



-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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December 20, 1978

78-208

South Carolina Volunteers To Build African Assembly

NORTH AUGUSTA, S.C. (BP)--In what is believed to be the largest overseas volunteer project ever sponsored by a single Southern Baptist church, First Baptist Church in North Augusta, S.C., will provide personnel for building an assembly in Tanzania.

The church will send one long-term volunteer and about 80 short-term volunteers. By voting to accept the project, the church postponed the construction of a new auditorium to accommodate the crowd which comes to two services each Sunday.

The Baptist Convention of Tanzania has acquired 15 acres of land for the assembly near Iringa, one of Tanzania's larger towns. The site has easy access to major roads and railroads which will ease the problem of having no good meeting center since the Kenya and Tanzania mission was divided in 1977, leaving Tanzania without an assembly.

To evaluate volunteer needs at the site, First Baptist will send three men to Tanzania in January. Both pastor Charles D. Page and R. D. Brown, a deacon, president of the Brotherhood, and a contractor, will return to North Augusta to report to the church.

Barrett Bowden, site engineer and office manager for a North Augusta construction firm, will remain in Tanzania to serve as site engineer for the project. Other volunteers will go as their skills are needed. Carlos R. Owens, a Southern Baptist missionary and the Tanzanian Convention's secretary for evangelism and stewardship, will move to Iringa to coordinate the project.

All of the volunteers will have person-to-person ministries with the Tanzanians and will train them in construction and church program skills.

Although larger projects have been carried out by volunteers from several churches or by a state convention, James W. Cecil, the board's associate to the consultant on laymen overseas, said this is the first project of this magnitude undertaken by a single church.

Cecil predicted the project "will have a ripple effect in voluntarism," and noted a 59 percent increase in one-year volunteers during 1978.

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Couple's Retirement Project
Grows Into Full-Time Job

Baptist Press
12/20/78

AMARILLO, Texas (BP)--When Evlynn Caviness volunteered for the job, she expected to pack about 20 barrels of medical supplies for Southern Baptist missionary physician Frances Greenway.

But when she and her husband, George, finished, they had filled 162 drums, 55 gallons each, with medical supplies for Dr. Greenway to use at Baptist Medical Centre in Nalerigu, Ghana. In fact, the response was so good that Dr. Greenway asked people to quit sending supplies.

Medical supplies must be imported in Ghana so are very expensive. The Cavinesses, who had just retired in Amarillo, Texas, volunteered to pack requested supplies sent by people and churches across the United States.

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DARGAN-OARVEE
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Eventually they received an average of 40 packages and worked six to 10 hours daily. By the time they had packed 155 barrels, they had received 1,376 packages of hospital gowns, offering envelopes for pill distribution, towels, pill bottles, sheets, and other medical supplies from over 1,000 individuals or organizations from Virginia to California, and even Hawaii.

Their major problem was locating the drums, which are scarce and cost \$2 to \$15 each. Several companies and individuals donated barrels and paid part of the shipping charges to get them to Texas. The Cavinesses then had to clean and paint them and apply stencils telling the contents and the hospital's address.

Mrs. Caviness can remember a day when every muscle ached as she worked in the intense July heat. But when the nine-month job was finally finished, she and her husband could sit back and survey their labor stacked in barrels in their garage, on the porch, and across the drive, headed for Ghana.

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(BP) photos to be mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond Bureau of Baptist Press.

Bond Misunderstanding
Threatens Elderly Unit

Baptist Press
12/20/78

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--An 18-month operating cushion for Belmont Plaza has been discovered unusable and has put the Tennessee Baptist Service Corporation in jeopardy.

The corporation financed construction of the 123-unit high rise for senior adults through a \$5 million bond sale with the understanding that income from the sale would provide operating capital for up to 18 months.

"We discovered five weeks ago that none of these funds can be used for operating costs," Wade Darby, executive director of the corporation told the Tennessee Baptist Convention's executive board. Because of the way the feasibility study and bond indenture were written, "we were in serious financial condition from the first and didn't know it," he added.

Darby reported that financial plans are being rewritten and "several avenues pursued" in an effort to save the project, which is nearing completion.

One avenue, which must be accepted by two-thirds of the bond holders, is to rewrite the documents, lessening the demands of the reserve. The corporation trustees are considering a management firm to market the units and operate the facility on a long-term contract, hopefully providing their own operating capital until the units are self-supporting.

Darby told the executive board that the worst thing that could happen would be for the facility to default and be sold with the proceeds going to the bond holders. He emphasized the Tennessee Baptist Convention is not legally liable for the debt, since Belmont Plaza is a separate entity. "This is clearly stated in the bond indenture," he said.

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Thai Prisoners Hear
First Christmas Story

Baptist Press
12/20/78

CHACHEUNGSAO, Thailand (BP)--Most of them had never heard the Christmas story before. They listened attentively. Some sat in fetters or shackles.

They were among more than 1,000 inmates of Chachuengsao Provincial Prison in Thailand who gathered in the prison dining hall to hear the young people's choir and a guitar combo from Chacheungsao Baptist Church present a program of Christmas music. Southern Baptist missionary Robert R. Stewart explained the meaning of Christmas and how God's love could set all of them free--even those in fetters or shackles.

