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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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No Anti-Missionary Pattern
Seen in Visa Difficulties

By Ruth Fowler

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries are having difficulty obtaining permission to live and work in several nations, but Foreign Mission Board officials see no pattern of anti-missionary sentiment.

Winston Crawley, the board's overseas division director, explained that even though missionaries in as many as 15 nations have experienced varying degrees of difficulty in obtaining work permits there are no nations where Southern Baptist work is in obvious danger because of such problems.

For missionaries to live and work in a nation, they must obtain from that country's government an entry permit or visa and sometimes a work permit. Governments use these permits as a means of knowing and controlling who enters and works in their respective countries.

"Each country is its own case and must be considered separately," Crawley said of the recent problems. "The limitations are not directed at Southern Baptist missionaries specifically, but usually include missionaries as a part of a larger group. Such limitations express policies and goals of individual governments."

The only nation where it now seems possible Southern Baptist missionaries may lose their presence completely over visa difficulties is Guyana, where final permission for the Charles P. Loves to return after furlough has not been received. The Loves are the only missionaries assigned there because work permits were denied other couples attempting to enter the country. The Loves have not yet experienced any visa problems and are optimistic about obtaining permits. The Guyana Baptist Convention officers are in contact with the government concerning their permit.

Other governments with strong nationalistic thrusts in western South America are trying to exclude members of one religious group which emphasizes not giving allegiance to government authority. Because regulations aimed at the group are written in such broad form as to encompass all religious workers, Southern Baptist missionaries are affected as a part of a larger whole.

In Nigeria, visas for new Southern Baptist missionaries were difficult to obtain possibly because of disapproval of American political stands after the Civil War, but now the situation in that country has changed. Although approval is still a slow process, the current difficulties relate to the Nigerian government's attempt to prevent foreigners from doing any job an African can do.

The government, working with the Nigerian Baptist Convention, often accepts its recommendations and asks the missionaries admitted to have specific plans for training an African to do their jobs. This procedure is also normal for other countries, including most of eastern and southern Africa, according to Davis L. Saunders, the board's administrator for that area.

Developing nations around the world are questioning missionaries and other groups not on a basis of who they are, but of what they have to offer, Crawley noted. Governments want to know how their people will benefit from the presence of Southern Baptist missionaries. In nations such as Yemen and India the medical care offered by missionaries is the only reason they are allowed to live and work in the countries. Agricultural advisors are also in great demand.

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Other visa problems do not deal with political conflict or strong nationalistic feelings, but government-established quotas.

The government of Switzerland has developed an allotment-by-regions system to help keep down the percentage of foreigners living permanently in each area. The E. Wesley Millers were recently denied a visa to Switzerland because the quota for the area in which they wanted to live was full when they returned from furlough. Appeals later resulted in the granting of the visa.

During the past months, slow processing or an occasional denial of permits has taken place in Indonesia, Brazil, Argentina, Angola and Belize. In some nations, restrictions represent an effort to keep out leftist factions and in others, an effort to keep out anyone but leftists, Crawley said.

Countries with an official national religion or Communist-controlled countries are often reluctant to allow missionaries to enter. Exceptions are made in countries such as Greece for missionaries to work with English-speaking Americans or Europeans living there for business or military reasons. Greece has a national religion.

In other nations missionaries work with the understanding that their ministries will revolve around social and benevolent efforts and not around the starting of churches. Missionaries remain in Uganda doing social work although Baptist churches have not met since they, along with some 26 other churches, were banned from meeting by the government. Missionaries serve in Yemen in medical efforts though no churches meet.

In view of the variety of reasons for slow processing or denial of entry permits, Crawley sees no real pattern developing in the countries where Southern Baptists serve. He said in some cases the fact that even a few missionaries were able to obtain visas was "miraculous" and Southern Baptist presence on whatever limited scale was a "real victory."

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Missionary Reappointments
Reach Record High Of 28

By Anita Bowden

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--An increasingly significant factor in Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust goal to place 5,000 missionaries on foreign fields by the year 2000 lies with resigned missionaries who are being reappointed at a record rate.

Seven couples were reappointed for missionary service at the Foreign Mission Board's July meeting, bringing the number of reappointments so far this year to a record 28 people. One of these couples, the Jack D. Hancoxes, will open work in Southern Baptists' 92nd country, Haiti.

Those being reappointed have at least one factor in common--the reason for their resignation no longer exists. Elderly parents and young children are two reasons that frequently are resolved in a few years, freeing the resigned missionary to seek reappointment.

But only in recent years has the number of reappointments grown significantly. Bill Marshall, secretary for the board's department of furlough ministries, says the increase in reappointments is due to "a collective effort on part of the Foreign Mission Board staff to nurture those who have found it necessary to resign."

The person in charge of that nurture is Edna Frances Dawkins, manager of special ministries in that department. Since 1972 when she began a concerted effort to keep in close contact with former missionaries, reappointments have increased significantly. More missionaries were reappointed in the six-year period between 1972 and 1977 than in the previous 36 years.

Miss Dawkins keeps in touch with resigned and emeritus missionaries and returned journey-men through a periodic newsletter. She also holds four or five weekend meetings a year and six to eight dinners in different locales for members of the Foreign Missions Fellowship.

