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**Baptist Colleges Challenged
to Share in "Bold Mission"**

**By W. C. Fields
Director, Baptist Press**

The 71 Southern Baptist colleges and schools and their 144,000 students were spotlighted as key factors in Baptist strategy for growth, during an orientation tour of Baptist missions on the Pacific Coast of the USA and Canada.

William G. Tanner, executive director of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, led a group, including the presidents of five Baptist colleges, on a survey trip designed to arouse greater collegiate participation in the Baptist outreach to the homeland.

In Portland, Ore., Dan C. Stringer, executive director of the Northwest Baptist Convention told the group of plans which include constituting 25 new churches in one day. He emphasized the need for well-trained young men and women to implement the denomination's vigorous expansion plans for the Northwest during the next 25 years.

Organized in 1948 with 15 churches, the Northwest Baptist Convention now has 248 churches and 70 church-type missions with over 55,000 members in Oregon, Washington, northern California and Idaho and in the four western provinces of Canada.

There are now only 670 counties in the United States without a Southern Baptist church. Stringer pointed out that many of these are in the Northwest, where only about 35 percent of the people have any religious affiliation.

In San Francisco, Robert D. Hughes, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, told the group that nearly half of the 21 million people in that state come from 75 ethnic groups. Baptists currently work with 29 of these.

In 1940 there were 14 Southern Baptist churches in California. Today there are about 1,000 churches, plus many missions, with a membership of over 300,000.

The need for young, well-educated Baptists in laity capacities as well as in religious vocations, was stressed in visits by the group also to Lake Tahoe and to Vancouver, British Columbia.

The representative group of college presidents included Thomas E. Corts of Wingate College in North Carolina, Daniel Grant of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas, Robert Lynn of Louisiana College, Lewis Nobles of Mississippi College, and Bobby E. Parker of Mary Hardin Baylor College in Texas.

At Lake Tahoe, on the Nevada-California border, missionary Sam Worley described the non-traditional church programs he and his associates utilize for witnessing in this gambling and ski resort.

Werner Schuster, the German-born manager of the Alpine Meadows ski area, drove down to meet the group at Tahoe to express his appreciation for the work of the young team of Baptists who by deeds as well as words provide "sermons on the mountains."

The need for creative, innovative people was further underscored by missionary Allen Elston when the group visited the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in Oregon.

Speaking from the experience of 17 years among the Indians there, Elston indicated that the work of the church must be adjusted constantly to minister effectively to people rather than to administer "programs."

At the Dolores Street Baptist Church in San Francisco, the visitors observed a laity-centered church where Pastor A.L. McDaniel, Jr. functions primarily as counselor and friend.

At the Nineteenth St. Baptist Church, San Francisco, four congregations--speaking Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Estonian, and English--share the same cluster of buildings.

In Vancouver, British Columbia, the group saw a thriving Chinese congregation which began in the basement of the Kingcrest Baptist Church and which under the leadership of Pastor Jonathan Cheung eventually outgrew the Anglo congregation and purchased the building from them.

Pastor Allen Schmidt of Royal Heights Baptist Church, Vancouver, a native Canadian, gave the group a bright picture of work in the four western provinces of Canada.

Whereas there are 35 churches in these provinces affiliated with the Northwest Baptist Convention, he stated that there are opportunities to establish 300 new churches in Western Canada during the next eight years.

Agreements were reached this year which permit Southern Baptist Convention national agencies to assist any and all Baptist work in Canada. Schmidt, who is the current president of the Northwest Baptist Convention, stated that the rate of future growth depends heavily on the availability of trained workers and on enlarged financial support.

Tanner, and Ed Seabough of the Home Mission Board's public relations staff, stressed to the traveling group of educators the missionary potential in these western areas.

California with a population larger than 111 nations likewise has one out of seven college students in the USA, a total of 1,665,000 in 345 colleges. It will host over 25,000 foreign students each year.

The college presidents were given an impressive picture of an enormous array of opportunities for multitudes of their students who might consider both short term and lifetime commitments to Christian vocational service in the homeland.

Each year hundreds of young men and women give their summers to mission service in programs maintained by the Home Mission Board and the Baptist student departments of the various state conventions.

The Home Mission Board's US-2 program places workers in strategic places for two-year assignments.

The newly operational Mission Service Corps will attempt to enlist by 1982 5,000 volunteers for both homeland and overseas service for one and two-year stints.

These programs are part of the denomination's current emphasis, "Bold Mission," an accelerated effort on the part of the 35,000 Southern Baptist churches to present the Gospel to people in every corner of this country and, eventually, in 115 other nations.

"Bold Mission" is an expanded program with a timetable geared to the year 2,000. By that time today's college students will have sons and daughters in college. "Bold Mission" is based on the assumption that the Christian faith is at the beginning, not the ending, of an era of unprecedented outreach, and that indeed the future is now!



