



BAPTIST PRESS

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79-24

People's Temple Relief Group
Includes Two Baptists

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (BP)--A Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary professor and a seminary student have been named to the Emergency Relief Committee designed to help families of victims of the mass-murder suicide in the People's Temple tragedy last November in Jonestown, Guyana.

Francis M. DuBose, professor of missions at the seminary, and Shadrick Riddick, a student and pastor of Chapel Hill Baptist Church in San Francisco's Fillmore District, where the People's Temple headquarters is located, were the only Southern Baptists appointed to the committee.

They are joined by 27 others on the ERC, organized by the San Francisco Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco and the Northern California Board of Rabbis.

Acting as "a friend of the court," the ERC issued a statement saying, "The interest of the Emergency Relief Committee is to have immediate financial help made available from People's Temple funds for the immediate burial of the dead bodies which have been stored at Dover, Delaware, since November 1978." Some 599 bodies, victims of the mass murder-suicide which claimed over 900 lives, remain in Delaware.

San Francisco Superior Court Judge Ira A. Brown ordered the committee and its attorney, John E. Wahl to produce a plan for his consideration within 30 days outlining the transfer and burial of the remaining unidentified or unclaimed bodies and bodies claimed by families financially unable to transport them for burial to San Francisco from Dover Air Force Base. The plan will include cost estimates and suggestions for the amount of People's Temple assets to be used. A vital part of the plan includes working with the families (most poor), the funeral directors and the clergy in providing funeral services and burial with dignity.

In addition to their work with the Emergency Relief Committee, DuBose, Riddick and several other Southern Baptist church leaders from the San Francisco Bay Area are involved in a "large-scale" counseling program to victims' families, a project spearheaded by the San Francisco Conference on Religion, Race and Social Concern, the larger coordinating organization of the three major faith communities.

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Peter Rhea Jones Accepts
Pastorate in Decatur, Ga.

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Peter Rhea Jones has resigned as associate professor of New Testament Interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to become pastor of First Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga.

Jones will succeed William V. Lancaster, who resigned in July to accept a position with the Georgia Pastoral Care Association in Atlanta. Jones will continue his teaching responsibilities with Southern through the spring semester.

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A native of Dyersburg, Tenn., the 41-year-old Jones received a bachelor of arts degree from Union University, a master of arts degree from the University of Mississippi, bachelor of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from Southern Seminary, and a master of theology degree from Princeton Theological Seminary. He completed one year of post doctoral work at Cambridge University in England.

Jones is married to Ellen Francis Miles of Dresden, Tenn. Mrs. Jones, also a graduate of Union University, has taught seminary wives in the evening school for several years. The couple has three children, Peter Rhea Jr., Heather Miles and Ramsey Poynter.

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Relief Plea Catches
Mission Board Short

Baptist Press
2/14/79

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--With only \$6,000 in general relief funds, members of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board were unprepared for a plea for \$285,000 to assist flood victims in south Brazil, where more than 400 died, 300,000 were evacuated and 100 Baptist churches were damaged or destroyed.

Requests were granted immediately for \$95,000 from hunger funds to assist 1,300 Baptist families who had to evacuate the area. But two other urgent relief requests left only \$6,391 in the general relief account for the Brazil disaster.

At their February meeting, board members redesignated funds from areas of lesser need. They shifted \$32,303 from relief funds in Niger Republic; \$50,000 from reconstruction funds intended for Romania; and another \$32,142 from a continuing relief project in Recife, Brazil; but still had only \$120,836, less than half the amount requested. The funds originally designated for Romania and Recife are to be replaced as funds are made available.

"There's a tremendous need down there, but our general relief fund is depleted," said Winston Crawley, director of the board's overseas division.

Fred L. Hawkins Jr., Southern Baptist missionary in the flood area, reported by telephone just before the board's administrative meeting that many areas remained under water. He said more than 400 persons had died and some 1,320 Baptist families have been completely uprooted. Crops and as many as 10,000 dairy cattle have been destroyed. He estimated that 70 percent of the population will be out of work for months because of the damage.

Devastation in the three south Brazil states--Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro and Espirito Santo--covers an area equal to the size of Texas. Thurmon E. Bryant, the board's secretary for eastern South America, called it the area most developed by Baptists in Brazil. He said with 100 churches damaged or destroyed and thousands of Baptist families homeless, the flood will affect Baptist giving across the entire country of Brazil.

"The churches will suffer very badly," Hawkins said. "People down here are already helping themselves as much as they can, (but) we could use the money beginning tonight."

Churches in other parts of Brazil have been gathering clothing, food supplies and money. The Brazilian Baptist State Convention and associational organizations are mobilized and, through churches, are getting relief efforts coordinated, said Bryant. He added that the Brazilian government is also mobilized and is using helicopters and other means to move food and supplies into stricken areas.

At the same time board members considered the requests from south Brazil, they expressed appreciation for funds received for relief and hunger needs and voted to endorse the Southern Baptist Convention's emphasis on World Hunger Day. Almost \$43,000 was appropriated at this meeting for hunger relief and \$24,000 for general relief in areas

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other than south Brazil, including \$4,000 for war victims in Tanzania and \$20,000 for flood relief in north Brazil.

In other action, the board granted 18 requests for early release of 1978 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering funds, amounting to \$264,004. Normally, the money from this offering is not distributed until after the books are closed in June, but the needs were considered too urgent to wait. The appropriations were for conference centers, churches, missionary residences, automobiles and mass media equipment. More than \$42,000 of that amount was for a small television unit to be used in evangelistic efforts in Latin America.

