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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Sponsors Now Make
Life, Death Difference

By Dan Martin

RIDGECREST, N. C. (BP)--Sponsorship of Indochina refugees has become a "life or death matter" participants in Home Missions Week at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center were told.

Mike Myers, a consultant with Church World Service, a refugee resettlement agency, said: "Lack of sponsors is costing lives. People are dying because there is no one in the United States to sponsor them for resettlement. Churches have a responsibility, and by responding they can actually save lives."

Myers, son of Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board staff member, Lewis I. Myers Jr., and the grandson of Lewis Myers of Cleveland, Miss., a director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, recently returned to the United States after a year in Malaysia working with refugee resettlement.

The 23-year-old college student who grew up in Vietnam, where his father was a missionary, said the danger is not that people are being murdered or starving in the 35 camps which house 125,000 refugees.

"The problem is that as the population of the camps grow, the governments are reluctant to let anymore refugees in," he said. "Currently, there are 6,000 to 7,000 refugees escaping from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos each month. Many of them are turned away and sent back out to sea."

Myers told of one refugee he met who had escaped from Vietnam on a boat loaded with 35 other persons. They were turned away by Malaysia officials, as are as many as 50 percent of the "boat cases."

"The government was tired of the flow of refugees and the number of persons in the camps in Malaysia. They refused admittance. The people were just pushed away from shore," he said. "The refugees anchored off shore, but during the night a storm blew up. All but six of the people on board drowned."

Myers said if churches and other groups would increase sponsorship of the refugees, camp population could be reduced and the flow of refugees could be accommodated by the governments of Southeast Asia.

The vast majority of the refugees are fleeing their homelands "to seek freedom," Myers explained. Many face persecution, lack of livelihood, the danger of being sent to "re-education camps" or to new economic zones.

"Those who leave on the boats have a strong motivation to flee," he said. "Many of them are very frustrated because they think they will be resettled immediately after they flee. Then after many of them have planned their escape for more than a year, they find they have to wait for months in the camps for sponsors."

Myers said some 8,000 persons in Malaysia alone--which has 15,000 persons in the refugee camps--are ready for resettlement. They have been approved by the U. S. Immigration Service and they have security clearances.

"The big bottleneck is sponsorship. There simply are few sponsors willing to take the responsibility to care for them," he added.

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Since the fall of Vietnam in April of 1975, some 175,000 Indochina refugees have been resettled in the United States. Of those, Southern Baptists have sponsored approximately 5,000.

Irvin Dawson, associate director of the department of language missions at the Home Mission Board, is coordinator of the refugee resettlement efforts for the SBC. He said, "the primary responsibility of a sponsor is to assist refugees until they are able to make it on their own."

"Sponsors should be willing to provide housing, some groceries, assistance of enrolling children in school, and helping the heads of the families get a job. Basically, it is just a matter of loving people, and helping them."

Churches, individuals or groups who wish to sponsor refugees may contact Dawson at 1350 Spring St., NW, Atlanta, Ga., 30309, or may telephone him at 404-873-4041.

"Please telephone," Myers said. "We can't wait for a letter. Each day we wait means more lives are lost."

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Consultation Agenda
Readied In Nashville

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A lawyer, two educators, and a writer will deliver major addresses to the Consultation on Women in Church-Related Vocations when it convenes Sept. 20-22 in Nashville, Tenn.

Along with an array of Southern Baptist leaders, including heads of the 11 sponsoring agencies, the headliners--Ruth Harvey Charity, Danville, Va.; Andrew D. Lester, Louisville, Ky., and Gladys S. Lewis, Oklahoma City--will focus attention on government policy and its impact on the employment of women, psychological effects of women in ministry, and human rights.

Participants in the consultation will look at the present involvement of women in church-related vocations, study trends in this area, and identify barriers to greater involvement. They will come up with a body of findings for the use of denominational agencies in employment, policy-making, education programs and vocational guidance.

Mrs. Evelyn Stagg and her husband, Frank, of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, will lead Bible study sessions on women in biblical perspective, based on their new book, "Women in the World of Jesus."

Also Kay W. Shurden, of Louisville, a college and high school English teacher, will analyze Southern Baptist literature and its attention to women. Orrin D. Morris, a planning consultant at the SBC Home Mission Board, will present the findings of his consultation subcommittee that studied the present involvement of women in church-related vocations.

The 300 participants will meet in the conference facilities of the Baptist Sunday School Board. Approximately 200 participants have been named by the sponsoring agencies. Due to space limitations, only 100 additional participants can be accommodated. Those who want to attend should contact Martha Jo Glazner, Consultation on Women in Church-Related Vocations, MSN 152, Nashville, Tn. 37234.