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But the possibility of reappointment is not the only reason to maintain contact with these former missionaries. They also can be of great help in the total mission enterprise, says Marshall. They can do a lot for promoting missions involvement in their home churches and wherever they are asked to speak. Contact through the fellowship keeps them informed on the board's work and goals and better equips them to speak for missions.

And as their ranks swell, their importance becomes even more evident. At the current rate of attrition, by 1985 there will be more former missionaries than active missionaries on the field, according to Marshall.

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Cauthen Says Record Numbers
Show Increasing Willingness

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The reappointment of 14 missionaries who had previously served overseas and the appointment of 19 new missionaries highlighted the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board July meeting.

The reappointments bring the year's total to a record high of 28 and the 19 new missionaries bring the 1978 total to 223, a record for the first seven months of a year.

"All of this bears witness to the increasing tempo of missionary concern and readiness in the light of today's possibilities and challenge," said Executive Director Baker J. Cauthen, in attendance at his first board meeting since April, due to a case of herpes zoster (shingles).

Cauthen said health, family concerns and other problems sometimes cause missionaries to resign, but when the problems are resolved, they frequently apply for reappointment. "We rejoice with these as they return to the field and their missionary careers," he said.

At this time of record reappointments and appointments, Winston Crawley, director of the board's overseas division, says there is also a greater stability of the present missionary force. "Up to this point this year, the resignation rate is the lowest it has been in the last four years," he explained. He looks at it as a sign of stability and says Southern Baptists should be encouraged in that and in the growth of their missionary force. The number of resignations has continued to drop since 1975 while the missionary force has grown.

Board members voted to set a maximum of \$71,181,429 for the 1979 budget. This figure will be used as a guideline in preparing the budget which will be voted on in the October meeting. Cost-of-living supplements for the 1979 budget were also approved.

In other cost-of-living decisions, increases effective Sept. 1 were made for eight countries. Because of inflation and the decline in the value of the American dollar, cost-of-living increases have been made in a total of 49 countries so far this year. The most recent ones were Morocco, France, Japan, Senegal, Upper Volta, Niger, Togo and Benin.

Final allocations for the 1977 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions included \$312,000 for Southeast Asia. Additional allocations to the other seven geographical areas of the world were made in June.

More than \$187,000 was appropriated from relief and hunger funds for efforts in five countries. Two food production projects in the Philippines will receive \$59,985. Another \$5,000 was voted for hunger relief efforts among Haitian refugees in the Bahamas.

Relief funds of \$57,500 were set aside for continued rebuilding and development in Guatemala following the 1976 earthquake there. Funds appropriated for Brazil included \$8,000 for emergency house repairs in Recife, and \$32,142 for poverty relief in slum areas of Recife. Lebanon will receive \$25,000 for house reconstruction following bombings during that country's civil strife.

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The board appropriated \$10,000 to pay the Foreign Mission Board's prorated share in the costs of programs at the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, Ga. Board members also voted to send their president, first and second vice presidents, administrative committee chairman and chairman of the committee on denominational coordination to Nashville, Tenn., to meet with the SBC Executive Committee. They asked these representatives "to urge consideration of reinstating a separate night for the foreign missions program in forthcoming SBC programs."

New missionaries named at this meeting include Minnie Gaston of West Virginia, assigned to Surinam; Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Hunter, South Carolina and North Carolina, respectively, to Tanzania; Mr. and Mrs. Ronald J. Miller, Oklahoma and Texas, to Malawi; and Mr. and Mrs. J. Stanley Moore, Oklahoma and California, to South Brazil.

Also Mr. and Mrs. David G. Parker, Georgia and Virginia, to Zambia; Mr. and Mrs. John L. Perkins, Alabama and Mississippi, to France; Mr. and Mrs. Bill E. Phillips, Texas, to Zambia; Mr. and Mrs. Edward L. Steele, Oklahoma, to Nicaragua; Nancy Strickland, Georgia, to Upper Volta; and Mr. and Mrs. William C. Viser, Tennessee and Arkansas, to South Brazil.

Included in the 19 persons named to missionary service was one special project medical worker, J. Phil White of Alabama, who will serve in India as a hospital administrator.

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Seminaries Graduate
Record Numbers

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--In the echo of a recurring cry for trained leadership, all six Southern Baptist seminaries graduated their largest classes in history this spring.

The total of 1,287 persons who received graduate degrees from Southern Baptist Theological seminaries included 370 from Southwestern in Fort Worth, Texas; 272 from Southern in Louisville, Ky.; 261 from Southeastern in Wake Forest, N. C.; 187 from New Orleans; 101 from Golden Gate in Mill Valley, Calif.; and 96 from the SBC's youngest seminary, Midwestern, in Kansas City, Mo.

SBC President Jimmy Allen called the unprecedented numbers "a sign of God's blessing" and a challenge to the church to do what's necessary to get these resources of human effort and skill to the high need areas to witness for Christ."

Allen said he's found the current crop of seminary students an "idealistic" group with an encouraging dedication who will go where the Lord leads them, and that they place less emphasis on "security" than previous generations.

He called for all SBC institutions to make top priority the need to "disseminate information and move lives into the area of greatest investment."

Graduates in ceremonies in all the seminaries were urged to be bold, a recurring theme as the SBC gears up to accomplish its goal of reaching every person in the world with the message of Jesus Christ by the year 2000.

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