwood, Tenn.; Mrs. Claude Kirkpatrick of Baton Rouge, La.; Conrad R. Willard, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Miami, Fla.; Hunter M. Jones of Wichita Falls, Tex.; Henry E. Love of Memphis, Tenn.; Alvin W. Wood of Anchorage, Alaska; Morgan Patterson, dean, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.; Mrs. Leroy (Sara) Parker, Greensboro, N. C.; D. G. Crewse, Boise, Idaho.

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77-70

Saunders Confident Cannata
Not Involved Politically

RICHMOND (BP)--Davis L. Saunders, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa, said here. He is confident that medical missionary Dr. Samuel R. J. Cannata Jr. of Ethiopia has not been involved politically in that country.

Saunders made the statement April 15, as Ethiopian officials continue to detain Dr. Cannata in Addis Ababa, capital city of the East Africa nation. Dr. Cannata was held for questioning after a search of his home in remote Alem Ketema, April 3.

No information on the nature of the questioning has been released, and no specific charges have been preferred against Dr. Cannata.

Several days before Cannata was detained, as searches began in Addis Ababa, government officials told newsmen that the searches were aimed at the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency and three Ethiopian groups which they blame for a wave of assassinations and turmoil in Ethiopia.

In his statement April 15, Saunders cited the long-standing Foreign Mission Board position of noninvolvement of its missionaries in political affairs. This policy, reaffirmed by the board in February 1976, states:

"Missionaries are to maintain carefully their role of spiritual ministry, refraining from any relationship with intelligence operations of any nation (including the United States) or with political movements in the nations where they serve. They are to avoid anything that might make unclear their purpose of Christian witness and service and thus jeopardize their witness for Christ."

In telephone conversations with the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond and John J. Hurt, editor of the Baptist Standard in Dallas, Mrs. Cannata reports that she and their children are allowed to visit Dr. Cannata and take him food in the police guard house where he is being detained. She said she spends several hours with him each day.

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Pope Duncan Accepts
Stetson Presidency

Baptist Press
4/18/77

DELAND, Fla. (BP)--Pope A. Duncan, president of Georgia Southern College, Statesboro, Ga., since 1971, has been elected president of Stetson University, a Baptist school here.

The 56-year-old veteran educator and administrator will assume his responsibilities as the seventh president of Florida's oldest institution of higher learning, about July 1. He succeeds John E. Johns, who left last summer to accept the presidency of Furman University, Greenville, S. C.

Duncan, a Glasgow, Ky., native, served as president of South Georgia College, 1964-68, when he joined the Georgia Southern administration as vice president. Before that, he was professor of church history at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C., 1953-63.

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Duncan has also served as dean, Brunswick (Ga.) College; professor of religion at Stetson on two occasions, 1946-48 and 1949-53; director of religious activities, 1945-46, and professor of church history, 1948-49, at Mercer University; fellow in church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1944-45; and assistant and then instructor in physics at the University of Georgia, 1938-41, during undergraduate college days.

A member of Phi Beta Kappa, Duncan has been president of the Georgia Association of Colleges and the Georgia Association of Educators and chairman of the Council of Presidents of the Southern Consortium for International Education.

An ordained Baptist minister and the son of a Baptist minister, Duncan has served pastorates in Kentucky and interim pastorates in a number of churches, including First Baptist Church, DeLand, and Wieuca Road Baptist Church, Atlanta.

He earned a bachelor of science in physics and math and master of science in physics from the University of Georgia and master of theology and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. He has done post doctoral study at Union Theological Seminary, the University of Zurich and Oxford University.

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

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SBC Child, Bus and
Postal Service Announced

Baptist Press
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KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Arrangements for preschool child care, bus shuttle service and postal service have been announced for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) here, June 14-16.

The preschool child care center, located in Bartle Exposition Hall just west of the SBC registration desk, will open 30 minutes before each session and close 30 minutes after.

Costs are \$3.50 per child for each session and \$2.50 for each additional child in the same family, with an additional charge for late pickup. If the child eats a noon meal in the facility, the charge will be 50 cents extra.

Bus shuttle service between the convention center and most hotels will be provided. As in previous years, tickets will be sold to those riding busses.

Shuttles will operate for the morning and evening sessions. Since automobile parking will be difficult to find within three to five blocks of the Convention Center, a spokesman in Kansas City encourages SBC messengers to use the shuttle service.

The Kansas City postmaster will provide a postal station in Bartle Exposition Hall, located near the registration desk, with full postal service from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the convention.

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Two Baptist Colleges
Among State-Aid Defendants

Baptist Press
4/18/77

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--In the wake of a court suit against two Missouri Baptist schools' involvement in a state student aid program, the Missouri Baptist Convention's executive board voted here to express "full confidence" in a convention elected committee studying impact of public funds going to colleges.

Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, and William Jewell College, Liberty, were among several defendants in the suit, filed by Missourians for Separation of Church and State, charging that the Missouri College Student Grant Program is being administered unconstitutionally and in violation of the laws of Missouri.

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Joining the two Baptist schools as defendants are the commissioner of higher education, the nine members of the Missouri Coordinating Board on Higher Education, and seven other church-related colleges.

The Missouri executive board's statement said, "We regret the lack of cooperation and confidence expressed by the recent legal action taken by critics who are bypassing due process as adopted by democratic and Baptist procedures . . . We call our brothers and sisters to await the report of the special study committee."