The \$50 registration fee covers advance reading materials, a dinner meeting and a book of findings. All participants must be responsible for their own transportation, meals, and lodging.

Southern Baptist Convention agencies participating in the Consultation are Baptist Joint Committee, Brotherhood Commission, Christian Life Commission, Foreign Mission Board, Historical Commission, Home Mission Board, Radio and Television Commission, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Sunday School Board, and Woman's Missionary Union.



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Backstretch Track Needs
Motivate Unique Chaplain

By Phyllis Faulkenbury

MIAMI (BP)--Cliff Hoolsema's congregation includes jockeys, trainers, stable hands and thoroughbred horses--an odd assortment for a Southern Baptist minister.

Hoolsema's pastorate is the Calder Racetrack in Miami.

For years, gambling turned Southern Baptists away from horseracing...even for ministry. But Hoolsema recognized an opportunity, left his pastorate at North Dade Heights Baptist Church and went to the new all-weather Calder track just after it opened in 1972.

As the track's first chaplain, he found little to work with, except encouragement from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's Chaplaincy Division and his belief in the validity of his calling.

He had no office, only half a desk at the track. Yet, he has molded a ministry that takes him through 160 "hard-core" problems a week: deaths, sicknesses, family problems, run-ins with the law.

Two thousand persons work at Miami's Calder Racetrack, one of three tracks in the Miami area, rising everyday at 3 a.m. to shovel manure, toss hay, exercise horses.

Most live outside the gates, but 400 men live year-round at the backstretch, the area where horses are stabled and exercised. Most belong nowhere else; they etch their lives around the horses they love.

"From my own experience on the backstretch, I didn't think they would accept a religious person," says Edward Brooks, track assistant manager. "But Cliff's overcome that. He's a part of the family now, a very important part."

When Cliff Hoolsema smiles, his face crinkles into a dozen well-established creases around blue eyes that almost close. "I'm here for one reason--the Lord called me to this work. Let the chips fall where they may," he says.

Hoolsema estimates that his work reaches as many as 3,000 persons a year, including families of racetrack workers. Men who once regarded Hoolsema as a pious "father" type now accept him as a friend. He says about 600 track workers are churchgoers.

Hoolsema hurts with those around him, but has learned not to be shocked by them, their lifestyles, their language. He laughs with them, cries with them, marries them, buries them; sometimes he's next of kin.

He sees track workers search mailboxes daily for letters that seldom come, letters many wouldn't be able to read. He finds pen pals for them and reads letters aloud when they arrive.

"You know, that guy is just super," says a horse trainer. "He does everything from holding their hands to bailing them out of jail."

Today the race track supports Hoolsema with a private office, a TV room and funds for clothing, medical help, English classes and recreation for employees.

Because Hoolsema understands, he's trusted with any problem. He is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week--and gladly accepts this responsibility. "I love being needed," he says.

But underlying the outward vigor and enthusiasm is inner drive that keeps Cliff Hoolsema going. Shortly after beginning at Calder, he underwent major heart surgery--and was back on the job in a week.

After having both kidneys removed, he began kidney dialysis treatment in November, 1974, that will be a part of his life three times a week, six hours a day, as long as he lives.

Meeting the needs of a 3,000 person congregation taxes Hoolsema. But he also recognizes the need for the message of hope a racetrack chaplain can bring.

"Some days I just get out there and I walk around and I look at these guys and I think, 'I have this opportunity, the greatest opportunity in the whole world.'

"And that's when I stop and say, 'Thank you'. That's when I cry."

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Wind Erases
Building Effort

Baptist Press
8/21/78

INDIANA, Penn. (BP)--Fifty-one men, women and young people from Brainerd Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tenn., worked a combined 1,000 hours in July to build a church in Indiana, Penn.

Hours after they returned home, they learned a tornado had flattened the building.

"We were all heartbroken," said Winford L. Hendrix, pastor of the Brainerd church. "Although we were all distraught, we were convinced that God had a greater purpose in the efforts we had exerted."

Brainerd members pledged to rebuild again and in late August, some members of the first mission team started the 700 mile trek back to Indiana, a small town 50 miles east of Pittsburgh.

John Stair, pastor of the Indiana Southern Baptist Church that suffered approximately \$40,000 damage, said the construction had given Baptist work good exposure, and "now that the team is back up there rebuilding, our witness is even more profound."

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