



BAPTIST PRESS

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79-22

4,478 Inoculated In One Day In Ghana Measles Outbreak

NALERIGU, Ghana (BP)--Mothers carrying children on their backs and leading others by the hand came by the hundreds to receive immunizations from Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers combatting a deadly measles epidemic.

As many as 4,478 injections were given in one day as medical teams went into the village areas surrounding the Baptist Medical Centre in Nalerigu, where Southern Baptist missionaries first reported the measles outbreak.

Missionaries requested both vaccine and volunteer personnel to help distribute the immunizations when a serious measles outbreak in their area became apparent. About 80 percent of the beds in the pediatrics ward of the hospital held measles victims and each night three or four children died.

Dr. Frances Greenway, missionary physician, said in her initial appeal for help that even healthy children were not surviving this particular strain of measles. Two nurses and a doctor, volunteers from the United States, joined the missionary staff in fighting the outbreak. During the first two weeks, the inoculation program vaccinated 16,950 children.

Another team of volunteers may be needed to help distribute the remaining vaccine. Although the amount of vaccine shipped to missionaries usually makes 50,000 doses, missionaries are using careful inoculation methods to stretch it to 70,000.

The work of the missionaries and volunteers supplements efforts by the Ghana government in curbing the outbreak. Southern Baptist efforts are confined to the northern area where medical missionaries are stationed.

Despite the careful planning, it was still "a near miracle" that the inoculation effort was accomplished, said John E. Mills, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's secretary for West Africa. "It was just great the way the people and the medicine got to Ghana and the work got done," he said.

Mills said bad weather almost prevented the volunteers from leaving the United States. One volunteer, Joyce Duncan, left St. Louis, Mo., on the only flight to New York that took off that day.

All 10 boxes of medicine arrived with the volunteers, and the medicine was still frozen. The vaccine must remain frozen until time for use. Even a more than five-hour delay enroute didn't prevent the volunteers from making connections. Airline officials held a plane 20 minutes past takeoff time until the volunteers could board for the final leg of their journey.

Money for the immunization project came from Southern Baptist gifts to relief funds. Arrangements for the volunteers and vaccine were made by Harold E. Hurst, associate to the medical consultant for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Surveys Reveal An Upswing
In Baptist Youth Commitment

By Charles Willis

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Results of surveys covering 6,000 Southern Baptist youth show an increasing importance in personal religious commitment among young people, according to a Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor.

Dan Aleshire, a former researcher and now assistant professor of church and denominational ministry at Southern Seminary, told youth program leaders from three Southern Baptist agencies that youth read their Bibles more and attend more church services.

The leaders, from Woman's Missionary Union, the Brotherhood Commission and the church training, church music, Sunday School and church administration departments at the Sunday School Board, were meeting in annual coordination conferences to share information among programs.

The surveys, taken in 1971 and 1974 and in 1977 by the Search Institute in Minneapolis, Minn., show increasing personal religious commitment and decreasing social concern in three successive high school generations. The most recent survey relates to the present high school class.

Aleshire said tabulated scores indicate changing values among youth in such areas as God awareness, religious participation, moral responsibility, Biblical concepts, self regard, national issues, self confidence, personal faults, family unity, parental understanding and classroom relationships.

Changes in scores from 1971 to 1977 indicate significant changes in values, which often reflect changes in values of society at large. A score below the average score of 50 indicates less concern, value or importance; above 50, more concern, value or importance. A change in three full points, from one survey year to another, Aleshire said, indicates a significant shift in attitudes.

"God awareness"--the extent to which youth are aware of God in their lives and believe that he is an ever-present reality--increased from 1971's standard score of 51.4 to 56.3 in 1977.

"Religious participation" registered a jump of nearly six points from 52.6 in 1971 to 58.2 in 1977. That indicates the degree of a youth's involvement in the activities of the institutional church.

"Moral responsibility"--the extent to which a youth becomes involved in life by accepting a God-given sense of responsibility for others--increased from 51.0 to 55.0.

A nearly seven point increase, the largest point change in the study, was shown in the category of "Biblical concepts," the extent to which youth perceive the conceptual uniqueness of Christianity and reject generalized statements of religion. The score in 1971 was 50.9; in 1977, 57.2.

"Self regard"--the degree to which youth accept themselves as persons of worth and possibility--increased from 50.6 to 53.2.

In one area, Baptist youth expressed a decreasing degree of importance. "National issues" reflects youths' concern about pollution, nuclear holocaust, violence, revolution, war, disorder and lawlessness. The survey score in 1971 was 49.8; in 1977, 45.1.

