



# -- FEATURES

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Pastors Key To Involvement  
Say Baptist Missions Workers

By Michael D. Creswell

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--Much is written about the beautiful response of Southern Baptist churches to mission needs.

The other side of the coin receives less attention. That's the do-nothing-side--the churches with no programs, little or no involvement in ministry or missions.

It's this side that Southern Baptist associational workers face daily as they try to coordinate missions projects for churches in a given geographical district.

"Most of what I do is try to get churches to do something they haven't tried before. They're not always willing to do it," said missions worker A.

He talked with one church this summer about having eight backyard Bible clubs, and offered to provide four workers to do most of the work.

But the church wanted only one club--and one worker.

One of the larger churches in A's area told him there were no members in the congregation who were willing to have their back yard used a week for a Bible study program. And they said they had no young people who could help. A is frankly baffled by such a response, though he says this is not largely typical for churches in his area.

In another case, an out-of-state church sent a missions-oriented choir into the area to work two weeks in a housing project. A Bible study program was established for mothers. When time came for the group to leave, A appealed to local churches to continue the program.

It would have taken two workers one hour a week to keep the program going. There were no such volunteers in the churches. So the program failed.

"Most Baptists think of missions work for them as being active in church--teaching a Sunday School class or going to the WMU meeting and maybe reading the prayer calendar, or studying about missionaries overseas," said missions worker B. "They have no concept of developing missions programs in their neighborhood that reach out and minister to people's needs.

"They want me to do it. They seem to think we have a worker to do all this now, and our only responsibility is to pay the salary. I guess that's when it hurts the most--when they don't want to get involved."

B said some churches want to buy their way out of direct missions involvement. They are willing to contribute money or materials for a missions project, as long as they do not have to give of their time and themselves.

A agreed. He had no trouble earlier this year gathering money for a needy woman's rent, and he picked up clothes for needy children very quickly from a single Sunday School class. But in most situations, the church members want to leave the materials at A's office for him to deliver, so they can avoid that personal interaction with the needy.

"Missions service is all on a mini-basis, instead of thinking about just how much they can do, I don't know how they can have such a small concept of what they can do," said A.

One worker said it is easier to get church members to show up for training sessions on missions than for the actual situations where the training is used.

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"We find a lot of people come and sit at workshops and train themselves. But when the time comes around for them actually to go out and do it, that's where the rub comes," he said.

Missions worker A said it is extremely difficult to get some church members to commit themselves to a missions project months in advance.

"A lot of them say, 'Well, if I'm here and nothing happens, I'll help' or 'I just can't commit myself right now.' It's pretty hard to plan these things and wait till the last minute to see who you've got," he said.

The missions workers agreed that it takes a missions minded pastor to have a missions active church.

"The shepherd is supposed to get out in front of the sheep, and what has happened is that the shepherd is back behind the sheep," said A. "The sheep don't know which way to go if the shepherd is not out front. Sometimes, he's just waiting to see which way the sheep are going and he falls in."

B said it appears some pastors have just gotten "turned off" in their ministry, and that spark of active caring which must be present for missions has gone out.

B added that another problem is inadequate missions education programs in some churches. "I've just seen a real slump in the Royal Ambassadors, Girls in Action and Acteens (youth mission education groups) programs in our churches. I tell the churches I work with, if I had not been influenced by missions education, I would not be here helping you today."

The poor missions response of some adults does not go unnoticed by younger church members, according to A.

One young missions assistant, A said, was promised workers from a church for a backyard Bible club. He wound up with two grandmothers and a great-grandmother as assistants working with hard-to-handle kids.

"The young people soon catch on to how things really are, and something goes out of them," said A.

And, perhaps when more church people see how things really are, something will get into them, and motivate them.

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President's Death Comes  
During Mission Meeting

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LIMURU, Kenya (BP)--The annual meeting of the Baptist Mission of Kenya was in session when news of the death of the country's first president, Jomo Kenyatta, was announced. After prayer for the nation, its leaders and the president's family, Southern Baptist missionaries continued their scheduled business sessions and worship services but cancelled festivities.

When the annual session is completed in Limuru, missionaries expect to return to their usual responsibilities, according to Laura Lee (Mrs. R. J.) Stewart, missionary press representative. In a telephone report from Kenya, she said government leaders have urged the people to continue with their work as usual except in places of entertainment.

Funeral plans, other than a 10-day lying in state and a 30-day period of mourning, had not been announced. Kenyatta, believed to be in his 80's, had been president for 15 years. Hours after his death Aug. 22, the country's vice president, Daniel arap Moi, was sworn in as acting president.

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## Mississippi Women Find You Reap What You 'Sew'

By Elba Womack

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados (BP)--Operation Sewing Machine, the first all-woman Southern Baptist volunteer missions work to assist foreign missionaries, has set precedent for other female work groups to serve on the field.

