



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 11, 1979

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Arizona Messengers  
Affirm Johnson

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--Jack Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Ponca City, Okla., was elected executive director-treasurer of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention in a special called session. He will take office in early June.

Messengers from Arizona Baptists' 287 churches and missions cast 90 percent of their ballots in favor of their executive board's earlier election of Johnson to succeed Roy F. Sutton, who retired Dec. 31, 1978. The Arizona convention's constitution requires affirmation for the chief executive by a two-thirds vote of the convention after election by the executive board.

A vote in a similar called convention in July 1978 failed by 11 votes to affirm the nomination of Mark Short for executive director-treasurer. Short, now church program consultant for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, was then a staff member of Houston's South Main Baptist Church.

Johnson, 44, has been at First Baptist since 1976 and is chairman of the administrative division of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma's executive board.

A pastor in California 19 years, he is former president of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California and chairman of the board of trustees for California Baptist College.

He is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary and the California Graduate School of Theology.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist editors by the Oklahoma Baptist Messenger.

Warren Named Associate  
Editor of Tennessee Paper

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BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP)--Charlie Warren of Memphis has been named associate editor of the Baptist and Reflector, Tennessee's state Baptist newspaper.

Warren, 31, associate editor of World Mission Journal at the Southern Baptist Convention's Brotherhood Commission since Feb. 1977, will join the staff July 15. He fills a vacancy which has existed since Oct. 1975, when David Keel resigned as circulation manager of the publication.

In another Baptist and Reflector staff adjustment, Eura Lannom was shifted from assistant to editor Al Shackelford to a position as advertising and circulation manager. Mrs. Lannom, who has held various positions with the paper for 38 years, served as acting editor, Aug. 1974 to Nov. 1976.

Before joining World Mission Journal, Warren served as senior editor of press relations for four years at the SBC Foreign Mission Board. He was publications coordinator for the Baptist Publishing House, Lusaka, Zambia, during two years as a missionary journeyman under the Foreign Mission Board before attending seminary.

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During seminary, Warren was minister of youth at a church in Fort Worth and then was a newswriter for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Warren, a Roanoke, Va., native, is a journalism graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, and earned a master of religious education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He is married to the former Sandra Hilton of Beaumont, Texas, and has two children. She is also a former missionary journeyman.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Memphis Bureau of Baptist Press.

Brazil's Key Role Noted;  
Prayer Urged on Visas

By Jennifer Hall Anderson

Baptist Press  
5/11/79

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A plea and a thank you are going out to Southern Baptists from Baptists and missionaries in eastern South America.

In his report to the SBC Foreign Mission Board meeting in Richmond, Thurmon E. Bryant, board secretary for eastern South America, focused on the "growing awareness of these nations, especially Brazil, that they are a vital part of the universal context."

He told the board to watch and learn about Brazil's "historic opportunity in exercising influence and power as one of the decision-making centers of the world." Bryant predicted that if the world, in making foreign policy, or Baptists, in mission strategy, overlook Brazil's power and growth, "we will be the losers."

As part of a report on the future of Baptist work in his area, Bryant told of "growing restriction" on permanent visas granted to missionary appointees. He said he was recently informed by Brazil's Department of Immigration that it's "highly unlikely visas will be granted to all of our appointees who have applied and the tendency will be to be more strict in the future." Observers see that as an apparent effort to protect Brazil's labor force.

Bryant added that if the sending of missionaries to Brazil becomes more difficult, "expansion of the work will be curtailed." However, he praised the "good denominational base" already established through the board's missionary efforts which should guarantee a continuity of Baptist work there. Bryant recently sent letters to missionaries, their children and others asking them to join in prayer about visa problems.

In a follow-up report on Brazil's worst flood in history, Bryant conveyed thanks from Brazilians who received help from missionaries and the board's allocation of \$345,000 in relief. Quoting Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil Fred L. Hawkins Jr., Bryant said, "The total needs reported are more and more staggering. We feel that the part we (Southern Baptists) have had in this has been vital...the people have suffered, but they have found that God and God's people cared."

Brazil remained in the forefront as missionary Ronald N. Boswell told of the "side by side" work of the 1980-82 "Mission to Brazil" between Baptists in Texas and Brazil. Boswell, on furlough from his assignment in Brazil, is living in Texas and acting as Texas' liaison-coordinator for the Brazil-wide evangelistic crusade. The Baptist General Convention of Texas, at the invitation of the Brazil missions and the Foreign Mission Board, is cooperating with the missions and the Brazilian Baptist Convention in developing plans for the second national evangelistic campaign.

Boswell told the board he is recruiting Texans for the project, but he's not interested in tourists. "We want those whom God would send out; those who know Jesus Christ; and those to share their testimony side by side with Brazilian Baptists."

