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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Home Board Names 1st
Service Corps Volunteer

77-189

MENOMONIE, Wisc. (BP)--The first Southern Baptist Home Mission Board Mission Service Corps couple has been approved and assigned here.

Elgin and Jean Lee of Doniphan, Mo., will serve the River Heights Baptist Church in Menomonie through an anonymous gift which will provide their support for two years.

Mission Service Corps (MSC)--a plan for enlisting and utilizing Southern Baptist volunteers in full-time mission work for a period of one or two years, was adopted by the 1977 Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City, Mo., following a video-taped challenge by President Jimmy Carter.

The plan calls for 5,000 mission volunteers by 1982 to serve either at home or abroad supporting themselves or being supported by designated gifts. MSC personnel will work under the direction of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board, state mission board and/or district associations. Volunteers may apply by writing P. O. Box 7203, Atlanta, Ga. 30309

The Lees moved to Menomonie in late October, where he will be church pastor.

The MSC assignment came after several weeks coordination between the Minnesota/Wisconsin Southern Baptist Fellowship and the Home Mission Board in Atlanta. The details of the assignment were handled through Gerald Palmer, director of the board's missions section, and the church extension department.

In the future, assignments for MSC will be facilitated through the Home Mission Board's director of MSC coordination, a position approved during the fall director's meeting in Atlanta but not yet filled.

Before the move, Lee, 57, was pastor of First Baptist Church in Doniphan for three years. He had served previously with the Missouri Baptist Convention 18 years--15 years as state director of student work and three years as statistician.

Lee, a Springfield, Mo., native, is a graduate of Southwest Missouri State University and holds a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Jean Bunch Lee of St. Louis has worked for Missouri Baptist College and as a library consultant for the Missouri Baptist Convention.

"My wife and I have struggled with mission work all of our lives," Lee said. Recently the Lees contacted both the Home and Foreign Mission Boards for possible mission fields. According to Lee, the offer for MSC placement came "mighty near simultaneously" from both.

The Menomonie community appealed to the Lees because of the nearby University of Wisconsin's Stout campus which has 6,000 vocational students. "Our plans are to stay here and see the church become self supporting," Lee added. The Lees have no children.

"Without Mission Service Corps there would have been no way for all the forces--volunteer, field and financier--to work together. Without Mission Service Corps this would not have happened," Lee declared.

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The River Heights Baptist Church began in 1970 with two families. Marvin Kemp, college professor and lay preacher, served as pastor until 1976, when he was forced to retire because of his wife's health. Robert Jackson recently served as pastor for a year before returning to complete his education.

Although the church completed a building under Kemp's leadership, Otha Winningham, coordinator for the Minnesota/Wisconsin Southern Baptist Fellowship, said, "All the future plans of the church were predicated by Kemp's continued service." Winningham said the church was unable to make provision for a full-time pastor at this time.

"The congregation of about 25 to 30 persons has a good opportunity for growth," Winningham maintains, "but has never had the advantage of a full-time leader. This Mission Service Corps couple will give them that leadership."

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Solicitations Bill, H. R.
41, Draws Mixed Emotions

By W. Barry Garrett

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10/27/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Baptist executive here has opposed H. R. 41, a bill in Congress relating to solicitations for charitable contributions, but at the same time approved the objective of the proposed legislation.

James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, told Baptist Press that the committee opposes H. R. 41 because it violates separation of church and state. Further, he said that the bill "would have a profoundly chilling effect on solicitation of funds by churches generally."

H. R. 41, pending in the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee, would require solicitors for charitable contributions through the mail or on radio or television to make financial disclosure of the use of the funds to anyone who requests such information. Its purpose is to correct abuses by a number of people who solicit funds by mail, radio or television.

"The Baptist Joint Committee has no objection," Wood said, "to a law requiring any person or organization which solicits funds from the general public to account to the public for the use of those funds." The reason for church objection to H. R. 41, he continued, "is that the government is constitutionally prohibited from requiring churches and their agencies to disclose the financial records of contributions received."

Because of the constitutional defect of the bill and because of "the chilling effect" on solicitation of funds by churches, John W. Baker, director of research services for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, testified against the bill at hearings earlier this year. He specifically requested that "churches, associations and conventions of churches should be excluded from the bill."

Continuing his testimony, Baker declared, "If it is the opinion of the subcommittee that the nature of the problem of charitable solicitations makes it impossible or impractical to sever the religious from the non-religious charities, we would have to object strenuously to the passage of H. R. 41."

The subcommittee did not choose to make this exception as proposed by the Baptist Joint Committee and other religious organizations and voted H. R. 41 out of subcommittee by a 4-3 vote. It is still pending before the whole House Post Office and Civil Service Committee, where the change could yet be made.

Wood said in his statement, "The Baptist Joint Committee does not view H. R. 41 as either an attack on the religious community or as a manifestation of American anti-clericalism, as is charged in a nationally circulated attack on the proposed bill in Congress.

"H. R. 41 has as its objective the exposure of unscrupulous fund raisers (religious or secular) who spend most of the funds they raise for purposes other than those claimed when the funds were solicited," he observed. "This objective is valid for the protection of the public and it is supported by most of the major secular public charities, such as the United Way," he said.

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"The Baptist Joint Committee has not joined the National Religious Broadcasters in opposition to H. R. 41. We acted entirely on our own when we gave testimony on the bill. That testimony did not challenge the appropriateness of a law requiring financial disclosure by charitable organizations seeking contributions from the public," Wood explained.

The full text of Wood's statement on H. R. 41 declares:

"H. R. 41 is a bill pending in the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee. Basically, it would require solicitors for charitable contributions through the mail or on radio or television to make financial disclosure of the use of the funds to anyone who requests such information.