A. L. Palmer, pastor of First Baptist Church, Trenton, Mo., is president of Missourians for Separation of Church and State and a trustee of Southwest Baptist College.

Among those joining in the suit are former Missouri Baptist Convention President Hugh Wamble, a professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City; W. Ross Edwards, retired editor of the Word and Way, news publication of Missouri Baptists; Roger D. Briggs, pastor of First Baptist Church, Bethany, Mo.; and James Tatum of Anderson, Mo., a former member of the Missouri Convention's executive board.

In a news release about the suit, Palmer said the student aid program is administered unconstitutionally because "grants are going to students which attend schools which discriminate on the grounds of religion and sex in hiring administrators, faculty or staff, or in admitting students."

The news release stated the state constitutional provisions are violated because the program "is being administered in such way as to support religion directly or indirectly, to entangle the state with the church-related schools, and to encourage church-related schools to give up or slacken their religion-related practices in exchange for public funds."

In November of 1976, Southwest Baptist College and William Jewell College were found to be in compliance with the state laws pertaining to the Missouri Grant program. Students attending those schools were declared eligible for continued participation.

The next month Hannibal-LaGrange College, a Baptist school, was ruled ineligible because it openly discriminated in hiring practices on the basis of religion.

The statement from the Missouri Baptist executive board, originating from a motion by Lester Harnish of St. Louis, came in response to an emotional appeal from William Jewell president, Tom Field.

"I am disturbed by the actions of this self-appointed group of messiahs who are dedicated to saving us from ourselves," Field said. "The colleges make a contribution to Missouri Baptist life far beyond their numerical strength and financial contributions of the convention."

In an apparent reference to those who initiated the law suit concerning the administration of the Missouri Grant Program, Field said, "They are creating chaos. They are dividing the convention."

"In some quarters," he explained, "It is being said that the Missouri Baptist Convention is in part responsible for the latest suit. I think it is high time the executive board disassociate itself from this group and become an advocate for its institutions."

A spokesman for Southwest Baptist College, Bill Jester, vice president for student affairs, said, "We are disappointed at the suit, of course. The program has already been declared constitutional by the state Supreme Court."

Jester said the timing of the suit might affect some students as they try to put together a financial package to pay for their college education. "We are counting on continuation of the program while the issues are decided in the courts, especially since the majority of money distributed through the Missouri Grant programs goes to schools not named in the suit."

Plains Church Leadership
Said Planning New Church

PLAINS, Ga. (BP)--Several members of Plains Baptist Church began laying plans here for the possible formation of a new Southern Baptist church in the town, after the congregation declined, 87-51, to reinstate its pastor, Bruce Edwards, who resigned under pressure on Feb. 17.

Attendance, receipts and general participation in all programs of the Plains Church have dropped drastically, according to reports, since Edwards' resignation was called for in the Feb. meeting.

Edwards, who opposed a 1965 resolution barring blacks from the church--eventually revoked and replaced by a screening committee process--said he was not "giving any support to those discussing the possibility of a new church.

"If they begin a new church, I want it not to be because of me but just because they think that's what is right," Edwards said.

A Plains church member described the formation of a new church as a "firm possibility." The present church was described as "in a shambles," with young people and young adults noticeably absent. Another member said that many of the people voting against Edwards' being retained as pastor were people who never attend or participate in church activities--"except to vote."

The church will have to be completely reorganized if it continues to exist, another member said.

In the April 17 business meeting, at which Edwards' reinstatement was voted down, some statistics reported indicated the church's apparent decline, according to a report.

Sunday School dropped from 154 to 109; Church Training attendance dropped from 54 to 16. And young people and young married adults no longer attend the Church Training sessions.

Financial giving dropped to \$1,000 under budget requirements. Woman's Missionary Union participation dropped considerably, and the Brotherhood organization (for men) "has become inactive," a source said.

"It's the leadership of Plains church who are talking about putting together another church," the source continued.

Edwards' resignation is effective April 30. He and his family are still living in the church's parsonage, but he is not preaching at the Plains church.

The Baptist minister said he did not encourage the April 17 move to reinstate him and did not expect it to carry anyway.

President Carter's cousin, State Sen. Hugh Carter, a deacon and church moderator, is said to be among church leaders considering the formation of a new congregation in Plains.

"This was a combination of jealousy, anti-Carter hatred, and anti-black sentiments," he told reporters. "They just crucified our pastor. Now they've just about crucified our church."

Molly Carter, 14, daughter of Billy Carter, reportedly told the congregation that young people had left the church because they no longer respected the adults.

Hugh Carter's wife, Ruth, told reporters that Edwards' opponents had rounded up members to vote against the minister. The church atmosphere, she said, had deteriorated to where members could no longer worship there.

"We all figured that's why Jimmy didn't come home Easter . . . I guess he just didn't feel welcome," she told reporters. President Carter worshipped at First Baptist Church, Calhoun, Ga., on Easter Sunday.

Edwards said that some 40-50 people who "never come to church except when a vote is taken," were present for the April 17 meeting. An announcement was made encouraging persons interested in forming a new church to meet following the morning worship service.

One source said discussion considering the possible formation of a new church has been underway for three to four weeks.