More than \$25,000 was appropriated from special evangelism funds for projects throughout the world, including a tent ministry in Chile and two evangelistic marches in Venezuela. In eastern Venezuela, church members in teams of three will cover at least 400 miles in the marches, penetrating the area with person-to-person witnessing and followup.

The board heard an update on mission work in west Africa by John E. Mills, the board's secretary for that area. Board members also paid tribute to Emanuel A. Dahunsi, an outstanding Baptist leader in Nigeria who was killed in a car accident Jan. 30, and A. F. Tuck, a board member from Illinois who died Feb. 6.

Finally, the board voted to evaluate its progress toward reaching its Bold Mission Thrust goals at the April meeting in Kansas City, Mo.

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Folksy Preacher Warms
Winter Texans' Hearts

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press
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RIO GRANDE VALLEY, Texas (BP)--About the time that birds begin their fall migration, a unique group of people head south away from the frigid Midwest and Northeast.

More than 100,000 of these "snowbirds" or winter Texans wind up in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. They park their trailers and motor-homes amid the towering palms and the citrus groves to enjoy the sub-tropical climate all winter.

On a typical Sunday morning, 2,000 Winter Texans--mostly retirees--packed the recreation hall at the Fun and Sun Too trailer court to hear a message by Texas Baptist layman C. L. (Smokey) Boyle.

"We can safely say every chair here is filled," laughed Rio Grande Valley Director of Missions Robert Smith, "because they bring their own chairs."

The main attraction is the folksy message of Smokey Boyle, a member of Memorial Baptist Church, Harlingen, Texas, said Smith. Semi-retired from the auto parts business, Boyle was the main speaker at four services the same Sunday.

"They like and demand Smokey Boyle," said one listener. "He represents what they want in their lives."

Boyle blends folksy humor with sound biblical teaching, and the retirees flock to the services.

"A lot of people think, 'I'm all right, I can handle this job all by myself,'" Boyle told the Winter Texans, "but you can't. When ol' smutty face beats me down, I just call on God. The salvation news is that we're freed in God's sight from all condemnation."

"You say, 'I'm not so bad,' but the Book says, 'You're not so good.' Somewhere, out in the trailers or the palms, just bow your head and say, 'Lord, I come to you.'"

"The exciting thing about the Winter Texans ministry is that so many lay people are involved," said Smith. "I believe this is the greatest home mission opportunity we have."

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Lay people are leading Bible study and other services at about 16 of the nearly 150 trailer courts in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties. The ministry is co-sponsored by the Rio Grande Valley association and the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

H. L. Meacham, in his third year as a volunteer, said the trailer people won't go out of their way to go into town to services, but "if you bring the church to them, they'll eat it up."

"One couple who'd never been to church has gotten involved and stays up at night to help get the meeting hall ready for Sunday morning," Meacham said.

One of the greatest things about the work, said Smith, is that many Winter Texans find Christ as Saviour and go back home to the Midwest and Northeastern United States as missionaries.

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Baptisms Promise Victory
Over Trouble in Ecuador

Baptist Press
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By Jennifer Hall and Stewart Pickle

CUENCA, Ecuador (BP)--Turmoil, turbulence and trials joined forces against them, but Baptists in Ecuador weathered the crises and now record baptisms promise hope.

Since 1975, evangelicals working in this area have been targets of violence. Physical attacks, verbal abuse and other tactics threatened to discourage Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries from establishing and continuing work for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Despite opposition, 50 believers were baptized recently in a combined service with First Baptist Church of Cuenca and Jesus the Good Shepherd Baptist Church of Tambo. It was the largest number of baptisms recorded at one time in the area. The Tambo church alone baptized 41.

Baptist work in Cuenca, begun in 1970 by Southern Baptist missionaries Archie and Julia Jones, grew rapidly. Later Cuenca began a mission in Canar. Work in Tambo also was well grounded. Today, services are held in alternating months in Tambo and Canar.

Not everyone, however, has seen the fruit of the labor. In 1976 Julia Jones was diagnosed with cancer. The family left for the United States, where she died in 1978. Jones, now a pastor in Mocksville, N.C., hasn't seen Ecuador for almost three years.

Hearing of the record baptisms, he said, "I'm not surprised, but I am pleased" with the way the gospel has touched Indians in the pioneer area.

"The whole valley was watching this 'fight'," Jones said, remembering the first years. "All this drew attention to us and people began to ask, 'Why are they (the Baptists) here? What's this all about?' I'd say it got sort of a holy curiosity started."

That curiosity apparently laid the ground work leading to the recent baptisms, and perseverance among the believers. W. Stewart Pickle, Southern Baptist missionary now working in the area, described the strength of Baptists: "Without Christ, the social pressure to drink would be almost impossible to resist. Eusebio Pingull, pastor at Tambo, was elected to public office. On one occasion he was tied up, but his assailants could not force him to drink. Also, five believers carry scars from an attack on one of their meetings. They were knifed and were being stoned as police arrived."

As the 160 attending the baptisms heard account after account of the Lord's protection and care, Cuenca deacon Wilson Serrano stood with tears in his eyes and said: "It was Brother Archie's dream to see this church building filled with believers. I hope he can come back to see what God is doing."

For now, Archie Jones will remain in the states as a father to his children, pastor to his congregation and encourager of missions. He has no firm answers, but definite desires: "I'm planning to go back...and I probably will."

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