He outlined the plan for a six-month orientation of those desiring to work with "Mission to Brazil." "We want them to know who Brazilians are...we want to help them to hit the field working," the missionary said. Brazilian Baptists are receiving similar orientation in their country.

The project goal is to aid the convention in establishing 3,200 new churches, bringing the total of churches to 6,000, with one million members by 1982, the centennial of Baptist work in Brazil.

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Missionary Dan Cobb Says  
Refugees Will Not Forget

By Anita Bowden

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A missionary who has spent three years working with refugees in Thailand delivered a medal to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in May. But in reality, he delivered much more.

He brought the grateful thanks of thousands of helpless people and a plea to Southern Baptists to continue their giving to relief ministries.

The missionary, Daniel R. Cobb, presented to the board the Thai Red Cross Society Medal of Merit, which he accepted as coordinator for refugee workers in the Thailand Baptist Mission. He was one of 20 agency representatives awarded the medal. "It represents a lot of hard work," he said, but also a great deal of accumulated good will with the Thai government.

"But more important than that," he added, "it represents a ministry to the needs of desperate people in the name of Christ and Southern Baptists. When the opportunity came, Baptists were ready. And the refugees will never forget."

Cobb expressed appreciation for regular Southern Baptist giving which sends missionaries to countries like Thailand, but he urged special giving for the general relief fund, now nearly depleted, so that missionaries can continue to meet the refugees' needs. More than 6,500 of them are in the three refugee camps where Baptists now work.

In the four years that Southern Baptists have ministered to refugees in Thailand, more than 3,200 refugees have been baptized. Cobb personally baptized more than 1,200 of that number.

But he's done more than simply baptize new Christians. When refugees began pouring across the border into Thailand in 1975, camps were set up hurriedly and emergency supplies sent in. The Cobbs distributed food, blankets, toothpaste, soap, plates, cooking utensils and medicine. Later, agricultural tools and seeds were added to the list.

They have worked to reunite family members who became separated in their dash for freedom and ended up in different refugee camps. They've been minister, mailmen, counselors, bankers and deliverymen for the refugees. They've bought necessities and fitted eyeglasses.

"You weep with them, but you also rejoice with them," Cobb said, his own eyes filling with tears as he told of miracles he's witnessed among the refugees. "We have seen so many people who have had deep problems of every kind find Christ and, through Christ, find a solution to their problems, find peace under all circumstances."

Work with refugees also has its frustrations. "You can't work with people's problems all day and then sleep well at night," Cobb said. "Maybe one night a month I get a good night's sleep."

Some of these problems relate to other relief agencies' supplies which never reach the refugees. Then there are refugee women who are raped or participate in prostitution and men who are beaten or forced to engage in homosexual acts. Camp deaths are not investigated thoroughly. Cobb has little authority in these matters but he has managed to have certain refugees, whose lives were in danger, moved to other camps.

He says reading Psalms and praying help keep him from becoming too discouraged. The refugees help, too.

One refugee in particular, Ly Meng, taught him a lot about prayer, Cobb said. After Ly Meng became a Christian at one of the camps, he decided to take the Bible's promises of answered prayer at face value. He prayed that his uncle and brother would escape. This was at a time when only about one in 10 was reaching Thailand alive. In a few weeks both were in refugee camps.

Then he prayed that he'd be able to get his eyes examined in Bangkok--275 miles away and across seven or eight provincial borders, all requiring mountains of paperwork before allowing refugees to pass. But he soon had written permission to make the trip. He did, and got his glasses

Next he prayed to get his name on the list of refugees to be resettled in France; soon it was. He realized he'd need money for miscellaneous expenses. He had 10 days before he was scheduled to leave. He prayed about it and before he left he got money in the mail.

"This man really taught me a lot about simple faith and prayer," Cobb said.

The two hardest aspects of his job, he said, are dealing with officials and red tape and the helpless feeling he has when he sees the needs and realizes he can't meet all of them. "It's the hardest but also the most rewarding job I've ever had," Cobb said. "We just praise the Lord that he's allowed us to work with the refugees."

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

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Report Suggests Ways  
To Help Handicapped

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Stating that approximately 40 million people in the U. S. are either physically or mentally impaired, a report from the Maryland division of vocational rehabilitation suggests ways for churches to relate to the handicapped.

"We may show our care by removing the walls and barriers which separate them from us, our homes and church buildings," says the report prepared for the Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee of the Baptist Convention of Maryland.

The report suggests Christians: invite a disabled person to their church to talk about his disability; accept them without requiring they be "like us;" include them in all activities of the church; arrange for transportation; provide ground level entrances, ramps, elevators, chair lifts, rails and other facilities to make all areas of the church accessible.

Also: remodel toilet facilities, making all doors wide enough for wheelchairs and install rails; enlist and train deaf interpreters; order large print, Braille and recorded Bibles, hymnals and other materials needed for the visually impaired.

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