Aleshire noted that in some important areas of ministry--self-concept and relationships with family and peers--attitudes of Baptist youth have remained essentially unchanged for a decade.

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In "lack of self-confidence"--the extent to which a youth feels uncertain about himself and fears making mistakes or exposing himself to ridicule--the score was 49.3 in 1971 and 50.5 in 1977.

"Personal faults"--the extent to which a youth worries about what he has done and what he has failed to do--stood at 49.1 in 1971 and 49.6 in 1977.

Youth's concern and anxiety over the emotional climate within the home, categorized as "family unity," registered 49.7 in 1971 and 50.0 in 1977.

"Parental understanding"--concern over a lack of communication and understanding with parents--declined slightly from 50.0 in 1971 to 49.9 in 1977.

"Classroom relationships"--dealing with the degree to which a youth feels lonely or unwanted by peers--increased from 49.3 in 1971 to 50.2 in 1977.

Continuing problems indicate areas of ministry which rightfully deserve consistent attention, observes Aleshire. These areas represent some of the most difficult needs to which ministry efforts should be addressed, he says.

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Additional data on survey mailed to Baptist state editors by Sunday School Board Bureau of Baptist Press.

Professor Says Children
Need Authority, Warmth

By Jerilynn Wood

Baptist Press
2/12/79

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--"Authority with warmth is the best environment for a child to grow up in," said David Elkind, professor and chairman of the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study at Tufts University.

"Children need to be loved and cared for but they also need someone to set limits and provide discipline," said Elkind, speaking to preschool writers, artists and consultants at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Elkind, who covered several areas of preschoolers' growth and development, told the group that often phrases such as "God is love" or "my best friend is Jesus" are verbal formulas for preschool children.

"The concept of God is abstract and complex for small children to understand. They may be able to repeat the phrase 'God is love' but they do not understand its meaning," Elkind said. "Children often view Jesus or God as an important man such as the president of the United States or a movie star until they mature enough to comprehend the meaning."

Elkind said that adults often turn children off to church and Sunday School by expecting too much from them too soon.

He cited an example of Sunday School lessons that expect a child to comprehend the birth of the Christ child one Sunday, Jesus as a 12-year-old the next Sunday and Jesus as a man the third Sunday.

Elkind also reminded the audience to keep in mind a child's maturity when selecting illustrations for quarterlies.

"When a child sees a picture of Jesus in his robe and sandals surrounded by children in contemporary clothing they want to go visit Jesus too. That picture is like seeing Santa Claus, whom they can visit on the street corners during December," he said.

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Elkind added that religion can add a valuable dimension to a child's world and provide an alternate way of dealing with his world and fulfilling some basic needs. He said that religion also offers some valuable lessons in morality, friendship, commitment and other areas.

"The most important thing to remember when working on children's materials is to be sensitive to a child's perspective," Elkind said. "It is necessary to recognize a child's intellect and be willing to listen to him, but always keep in mind that he is not yet an adult."

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state editors by the Sunday School Board Bureau of Baptist Press.

Corps' Support Needs
Draw Baptist Response

Baptist Press
2/12/79

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists committed about \$60,000 to support Mission Service Corps volunteers overseas in late January and early February, according to Lewis I. Myers Jr., coordinator of the corps for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

These commitments by eight Southern Baptist individuals or groups, plus seven inquiries about supporting a volunteer, came in response to Myers' earlier announcement that immediate financing was needed for 27 Mission Service Corps volunteers.

Based on this initial response, Myers expressed confidence that financing for all 27 will be arranged during the next two to three months. It costs an average of \$7,500 a year to support a single volunteer and \$12,500 to support a couple overseas.

The appeal for additional financing came after the January meeting of the Foreign Mission Board. Eight new Mission Service Corps workers were approved at that time, and Myers said four more awaited financing. Another 23 were nearing approval but also lacked support.

Although encouraged by the recent response, Myers said the number of volunteers and sponsors still does not equal the number of requests coming in from the field. About 60 percent of the requests are for teachers on levels ranging from elementary school to seminary. Missionaries in Spain, for example, have three requests for persons to teach the children of one or two mission families so that missionaries may devote more of their time to mission work.

English teachers are requested for government schools, particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa. Other requests are for teachers for international schools attended by missionary children, mission schools, national and Baptist junior and senior colleges and universities, Baptist seminaries, and English classes in community centers.

Myers said people with experience and training in literacy work on in teaching English as a second language would be especially helpful overseas. Other vital needs include office workers, especially secretaries and bookkeepers, and agriculturalists.

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