



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Allen Praises SBC Efforts
To Meet Hunger Crisis

By David Wilkinson

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists at the grassroots levels are demonstrating a concern for world hunger that has surprised denominational planners and surpassed the plans of governmental strategists, the president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) said here.

In his keynote address at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, SBC President Jimmy Allen said that Christians have registered their concern by giving hundreds of thousands of dollars to world hunger in recent years, and he believes that Southern Baptists are now ready to commit more than money to the cause.

It is a response, he said, that has left some denominational leaders unprepared.

"Resistance to the idea of feeding people because of fear of manipulation and creating so-called 'rice Christians' has left us ill prepared for an aggressive program of both feeding and helping people feed themselves," Allen told the members of the Christian Life Commission "But," he said, "we are gearing up for that task."

The newly conceived Mission Service Corps, which will mobilize short-term, volunteer missionaries, offers the possibility, Allen explained, "of engaging the gifts of hundreds of agriculturists, technical people and generalists in the areas of greatest need in our hungry world. We are faced with fantastic possibilities in sharing our witness of the Bread of Life as we help hungry lives survive by increasing bread."

The San Antonio pastor emphasized that the Southern Baptist witness must also include "a call to the conscience of America to lead the way instead of dragging our feet in helping our world with the problems of basic human survival."

Although he commended President Carter's emphasis on human rights, Allen added that "the right to food needs to be placed in a priority position by our governmental leaders."

"The hearts of the American people are already there," he said. "It is time for the leaders to catch up with the people on the subject. We have a specific role to play as Southern Baptists in making that come about."

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Honduran Consul General
Exhorts Mission Emphasis

By Jennifer Hall

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RICHMOND (BP)--The radiance of Rosargentina Pinel rarely flickers. She is, as she says, a steady "living flame for the living Christ."

The Honduran consul general residing in San Antonio, Tex., who became a Christian at First Baptist Church there, took time out from a speaking tour to deliver an evangelical message and parts of her testimony here.

Mrs. Pinel, who immediately makes herself known as a Christian to everyone she encounters--whether it be a porter helping with her luggage, a business associate, or a voice on the other end of the telephone--spoke during the weekly mid-day worship at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's Baker James Cauthen Chapel.

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Her 20-minute talk, in part, exhorted listeners to become missionaries for Jesus Christ.

"In my heart," Mrs. Pinel said, "this is not the Foreign Mission Board. It's the 'mission of Jesus.' We're all missionaries for Christ."

As she briefly reviewed her life since joining the diplomatic corps in 1960, Mrs. Pinel said she "never dreamed before that I'd become a missionary myself. But when you receive him you become a missionary for God." She later added, "I never dreamed I'd take the Gospel around the world, but I asked him to use me to glorify Him."

Five years ago, Mrs. Pinel became a Christian through the ministry of Jimmy R. Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church in San Antonio who is now also serving as Southern Baptist Convention president.

The vivacious blonde noted that because she became a Christian in her 40's, she had "catching up" to do. Helping her to compensate for lost time is what she considers as a gift from God--boldness. "I started to witness to...everyone I encountered...thousands are so thirsty...desperate to meet Christ."

She related incidents when she and Allen visited Honduras as a "mission for Christ." Earlier she noted that her prayer was to "win this nation (Honduras) for you, Jesus."

As she focused in on missions, Mrs. Pinel told what she believed to be the "most important rule of a missionary: wherever I am, wherever I go, the glory is to Jesus Christ."

She later said "regardless of our career, sex or job position, our goal is to serve and glorify."

(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

Zambia Crusade Goes On
Despite Curfew, Blackout

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By Jim Newton

Baptist Press
9/16/77

LUSAKA, Zambia (BP)--Despite a curfew and blackout that warned of the possibility of war between Zambia and Rhodesia, Baptists in Zambia moved ahead with a three-week, nationwide evangelistic crusade in September involving all of the 80 Baptist churches and mission points in Zambia.

Leading the evangelistic crusade was a team composed of 15 preachers, one layman and two musicians from the United States, plus five African preachers from nearby Malawi and Kenya and from Nigeria. Twelve of the 18 Americans came from churches in the Chattanooga Tenn., area, and three others were pastors of black Baptist churches in the U. S.