Mississippi women responded to a challenge from James Cecil, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board associate consultant on laymen overseas, to organize and coordinate a 10-day pilot project in July at the government-related St. Philip District Hospital, Barbados.

Already another sewing project has begun in Kingstown, St. Vincent. A number of women from Maryland, Virginia and Mississippi joined as volunteer seamstresses to aid a work project on that Caribbean Island. Cecil says he believes the sewing projects with volunteer women will be a continuing ministry.

Operation Sewing machine got its start from a "help wanted" request in the Mississippi "Baptist Record." It brought an "overwhelming response" from Baptist women in that state, according to Marjean Patterson, executive director of Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union. Nearly twice as many women responded as were requested, many paying their own way over. Some churches and associations helped others.

The women, ages 20 to 70, brought sewing supplies and portable sewing machines--12 to be left for further projects. Among the group of 16 were home economics teachers, a retired extension home economist, a garment factory worker and women with other sewing experience. One had chalked up 1,900 hours sewing as a volunteer for her local hospital.

The project will help leaders and residents of Barbados know that Southern Baptists are interested in the total life of the island, says Bill Womack, Southern Baptist missionary stationed there and director of Barbados Baptist Theological College, where the group stayed. Womack is convinced the project will open avenues for further ministries there.

The first day about 100 yards of fabric were used to make garments. In the college chapel a group of 17 young Barbadian women learned to sew, while others worked on drapery-type room dividers for a local church. The teachers worked late each night.

Eight of the women spent three days in a home for delinquent girls to teach clothing construction. Additionally the women processed about 300 books for the college library, did gardening duties, set up a barber shop for missionaries and students, and assisted in other college offices.

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Mrs. Womack is a missionary to Barbados with her husband, Bill, and is a press representative.

SBC Housing Bureau  
Tries New Procedure

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A new housing procedure with "tremendous advantages" for messengers will be inaugurated for the 1979 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Houston.

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To accommodate early birds, the convention housing bureau is open as of Sept. 1 for the June 12-14, 1979 meeting.

Houston's convention bureau requires a computer form from the registrant. None of the 34 designated convention hotels will take reservations over the telephone.

The short computer form asks simply to know what type room is desired and the first three choices of hotels. Forms are available from Baptist state convention offices or from the Convention Housing Bureau, 460 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, Tenn. 37219.

Forms include a complete information sheet, names and rates of the convention hotels, a map and instructions. They are required by the Houston convention bureau. Tim Hedquist, SBC convention manager, says most major convention cities have adopted or will soon adopt the procedure.

St. Louis, site of the 1980 convention, pioneered the concept. The returned form is processed through a computer which confirms the type room and hotel desired on the dates requested as requests are received.

Hedquist said that means requests submitted in September will get confirmations within four weeks. He said many of the record 22,872 messengers to the Atlanta convention this year did not receive confirmations until spring.

Use of the computer, Hedquist says, will assure rapid and accurate confirmation of rooms.

Group requests involving 10 rooms or more must be secured through the Convention Housing Bureau in Nashville. State conventions will not have the appropriate forms.

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D. C. Residents Advance  
Toward Full Citizenship

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WASHINGTON (BP)--By a one-vote margin, the U. S. Senate approved a constitutional amendment that would give voting representation in the Congress to the District of Columbia.

The final vote was 67-32, one more than the two-thirds majority required for any amendment to the Constitution. The vote came after two days of often heated debate and numerous attempts to weaken the proposal with amendments.

Currently, the 690,000 residents of the District of Columbia can vote only for the president and vice president of the United States and for officials in the local government. There is now no voting congressional representation from the District of Columbia. Walter E. Fauntroy is the elected D. C. delegate to the House of Representatives, but he has no voting rights in Congress.

The House of Representatives approved the measure March 2 by a vote of 289-127, 11 more than the required two-thirds majority.

Supporters of the resolution calling for voting rights for the residents of the District of Columbia said the proposal was a matter of civil rights or human rights for a predominantly black population.

Opposition centered on constitutional questions. Sen. William L. Scott (R.-Va.), leader of the opposition, argued that the district gets plenty of representation in Congress as a result of its "uniqueness."

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D.-Mass.), floor leader of the measure's supporters, retorted that the district is not unique when its young people are sent to Vietnam or its residents pay more taxes than 11 states.

The measure now goes directly to the state legislatures where at least 38 states must approve it before it is effective. The proposal would give the district two senators and one or two representatives. The latter would be decided by the 1980 census.

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EDITORS:

The racetrack chaplain story mailed 8/21/78 under headline "Backstretch Track Needs Motivate Unique Chaplain" has photos that were mailed from the Atlanta Bureau of Baptist Press 8/22/78.

Thanks, Baptist Press

**(BP)**

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