"The Baptist Joint Committee does not view H. R. 41 as either an attack on the religious community or as a manifestation of American anti-clericalism, as is charged in a nationally circulated attack on the proposed bill in Congress. On the other hand, H. R. 41 has as its objective the exposure of unscrupulous fund raisers (religious or secular) who spend most of the funds they raise for purposes other than those claimed when the funds were solicited. This objective is valid for the protection of the public and it is supported by most of the major secular public charities such as the United Way.

"The Baptist Joint Committee has expressed opposition to H. R. 41, as originally drafted, because of its belief that it would result in an unconstitutional entanglement of government and religion and that it would have a profoundly chilling effect on solicitation of funds by churches generally. Further, H. R. 41 would run into administrative difficulties when the government seeks to apply the law equally to the wide variety of church structures.

"The Baptist Joint Committee has no objection to a law requiring any person or organization which solicits funds from the general public to account to the public for the use of those funds. Our objection to H. R. 41 is that the government is constitutionally prohibited from requiring churches and their agencies to disclose the financial contributions received. H. R. 41 would subject churches to such governmental controls if they inadvertently or incidentally solicit funds from a portion of the general public. For this reason, the Baptist Joint Committee has asked Congress to exempt churches, associations of churches and conventions of churches from the provisions of H. R. 41. This may or may not mean that all religious broadcasters should be exempted from the requirements of H. R. 41."

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Nicaraguans Grateful
For Drought Relief Funds

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MANAGUA, Nicaragua (BP)--Nicaraguan Baptists have expressed gratitude to Southern Baptists for two separate donations totaling \$13,100 for drought relief.

"We in Nicaragua have been able to feel the brotherhood, fellowship and solidarity of the Baptists from the world over, through the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention," Octavio Cortez, president of the Social Service and Community Development Commission of the Baptist Convention of Nicaragua, wrote in a letter to Charles W. Bryan, Foreign Mission Board area secretary for Middle America and the Caribbean.

"That is why we want to express our appreciation for your donation...toward our 1976 drought relief program. This program benefits 265 Baptist families in 14 rural communities..."

Funds were used to purchase basic food staples and essential seeds for replanting for the 1977 season. This year's rains, although still below normal, seem to be better than those of the two previous years and promise at least some improvement in crop yields, according to Stanley D. Stamps, Southern Baptist missionary press representative.

Southern Baptist funds were used to buy more than 37,000 pounds of rice, beans, corn and cooking oil, which constitute the basis of a typical rural farm family's diet, according to Cortez. Corn alone is used in the preparation of more than 30 forms of dishes and drinks.

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Drought relief funds also allowed the convention to buy 12,800 pounds of improved seed corn for replanting as soon as rains began falling in June. The country had been in drought conditions since 1975. During this period, many families, totally dependent upon farming for their living, were seriously affected by a lack of work and crop failure. Many lost their small flocks of poultry and other small farm animals.

Nicaraguan Baptists contributed over \$3,200 in a special offering promoted late in March. Members observed a day of fasting and offering for the drought program.

Gustavo Wilson, executive secretary of the Nicaragua Baptist Convention, reported that even one of the poorer rural churches in the zone hardest hit by the drought sent an offering for the special effort.

"I believe this program has helped in the spiritual growth of the believers," said Gilberto Proveedor, a rural missionary in north central Nicaragua.

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50 Overseas Opportunities
Listed For Service Corps

Baptist Press
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RICHMOND (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has compiled a preliminary list of more than 50 opportunities for volunteer service on foreign mission fields through the newly created Mission Service Corps.

The range of job requests is varied. Possibilities include service as a pastor, professor, houseparent, businessman, Sunday school consultant, printer, teacher, mechanic and others. Eleven of the requests are for interim pastors.

Lewis I. Myers Jr., associate to the director of the board's overseas division, has been given the primary responsibility for the coordination of Mission Service Corps for the Foreign Mission Board.

The board has received more than 20 requests from potential volunteers for more information on Mission Service Corps and is waiting to receive and process those applications. (Interested persons may apply by writing to Mission Service Corps, Southern Baptist Convention, Box 7203, Atlanta, Ga. 30309.)

The Foreign Mission Board has set up basic guidelines for its utilization of the volunteers in the program which seeks 5,000 volunteers for one or two years service at home or abroad by 1982.

As in all volunteer or career missionary service, requests for foreign missions personnel come from the missionaries serving in a particular mission field. The board feels that the missionaries serving in a country are best able to identify what personnel are needed, Myers said. "We at the board may make the availability of volunteers known to the missionaries," Myers said, "but the request for their service must come from the missionaries."

Assuming the request from the mission field is in hand, Myers and the consultants who work with volunteers review possible assignments. A board screening committee from different departments makes the final decision about the suitability of a volunteer for a specific job. After qualifying medically, the volunteer is commissioned. Orientation includes printed information, group encounters and personal study.

Myers said the procedure includes four basic parts--receiving a request from missionaries, screening applications, orienting volunteers, and the funding process.

Emphasizing that all funding should "be over and above regular missions and Cooperative Program giving," Myers said the money might come from the volunteer or another individual or group.

At the present, the information storage service for volunteers called Volunteer Involvement in Missions is not being used for Mission Service Corps. It will be used when the number of applicants warrant it, Myers said. He emphasized that unlike other volunteers whose names will be stored until called for, volunteers for Mission Service Corps will have names and information forwarded immediately to either the Home or Foreign Mission Boards or the state Baptist convention in which a person volunteers to serve.

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