



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Alabama Board Approves \$9.5 Million Budget

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--The Executive Board of the Alabama Baptist State Convention has adopted a Cooperative Program budget goal of \$9,500,000 for 1978. The goal is an increase of \$200,000 over the 1977 goal.

The board also voted a challenge goal of \$1,000,000, for a total Cooperative Program and challenge goal of \$10,500,000.

A priority item in the challenge goal is \$200,000 for the first phase of "Good News Alabama," a mass evangelism effort of the Alabama convention and four black Baptist conventions projected for 1978-79. The project will be a major part of the Alabama convention's "Bold Mission Thrust."

Of the \$9,500,000 Cooperative Program budget goal, 35.5 percent is for Southern Baptist Convention causes and 34.5 percent for Alabama Baptist Convention and general denominational causes.

Thirty percent, or \$2,850,000 is for Christian higher education at the three colleges of the Alabama Baptist Convention. The breakdown is: Samford University, \$1,814,358; Mobile College, \$682,190; and Judson College, \$353,452.

An additional \$3,500,000 goal for designated offerings for foreign missions, home missions, and the Alabama Baptist Children's Home brings the 1978 grand total budget goal to \$14,000,000.

The budget is subject to final approval of the convention when it meets here in November.

In addition, the board elected two persons to fill positions at the board's offices in Montgomery.

Jere Allen, who has served as the board's consultant to churches in changing communities for the past two years, was named director of the special missions department.

O. Wyndell Jones, pastor of Highland Baptist Church, Florence, was named director of the Church ministries division, effective September 1.

Allen will succeed H.O. Hester who will retire September 30 after serving for 16 years as head of the special missions department.

Jones succeeds A. Earl Potts, who has been director of the church ministries division for the past five years. Potts was recently elected assistant to George E. Bagley, executive secretary of the executive board.

The executive board transacts business of the Alabama Baptist State Convention between sessions, and is comprised of 120 pastors and lay people.

Evangelism, Need for Food
Part of Agricultural Work

By Ruth Fowler

LIMURU, Kenya (BP)--Southern Baptist agricultural missionaries of eastern and southern Africa met recently to examine their philosophies of agricultural missions and their evangelistic task.

"This could well be the most important single conference ever held by Southern Baptists on the African continent," said John R. Cheyne, Southern Baptist missionary field representative to eastern Africa. Cheyne is serving this year on special assignment as associate coordinator of hunger relief and disaster response at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va.

In explaining his statement Cheyne pointed to the 65 million persons suffering from malnutrition on the African continent and to the growing desire by some governments for missionaries to justify their presence in terms of social welfare.

Davis L. Saunders, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for eastern and southern Africa, considered the conference important in terms of the communication between missionaries about philosophy, methods and purposes.

Both Cheyne and Saunders see an insufficient food supply as a major problem for the future of Africa.

"Agricultural missionaries will continue to wrestle with the problem of how best to help the people of Africa to feed themselves," Saunders said.

The 400 million people of Africa are primarily agrarian, Cheyne states, with some tough problems facing them. He cited the changing weather patterns as one cause of drought and the subsequent starvation. Changing from traditional crops to ones that are more drought resistant is slow, Cheyne said, and planning for agricultural projects on a national scale is difficult because of the village living.

P. Vaughn Ross, Southern Baptist missionary working in public health administration, presented a study of one area of farming in East Africa. There the average farm family consists of eight persons, living on four acres of land and cultivating only two of those four acres.

Most of the farming done is subsistence farming which meets only the needs of the farm family and produces no cash crops to be taken to market. Modern methodology using fertilizer, insecticides and high quality seeds is not practiced on a wide scale.

Cheyne also pointed out that agriculture-based economies of African nations tend to offer little support to the farmers during a bad year, and with the exception of Kenya, Rhodesia, and South Africa, there is relatively little industrialization in eastern and southern Africa.

In some countries government money that could be spent on development of agriculture is spent instead on what Cheyne called "prestige projects," like a national airline.

Facing these problems and keeping in front the primary goal of evangelism, the agricultural missionaries brought forth several recommendations, most of them centered around needed career missionaries, broader use of volunteers and future conferences.

"The primary emphasis was on the fact that agricultural missionaries are witnesses," said Saunders, "both by what they do and what they say."

"There is an overwhelming sentiment that evangelism is their first purpose," Cheyne agreed. "There is a growing conviction that we are all evangelists and even the man who is assigned to general evangelism is really a specialist in leadership training or church development. Whereas, the agricultural missionary is an evangelist who is a specialist in agriculture."

Present for the meeting were 11 agriculturalists, two veterinarians, a public health administrator, and an engineer who specializes in village level technology, plus various guests and board officials.

More than one-third of all the agricultural missionaries under appointment by the board serve in eastern and southern Africa and were present at the meeting. More agricultural missionaries have been appointed by the board during the last three years than in all the previous years combined.

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"Born More Than Once:"
A Doctor Tells Her Story

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SANTIAGO, Chile (BP)--"I consider that the Lord has made me born more than once."

The words continued to flow from the attractive Chilean woman with political leftist views who after years in an atheistic family wanted her story to be told.

Seated in the living room of Southern Baptist missionary John H. McTyre here, Dr. Maria Christina Rojas described herself as a pediatrician who worked for several years in the Baptist Infant's Clinic in Antofagasta, north of Santiago.

Dr. Rojas' story includes not only the atheistic background, but "a love of social justice" which she admitted "didn't leave me very much (security)."

"In all honesty, I really never gave the slightest importance to the religious part (of working at a Baptist clinic)...I went to the clinic as a doctor and as such I carried out my commitment (to social justice) in the very best possible way, but I never had Christian criteria in my life and never had seen life from a Christian viewpoint."

Because of problems in Chile, Dr. Rojas left her husband and went with her eldest daughter to work in a clinic in a small Colombian town.

Ten months later she returned to her husband and family, "But my life was very empty. I felt spiritually ill. I was in an intense nervous depression."

Her depression led to an attempted suicide which was averted because of what she termed "a truly extraordinary thing."

It was a Sunday and her husband, a dentist, was to play tennis and afterwards go to his office.

"I then calculated that he would return between six and eight in the evening. I did not eat lunch, but took pills. My husband left the tennis courts early and went to his office. Upon arrival there he looked at the telephone and felt an imperative need to talk to me."

Hearing from a daughter that his wife was ill, the husband arrived unexpectedly some 20 minutes after Dr. Rojas tried to end her life.

Following hospitalization, Dr. Rojas returned to Antofagasta and telephoned Belia Perez, a Baptist nurse with whom she had worked in the Baptist clinic.

"I said, 'Belia, I need to know something of what you have, to have your serenity, I need your peace.'"

Days of searching followed, but as Dr. Rojas says now, "I came to believe that Christ was real and I wanted to know him...so I accepted Christ and for me it was the most important moment I'd ever had. Yes, I acquired something of incalculable value that I knew wouldn't decay or crumble like any earthly fascination."

Dr. Rojas concluded, "I have put myself completely in his hands and I ask the Lord about every decision I make, regarding my work as well as in all my life."

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