



BAPTIST PRESS

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Drought Ministry Includes Grain, Digging New Wells

BOBO-DIOULASSO, Upper Volta (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries plan to move grain stored here to drought areas and continue a well-digging and farming program with two relief appropriations totaling \$16,000.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board voted in its August meeting to approve a \$3,000 and a \$13,000 appropriation for Upper Volta.

The creeping sands of the great Sahel Desert claiming farmland and the changing rainfall patterns have created a serious drought in Upper Volta. The president of that nation declared at a public meeting that "a state of famine exists in Upper Volta."

The nation has only harvested two crops in the last eight years, according to Norman L. Coad, Southern Baptist missionary stationed in Ouagadougou. National reserves were already below the safe margin set by the United Nations advisors and as the year progressed they have dropped until the government put its last 3,000 ton of grain on sale in July.

Some grain in the country is available through an international relief agency, but no more grain is available to be purchased for relief in neighboring countries by the Southern Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries). So, for the present time, grain distribution efforts will be confined to transportation and distribution of available grain.

The \$3,000 appropriation will be used to pay the transportation on this grain to needy areas.

Crop predictions for 1977 are bad, Coad said. "Many of the farmers are in their third planting (without a harvest). The rains have been very late."

The drought has been caused by the changing weather patterns in West Africa. Usually the bread basket areas, the extreme northern and southern sections have not had the average amount of rainfall, and more importantly the time when the rains come has changed.

John R. Cheyne, a Southern Baptist missionary, serving this year as associate to the board's consultant on hunger relief and disaster response, visited the area in July.

The farmers plant their crops when the rain begins. Then, instead of continuing to increase in amount and frequency, Cheyne said, the rains almost stop, killing the new crops. The crops which do survive are drowned when the rains come at the usually dry harvest time when the area is supposed to be dry.

Besides the grain project to relieve the drought victims, \$13,000 will be spent on a well-digging and farming project near Koudougou, run by Southern Baptist Missionary Ray W. Eitelman.

"Eitelman chooses one person in the area with whom he works, to demonstrate on that person's land," Cheyne said.

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Eitelman plants half the land in the traditional manner, using no rows or mounding, and the other half of the land in rows, using fertilizer and superior seeds. The second half yields much more harvest. The next year the farmer pays for the seed and fertilizer to increase the yield on all of his land.

Water is an important factor, taking up most of the \$13,000.

"Apparently some 90 percent of the present shallow wells tend to go dry at the end of the season," Cheyne said. The wells are cased in concrete and have a small pulley for hauling up the water.

Eitelman dug four such wells in the area last year.

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(BP) Photos mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Ballenger Named Ruschlikon
Seminary's Sixth President

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GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--Southern Baptist Missionary Isam E. (Dick) Ballenger has been elected sixth president of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, pending ratification by the seminary's board of trustees.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board action came during its August meeting here.

Ballenger had been serving as interim president since Southern Baptist Missionary Associate C. Penrose St. Amant's return to the United States for retirement. St. Amant had served as president since 1972.

The international seminary, supported by Southern Baptists through the Foreign Mission Board, opened in 1949. The board of trustees includes Baptist representatives from most European countries.

Ballenger will temporarily continue to serve as field representative for Europe, providing a liaison between Southern Baptist missionaries in eight European countries and the board.

Appointed by the board in 1965, Ballenger has served previously in Hamm and Offenbach, Germany.

Born in West Palm Beach, Fla., he lived in Charleston and Inman, S. C., while growing up. He studied textile chemistry at Clemson (S. C.) College and taught in a Baptist school in Nigeria for a year, after receiving the bachelor of science degree.

He attended North Carolina State University at Raleigh, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C., where he received the bachelor of divinity and master of theology degrees. He received the doctor of ministries degree from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn.

He has served as assistant pastor for a Petersburg, Va., church and pastor of a Henderson, N. C., church.

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

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Weber, Lee Continue to
Recover from Heart Attacks

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8/15/77

NASHVILLE (BP)-- Reports received here indicate that two former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) presidents are continuing to recuperate after suffering heart attacks.

Jaroy Weber, 55, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lubbock, Tex., SBC president, 1975-76, has been released from the hospital and is visiting his son in California for a short period of

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rest and an evaluation by the Stanford Medical Center, according to Mrs. Weber.

"Upon our return to Lubbock, his doctor will prescribe his treatment for complete recovery," said Mrs. Weber.

R. G. Lee, 90-year-old pastor emeritus of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, who served as SBC president, 1949-51, is continuing to recuperate at home in Memphis after a series of heart attacks incapacitated him last Spring during a revival in Oklahoma City.

Lee, who had continued to travel many miles each year with preaching engagements before his heart attacks, currently is accepting no preaching engagements.

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Joiner Joins Index
As Associate Editor

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8/15/77

ATLANTA (BP)--W. D. (Dub) Joiner Jr. of Waycross, Ga., has been elected associate editor of The Christian Index, effective Sept. 12. The Christian Index is the weekly newsmagazine of the Georgia Baptist Convention, published here.

Joiner has been Waycross bureau chief for The Florida Times-Union for four years. He had previously worked for newspapers in DeLand, Fla., Atlanta, Statesboro and Alma, Ga.

He is a graduate of Brewton-Parker Junior College and studied journalism and criminal justice at Georgia State University and Valdosta State College. All three schools are in Georgia.

Mrs. Joiner is the former Martha Thomas. Her father, Cecil Thomas was pastor at Nahunta, Ga., for many years. The Joiners have two sons.

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Board Resolution Pays
Tribute to James Harris

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--In a special resolution, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board paid tribute to the late James G. Harris, its immediate past president, as a "man who was used of God to help give birth to a new day in the kingdom among Baptists in Texas, among the nation and the world."

Harris, who died of a heart attack in Forth Worth, Tex., was described in the resolution as a pastor who was "contagiously warm and divine human," whose concerns reached far beyond his own congregation at University Baptist Church, Fort Worth, to people at the farthest parts of the earth. "He had a burden for the hungry and hurting people of the world," the resolution said.

President of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and a member of the Foreign Mission Board at the time of his death, Harris had just completed two years as the board's president last April.

Travis S. Berry of Texas, first vice president, led the board in a prayer of thanksgiving for Harris' life and witness as members of the board stood during their meeting here Aug. 11.

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