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After the program the young people circulated among the prisoners, giving each of them a Christmas present--Scripture portions and a hand towel. Only about a dozen of the men indicated they had ever heard the Christmas story before.

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Southern Baptists On World
Hunger Advisory Panel

NEW YORK (BP)--Six Southern Baptist leaders will serve on a panel advising Eugene Stockwell, the only representative of the religious community named to the recently-appointed Presidential Commission on World Hunger.

Stockwell, associate general secretary for overseas ministries of the National Council of Churches, said he has asked a wide range of religious leaders to serve on a panel to provide input through him for deliberations of the commission.

Southern Baptists in the group are Jimmy R. Allen of San Antonio, Texas, president of the Southern Baptist Convention; Foy Valentine, executive director of the SBC Christian Life Commission, Nashville, Tenn.; W. Eugene Grubbs, coordinator of hunger relief and disaster response, SBC Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va.; Paul Adkins, director of Christian social ministries, SBC Home Mission Board, Atlanta; Phil D. Strickland, associate secretary, Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, Dallas; and W. David Sapp, director of organization, SBC Christian Life Commission, who coordinated the SBC's recent Convocation on World Hunger.

Stockwell, who picked the Southern Baptists in consultation with Allen, said the group will number about 50, including Roman Catholics, Jews, and a number of Protestant denominations.

He said the commission, which will last until June of 1980, tentatively hopes to come up with recommendations on the world hunger problem in the summer of 1979 and then use the balance of the time to try to get them implemented. The commission, chaired by Saul Linowitz, was constituted in October, 1978, following appointment by President Jimmy Carter.

Stockwell said he hopes to accomplish two things with the panel: "First, I want to share occasional status reports with them, in writing, of what is happening in the commission and invite any comment or suggestion to take back. Second, I hope to bring the group together to talk through the issues the commission faces."

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Agencies Recommend Study
Of Communications Needs

Baptist Press
12/20/78

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The Public Service Satellite Consortium has gotten permission from eight Southern Baptist agencies and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs to study the agencies' current telecommunications systems.

The study is the first and only approved part of a potential three-phase effort that may eventually propose replacement of current systems with more advanced technologies.

The Public Service Satellite Consortium is an organization of public service broadcast users, which includes the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, dedicated to helping members define and analyze their communications requirements and reduce cost.

Phase I will take three months and begin Jan. 15, 1979. The cost will be shared by the agencies involved, which include the Radio and Television Commission, Home and Foreign Mission boards, Sunday School Board, the Joint Committee, Stewardship Commission, Executive Committee, Annuity Board and Southwestern Seminary.

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Journeyman's Parents
Follow Their Steps

By Mary Jane Welch

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Children often follow in their parents' footsteps, but Mr. and Mrs. Stephens L. Baumgardner followed in their children's when they joined the missionary force of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Only four months before their December appointment as missionary associates, the Baumgardners saw their two oldest children go to Nicaragua and Nigeria to serve two years as missionary journeymen. Steve Baumgardner and his wife Paula are bookkeepers in Managua, Nicaragua, and Stella teaches in the Baptist Women's College in Abeokuta, Nigeria.

"When we put them on the plane in August, we didn't know we'd be here," said Mrs. Baumgardner on the day of her appointment service.

The Baumgardners had been interested in foreign missionary service since their youth, but had been delayed in attaining this goal.

Baumgardner says he saw his first "real, live missionary" as a 10-year-old boy in a Georgia Royal Ambassador camp. The missionary, Stephen P. Jackson, impressed the young boy as a "real man's man." He was also a missionary to South Brazil--the mission field to which the Baumgardners have been assigned. There Baumgardner will serve as host for the mission (organization of missionaries) and Mrs. Baumgardner will do church and home work.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Baumgardner, who grew up in Alabama as a member of another denomination, was developing a deep conviction that the world needs to know Christ and that his love can heal its problems.

When the couple met in a church training class and began dating, missions was a natural topic of discussion.

While attending New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, they talked to the Foreign Mission Board representative every time he came to campus. Then, with seminary and some experience behind them, they applied for appointment as foreign missionaries.

But their daughter Stella was almost ready to enter high school, so the board asked them to wait until all the children were in college. Mrs. Baumgardner says the decision was hard to accept at the time, but they felt God had foreseen their future needs when Stella later became seriously ill and received treatment in the United States.

While they waited, they didn't forget missions. They moved to Warren, Ohio, to work in pioneer missions, which Baumgardner calls "the cutting edge." Later he became pastor of Sharron Woods Baptist Church in Plattsburgh, N.Y., where they now live.

They intended to wait for their other son, Joshua, to finish his second year of college. But this October, they stopped at the Foreign Mission Board for a visit, and Mel Torstrick, associate secretary of missionary personnel, suggested they not wait.

Their application was processed quickly. In early December, 14 years after their first application was turned down, they joined their children as Southern Baptist foreign missionaries.

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DEC. 21 1978

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