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New Canal Treaties Viewed  
As Positive Step For Missions

By Stan Hasteley and Jennifer Hall

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties is a positive step for foreign missions, according to Southern Baptist missionaries in Panama and several SBC leaders.

"The Panamanians, as a general rule, have been open to the gospel," said Jackie B. Cooper, missionary in Arraijan, Panama. "But since this is a very nationalistic country, the North American presence does have a somewhat cooling effect."

With ratification, missionaries "can be more direct in an evangelistic approach," Cooper said in a telephone interview just days after ratification. "I don't feel they will refuse us. I think they'll give us a better hearing now." Now that the treaties have been ratified, Cooper feels North American missionaries in the republic should be, perhaps, more aggressive.

Stateside, SBC President Jimmy Allen applauded ratification, saying that the action "brings a new mutuality of respect to our relations" with the Central American country.

Allen, who endorsed the treaties as early as last fall, said, "The Senate has used good judgment in responding to the challenge to alter our relationship with Panama." Allen said the decision, "will move us into a better position to share the gospel in Central and South America."

"The ultimate result of the decision," he went on, "will be to build a more healthy relationship with the nations of Central and South America based upon a new level of trust." He said that now both the United States and Panama "ought to be majoring on what we have in common" rather than on our differences.

Charles W. Bryan, the Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for Middle America and the Caribbean, agreed. "Southern Baptist missionaries there can now devote their energies to the development of Baptist work without the tensions that have prevailed in the past," he said.

For example: Cooper said he often goes house-to-house on evangelism trips with students from the local seminary. Ordinarily he has remained in the background, giving encouragement to the students. "But I'm saying now that I feel because the treaties have been ratified, I can be more open and more direct, and that the people will accept me--they won't reject me because I'm North American."

The Senate passed the treaty yielding control of the canal to Panama by the year 2000 by a 68-32 vote on April 18. The tally was identical to the vote on the neutrality treaty approved in March, with not a single vote shifting on either side.

Politically, a vote in favor of ratification was seen by many Washington observers as tenuous at best. For some senators, the decision to vote "yes" may do serious damage to their future political ambitions.

Allen noted this political reality, saying "It was a costly decision politically for some senators because many of our own citizens have difficulty understanding the complexities of the issue."

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Alluding to the treaty provisions which will allow the U. S. certain defense rights in Panama to insure the canal is kept open, Allen said that "As time goes by the wisdom of the decision (to ratify) will be borne out."

With the recent ratification, missionary Cooper believes there "exists somewhat an air of confusion as to what exactly will take place, not only in the republic, but here in the Canal Zone, too.

"There are certain implications that have not been worked out, and the state department, Canal Zone government and the Panamanian government--all of these--are going to have to sit down and work out these implications and procedures," Cooper pointed out.

Such implications include the work of religious or Christian organizations and the handling of properties.

In his Richmond office, Bryan said that in time all of the properties being used by Baptist churches and workers in the Canal Zone will be under the jurisdiction of the Panamanian government. Before ratification, the churches were on land leased from the Panama Canal Authority, subject to the U. S. government, he said.

"The churches haven't been able to build on property that they own. They've had to build and enter into a property lease arrangement," Bryan explained.

Bryan, an advocate of ratification, said that with the new treaties it's not yet known whether the churches will be able to lease or buy their property. He noted, however, "They won't be in any worse condition. It will probably be better because they may be able to purchase their own property" which would guarantee ownership and permanence of buildings.

"My own feeling," he said, "is the Panamanian government is going to do everything it can to work with us in a fair and open and right way."

In the Canal Zone proper, Robert C. Hensley, another Southern Baptist missionary and pastor of Laboca Baptist Church there, said he believes that people affiliated with the military and others who are Panama Canal employees are waiting to see what develops.

"Some are going on regular leave or vacation this summer," he said. "And perhaps while they are in the states, they will inquire about the future for positions in the states. But they're not making any definite decisions."

Cooper noted that the general reaction in Panama, following announcement of the ratification, was "a tremendous outburst of joy. The students at the seminary were overjoyed; the radio announcers were out of their minds with joy; people were dancing in the streets."

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Camp Care Planned  
For Messenger Kids

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MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--About 300 children ages 6-11 are expected to enroll in a three-day mission day camp June 13-15, while their parents attend the 121st annual Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta.

The camp, sponsored by the Convention's Brotherhood Commission for the fifth consecutive year, will be held on the outskirts of Metropolitan Atlanta on a 12-acre secluded retreat.

Registration fee is \$5.00 per day which includes insurance, supplies, noon meals and transportation between the Georgia World Congress Center and the day-camp site.

Frank Black, director of the Crusader department at the commission, will direct the camp, with the help of adult counselors. The camp is designed to give messengers freedom to attend SBC sessions while their children participate in mission games, sports, crafts, and nature studies and getting to know Southern Baptist Home and Foreign missionaries.