A cloud of uncertainty engulfed the first few days of the simultaneous revivals after Zambia President Kenneth Kaunda imposed a curfew and blackout from 8 p.m. until 5 a.m. daily in four major cities just two days before the revivals were slated to begin. A few days later, President Kaunda announced that the curfew would continue indefinitely.

The blackout decree came four days after reports of a Rhodesian bombing raid on a Zambian border town located at the triangle where the Zambia, Rhodesia and Mozambique borders meet. Kaunda said he feared similar bombing attacks on the capital city of Lusaka and other cities near the Rhodesian border.

When the lights went out on Sept. 3, Zambia Baptists, missionaries and the 23 visiting evangelists prayed by candlelight that the curfew would not hinder and deter the crusade.

The next day, Sunday, 103 Baptist churches in the Hamilton County Baptist Association (Chattanooga area) observed a day of prayer for the Zambia crusade and the 12 team members from Chattanooga.

Only revival meetings in Kafue, south of the Zambia capital, were immediately affected by the curfew the first week.

Evangelist John Bray of Lakeland, Fla., who preached in the Kafue revival, said he felt the curfew probably cut attendance in half, since services had to start at 5:30 p.m. to allow people to get home before the 8 p.m. curfew. Bray reported nine professions of faith and an average attendance of about 50.

During the same week, 14 churches in the "Copperbelt" region of northern Zambia, where Baptist work is strongest, reported 524 professions of faith, 464 rededications, and 8 responses to the call to preach in one week.

Frank J. Baker, Southern Baptist missionary in Lusaka who is co-director of the crusade with Zambia pastor Waddy Shibemba, was delighted with the initial response.

"With 500 conversions in the Copperbelt, we can expect 2,000 to 3,000 professions of faith throughout the entire nation," he predicted after the first week.

Although concerned about the effect of the curfew on revivals planned during the last week in Lusaka and Livingstone, two of the blackout areas, Baker was undaunted in his initial appraisal of the crusade.

"The curfew may even turn out to be a blessing in disguise," he suggested. "One of the strange paradoxes of missions is that people are more responsive to the gospel in times of adversity and crisis."

Most of the 15 team members who went to the Copperbelt region in the north said they were overwhelmed by the response of the people in the first week of the crusade.

"This experience has changed my life," raved Duane Highlander, director of special ministries for Hamilton County Baptist Association, Chattanooga, after 25 Zambians responded during the first service.

Elmer Piper, missions committee chairman for the association and pastor of East Lake Baptist Church, Chattanooga, added that he felt all the team members would return home more deeply committed to missions after experiencing the overwhelming response to the gospel in Zambia.

Over and over, the team members expressed amazement at the joyful spirit of the Zambian people, and especially at the enthusiastic, exuberant singing of the Zambian choirs to the beat of drums and shakers.

"It's thrilling," said Chattanooga layman Richard Grammer after playing his trumpet and listening to the choir at the Chililabombwe Church where Highlander had preached. "I've never heard singing like that before in my life."

In the eastern province of Zambia, seven team members were leading revivals simultaneously with the 14 churches in the Copperbelt region, and the response there matched in spirit the revivals in the Copperbelt.

Edward Seanor, pastor of Chamberlain Avenue Baptist Church in Chattanooga, said what impressed him most was the joyful welcome the Zambians gave him and other Americans.

Benjamin Baker, pastor of the Main Street Baptist Church in Lexington, Ky., and another of the three black Baptist pastors, said that he had established a real rapport and deep affinity with his black brothers in Zambia. When the Zambians sang and danced, Baker joined with them.

Baker expressed the hope that some of the team members would see the need for career missionaries in Zambia and return to their homes determined either to seek career missionary appointment themselves or to recruit other members of the churches to come to Zambia as missionaries.

"What we need so desperately is for some Baptist pastors back in the states to leave their comfortable churches and come out here to serve as field evangelists," Baker explained. He said that next year, three of the four existing field evangelists will be going home on furlough, and as yet, there is no one to take their places.

CORRECTION

In BP story mailed 9/9/77 entitled "Annie Armstrong Offering Nears \$12 Million Goal", please correct to read \$11,250,000 million goal. In graph two of same story, the 92 percent is correct.