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Illinois Baptists Elect Stanford, Set Budget

PEORIA, Ill. (BP)--Illinois Southern Baptists, meeting in annual session here, re-elected Keith Stanford as president of the Illinois Baptist State Association and passed a record budget for 1978.

Stanford, pastor of Logan Street Baptist Church, Mt. Vernon, Ill., challenged registered "messengers" to the convention to be "bold believers, going and praying and giving boldly in the name of Jesus Christ," as part of the Southern Baptist Convention's Bold Mission Thrust to proclaim the message of Christ to the entire world by the year 2000.

Messengers adopted a Cooperative Program goal of \$2.5 million, earmarking 41 percent of the funds for distribution to world missions through the national Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget.

A report commissioned at the 1976 annual meeting to study the possibility of establishing Christian care centers concluded that the elderly do not want to leave home and if they must go to a care center, it must be close to their community.

A move to establish a department on aging with a full time director was defeated, but messengers approved the committee's recommendations to look for ways to better serve senior adults.

Recognizing the part played by two Missouri colleges in training Illinois pastors, messengers voted to review the status of Hannibal-LaGrange College, Hannibal, Mo., and Missouri Baptist College in St. Louis, Mo., to consider budgeting funds for the schools' general operating budgets.

Illinois Baptists currently budget \$5,200 annually for Southwest Baptist College in Bolivar, Mo., and for Judson College in Elgin, Ill.

Resolutions were passed reaffirming the historical Illinois Baptist position that considers homosexuality as "deviant moral behavior" that could have "serious consequences for family life."

Illinois Baptists were also urged to participate "sacrificially" in world hunger relief programs. Other resolutions spoke against abortion, current television morality and racism and supported daily Bible reading and a Christian life style.

The 1978 convention will be held Nov. 1-3, First Baptist Church, Herrin, Ill.

Released Cuban Pastor
Arrives in Atlanta

By Judy Touchton

ATLANTA (BP)--A Baptist pastor imprisoned in Cuba for 12 years has joined his family in Marietta, Ga., a suburb north of Atlanta.

Benjamin Valdez arrived here Nov. 3, from Madrid, Spain, where he lived since August awaiting permission to enter the United States.

The 48-year-old Valdez is one of about 50 Baptist pastors imprisoned during the revolutionary takeover by Fidel Castro in 1965. Others imprisoned were Southern Baptist Home Mission Board missionaries Herbert Caudill, released in 1966, and David Fite, released in 1968.

Valdez' wife Carmen and their two sons and two daughters, who came to the U.S. in 1968, met at the Atlanta airport. Valdez also had seen his wife when she flew to Madrid in August.

The Home Mission Board and First Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., helped pay Valdez' way to the U.S., just as they helped his family move here nine years ago, and have since helped them financially.

Valdez' release leaves only one of the original group of arrested Cuban Baptist pastors still imprisoned. That pastor is on a work-release program and may apply to leave the country, Jan. 1, 1978.

On August 1, when U.S. Sen. Frank Church met in Cuba with Castro, arrangements were made for Valdez to board Church's plane and fly directly to the U.S. Valdez, however, was at the Spanish embassy on that day applying for a visa and was not aware such arrangements had been made.

Because of the mixup, Valdez had to go to Spain before entering the U.S. Because the U.S. and Cuba have no diplomatic relations, Valdez had to enter through Spain or Mexico.

The charges on which Valdez was found guilty, in what he called a "revolutionary trial," were for trafficking in exchange of currency and helping a fugitive out of the country.

Valdez admits assisting more than one fugitive leave Cuba, including his own brother. "Would I have changed my actions to help my brother and others?" he asked. "Now, with the experience I have had, I know it was not worth it."

Yet, he refused special "re-education programs" that might have permitted him early release. "I was sentenced to 12 years. I felt I should serve my entire term. It helped me fulfill my duties to myself."

His ambition in the U.S. is to "preach; to work as a pastor of a church." He has, however, no immediate plans.

Valdez' two daughters--age 15 and 14--attend school in Marietta. One son attends Mercer University in Macon, Ga.; and the other is in school at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Carmen works at home as a seamstress.

He described his first meeting with his wife in Madrid as "very emotional." "This has been an experience for me and my wife and family and for all who worked in Cuba with the Home Mission Board," Valdez said.

Valdez, who looks healthy and strong, said he could not describe his conditions in the Cuban prison because "I was in transition from time to time. Sometimes space was limited. Sometimes we had more space. Sometimes I had a small Bible... sometimes no. They did not strike me. I did the best I could to keep in shape."

Although he was not permitted to openly witness to others in prison, Valdez said he and other pastors "tried to help others. We won several of them."

Since his release in April, Valdez has worked in some of the Baptist churches in Cuba. He described the religious climate there as strong. "As long as the ministers speak concerning religion, the government will not interfere. But if they speak for political reasons," he said, "they will be affected."