Parents can register their children prior to each session Tuesday-Thursday at the day-camp registration booth adjacent to the messenger registration area in the convention center. The children will return to the convention center at the close of the afternoon session on Tuesday and Thursday and after the morning session on Wednesday.

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Lobby Disclosure  
Delayed in House

By Carol Franklin

WASHINGTON (BP)--Opponents of a proposed lobby disclosure bill have a new opportunity to work against it since the controversial measure was withdrawn from consideration in the House of Representatives by its sponsor, Rep. George E. Danielson (D.-Calif.), after two days of debate.

The bill (H.R. 8494) would require any organization to register if it employs at least one person who spends any part of 13 days, or two or more persons who spend any part of seven days in a quarter lobbying and spends over \$2,500 during that time. If an organization hires an outside lobbyist it must spend over \$2,500 in a quarter before it crosses the threshold for reporting.

Reports would have to include total expenditures for lobbying activities, identity of lobbyists, and a description of the issues on which the organization lobbied. Churches or church agencies that seek to influence legislation would be included in the lobby registering and reporting requirements the same as any other organization.

The proposed law is opposed by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the American Civil Liberties Union, Environmental Defense Fund, Chamber of Commerce, the United Methodist Church, the United Presbyterian Church, the Synagogue Council of America, the Lutheran Council of America, the United Church of Christ and the U. S. Catholic Conference.

The bill is supported by Common Cause and the ALF-CIO.

During debate on the House floor, numerous amendments were offered with the general effect of strengthening reporting requirements. One amendment would require registered organizations to report so-called "grass roots" lobbying efforts. Another would require disclosure of the names and addresses of individuals or organizations contributing over \$3,000 to a lobbying organization in a year.

Danielson said the contributor disclosure amendment caused him to withdraw the bill to "regroup" and "shore it up."

Rep. Charles E. Wiggins (R.-Calif.) asserted during the debate that every organization in America, business and social, as well as every church, would be considered a lobbyist under the proposed law "if those organizations have the temerity, mind you, the gall, to communicate with their legislator."

Rep. Barbara Jordan (D.-Tex.) countered that the purpose of the bill was not regulation of lobbying but registering, reporting, or disclosing. She said that because the public has perceived "an undue influence exercised upon members of Congress by people designated as lobbyists, . . . we are going to require these organizations to disclose . . . exactly what they are doing."

Danielson predicted eventual passage of the lobby disclosure measure.

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Pre-School Arrangements  
Made for SBC Meeting

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ATLANTA (BP)--Parents bringing pre-school age children to the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, June 13-15, will find complete provisions made for their care during SBC sessions.

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A pre-school child care center will be set up in the Georgia World Congress Center, beginning on Tuesday morning, June 13 and staying open through Thursday night, June 15. It will not operate Wednesday afternoon, when no convention sessions are planned.

Tyler Aldrich, long-time pre-school worker in Avondale Estates First Baptist Church is chairman of the pre-school committee.

Aldrich said the service will be provided, at expense of parents, for children born in 1973 or later. the pre-school center will be set up in rooms 302-303 and 305-310 in the World Congress Center.

The fee will be \$3.50 per child per session. The fee covers cost of accident insurance and is payable as children are checked into the center. Registration tables will be set up in the main lobby of the meeting hall and at the child care center.

Aldrich said the pre-school center will be especially equipped as a demonstration of a recommended child care facility for local churches. First aid coverage will be provided by Georgia Baptist Hospital. Walkie-talkies will connect the center with ushers and convention officials.

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Missionary Follows in Paul's  
Footsteps--Through the Air

By Ruth Fowler

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KAVALA, Greece (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary Norman N. Burnes III follows in the apostle Paul's missionary footsteps once a month when he comes to the ancient city of Kavala--except Burnes doesn't walk. He flies.

Burnes is pastor of the English-language church in Athens, the city where Paul preached his Mars Hill sermon where he revealed the unknown God. The Athens congregation is made up of military and businessmen's families. It was the wife of one of these men who first asked Burnes to make the trip from Athens to Kavala, near ancient Philippi.

Many are the families of men stationed with Voice of America near the Turkish border and some hadn't attended a worship service in years.

When plan connections are impossible, Burnes takes a bus to an airport in Thessalonica.

Paul's first journeys were long and hard. Even today, Burnes has found that the trip requires days away from his family. Sometimes it means not getting home until only a few hours before he must preach again, without benefit of a night's sleep.

But the Burneses have decided that it's worth it. Some of the people coming to the services in Kavala have never been to a Christian church. Some are the Buddhist wives of American servicemen.

For Shirley Smith, who made the initial request, Burnes' visits are an answer to prayer.

She and her husband Frank, on the Voice of America staff, have maintained a Bible study and always try to find a Baptist church wherever they are assigned. When she came to Athens to live so their daughter could go to high school, Shirley found the Baptist church there where Burns is pastor and asked him to preach to Frank and the other families in Kavala.

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Ruth Fowler, staff writer-consultant for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, visited Greece during a recent tour of Europe, the Middle East and India.