"Castro is indifferent to the church," Valdez insisted. "If the church doesn't hurt his interest he won't hurt the church. If the church reaches Christ, Castro will not hurt the church." The obligation of the church is not political, Valdez contends, "but to preach the gospel."

Valdez said he spoke in church only once since his release from prison. He spent his time studying and visiting with family and friends. "The government did not ask or compel me to avoid speaking in church, but I prefer it for my own security," he said. "I was trying to avoid difficulty with the government, trying not to say words that would strike the ears of officials harshly."

Valdez insisted he did not "judge" the others who were released early from prison. However, he said, "I think no one who is Christian could accept their (the government's) way of thinking. "I felt I must be true to myself," he reiterated.

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(BP) Photos mailed to state Baptist papers by Atlanta Bureau of Baptist Press

Georgia Baptists Help
Toccoa Flood Victims

By W. D. Joiner

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TOCCOA, Ga. (BP)--When flood waters from a swollen Toccoa creek washed away the lives of 38 students, faculty members and other residents and part of the tiny Toccoa Falls College campus early on Nov. 6, Georgia Baptists provided relief.

"All immediate needs of the flood victims are now being met," said David Turner, pastor of First Baptist Church, Toccoa. "Our church is acting as the central relief agency for collecting clothes, food, water and other goods they will need."

When the earthen dam on the lake above Toccoa Creek broke about 2 a.m., it sent a 30-foot high wall of water rampaging down the stream. In its path, a small mobile home park slept. Some victims never knew what hit them.

Likewise a college dormitory, situated near the creek bank, was flooded. A number of men students died in their sleep from the raging waters. Several buildings on campus were completely demolished, including the music building.

When word of the tragedy spread, federal and state disaster agencies moved in to give assistance, and so did Baptists.

The Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board sent \$2,500 in disaster relief funds for emergency food and clothing and will probably send more as additional needs develop, according to Paul Adkins, who heads the board's disaster relief office.

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By 7 a.m. the morning after the flood, Harold Sangster, manager of Toccoa's Georgia Baptist Assembly, six miles from the campus, offered the assembly as a disaster relief headquarters. After discussions with state officials, including the Red Cross and Governor George Busbee, the offer was accepted.

"It's amazing the help we have received from people at the assembly," said Bob Corr, who headed the state Red Cross team which aided flood victims. "We cannot say enough for Harold Sangster and his staff. They have met our every need. The decision to locate the disaster relief headquarters at the Baptist assembly was an excellent one," he continued. Bill Clack, deputy director of the Georgia Civil Defense, also praised Georgia Baptist Assembly cooperation.

Other assistance came from churches and associations of churches. "We have received calls from all parts of the state and from out-of-state Baptists and other denominations offering help," Sangster said.

Local members of First Baptist Church, Toccoa, brought in clothes by the car loads, Turner said, looking over the fellowship hall piled high with clothes and other personal items.

"We have really had more offers for assistance than we need," Turner said: "We must have received 500 calls from people offering help of various types, including housing for those left without homes."

Sangster said he expected Red Cross and other relief agencies to remain at the assembly for 8 to 10 days. The assembly is also keeping its own schedule of regular guests who were booked before the disaster struck. Sangster said, "We'll have about 400 additional people on the assembly campus but we will take care of everyone."

Soon after rescue workers arrived on the scene, members of Toccoa Creek Baptist Church, located across the highway from the college campus, began serving meals for those involved in rescue operation. After most of the bodies were found and cleanup begun, Toccoa Creek Church members continued to serve meals for workers, including Red Cross, Civil Defense and law enforcement officers.

"Response from Baptists and other people of the community is amazing," one of the victims said as he talked by telephone to family members in another state. "Praise the Lord for the response."

Besides serving as headquarters and preparing food for victims and relief workers, the assembly has also prepared additional food for people working at the morgue set up at the old Toccoa High School.

In summing up the situation, Corr said, "We could not have gotten the job done without the help Georgia Baptists have provided. It's been amazing." Toccoa Falls College was formerly Toccoa Baptist College, an independent four-year school not affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

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W. D. (Dub) Joiner is associate editor of the Christian Index, Atlanta.
(BP) Photos will be mailed to Baptist state papers by the Atlanta Bureau of Baptist Press.

Florida Waite
Dies in Pensacola

Baptist Press
11/8/77

PENSACOLA, Fla. (BP)--Miss Florida Waite, retired secretary of the church library department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, died here, Nov. 2.

Miss Waite, a native of Florida, retired in 1957 after serving for 14 years as head of the church library department. She was an employee of the Sunday School Board for 23 years. Before working at the board, she was minister of education at First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla., and a teacher at Pensacola High School.

Burial was in Pensacola. The family asks that contributions be sent to the building fund of First Baptist Church, Pensacola.

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