

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2356
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
Norman Jamason, Feature Editor**BUREAUS**

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Richard T. McCartney, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) L. Bracey Campbell III, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2798
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hasteley, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

June 25, 1979

79-105

Flight From Nicaragua:
Journeyman's Last Days

By Jennifer Hall Anderson

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--"I don't think I ever was afraid we wouldn't get out until we got to the airport...where we met an American reporter whose hands were shaking so bad he could hardly write."

Paula Baumgardner, 24, didn't know then what she knows now. She and her husband Steve were not only the last Southern Baptist missionaries to exit strife-torn Nicaragua, but they believe they were passengers on the last regularly scheduled flight out of Managua, the capital city. Stepped-up fighting between the government of Anastasio Somoza Jr. and guerrillas of the Sandinista National Liberation Front caused scores to leave.

What some have called acts of bravery are really nothing more than raised eyebrows to the missionary journeyman couple, now with family in Orlando, awaiting departure to a new assignment for the final year of their two-year volunteer mission term.

Steve, 25, maintains he was only "concerned" and never in fear. "After all, ever since we arrived as journeymen in August 1978 we heard gunfire almost every single night," he said. He likened Managua to the eye of a hurricane, action all around, yet relatively calm in the center.

In fact, when they packed to evacuate, "we packed like we were going on vacation," Paula said. "It never crossed my mind that we might never go back." Except for their wedding pictures, Paula grabbed little else.

Their flight from Nicaragua sounds like a mystery thriller.

For months, career missionary veterans Stanley and Glenna Stamps had planned a June vacation away from Managua. As the time grew nearer, the Baumgardners and Stamps thought they'd go together. Steve's parents, however, were planning to visit Managua. "It was a tough decision (with the on-again, off-again fighting), but we decided to stay," said Steve. The Stamps left.

Just days later, a general strike closed 85 percent of Managua's businesses. June 5 the city's vital transportation system shut down. "June 6th I finally said, 'Hey this looks like it's a prolonged type thing--maybe we should leave,'" said a calm Steve Baumgardner.

Phone calls to airlines proved futile--information was unreliable. By June 9, Baumgardner and a Nicaraguan friend went to a travel agency. "They'd only let me through the back door, but I got two tickets," Steve said. The couple hoped to get to Honduras.

June 10 the Baumgardners arrived at the airport to find enough tickets had been sold to fill three airplanes. Steve called it "a mass of confusion." Flights were cancelled to Honduras; they decided to try for Miami. Four hours later, passengers were starting to board, but to get a seat, baggage had to be tagged.

"A man in front of us got a nod from someone and they took his luggage and tagged it," said Baumgardner. When Steve asked the man how he did it, he suggested they put their luggage on the scale. They did; were asked their destination; and with no other questions asked, they received a nod to board.

-more-

"We barely got on," Steve recalled. "And on June 11, the day after we left Managua, we heard the U. S. citizens couldn't get out of Nicaragua...we're very thankful. The Lord was certainly watching over us."

Since their arrival in the states, the Baumgardners say they've heard much more about the fighting in Nicaragua than when they lived there. "I guess I just look back and say it was the hand of the Lord guiding us," said Steve. "That's all I can say. If we were there now we'd probably be scared."

What does the future look like for the Baumgardners and Stamps? The Stamps call it "wait and see." They hope to return and continue literature work, but for now they're in Honduras. The Baumgardners will work in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, where he will do accounting for the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries there.

Still the longing for Nicaragua remains vivid. "We tried to make provisions for the employees with the literature ministry...I'm concerned about the people who were depending on us for a living," said Steve. "We just did the best we could."

-30-

Stephens L. Baumgardner Jr. is a native of Pensacola, Fla., and Paula Howard Baumgardner is from Orlando. Stanley D. Stamps is from Prentiss, Miss. Glenna Morgan Stamps is from Hill County, Texas.

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

Center Looted, Employee Hurt in Managua Conflict

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (BP)--Nicaragua's Baptist Culture Center in Managua reportedly was looted and an employee wounded as fighting intensified between guerrillas and national guard troops.

Stanley D. Stamps, Southern Baptist Missionary to Nicaragua, said he had received an unconfirmed report that the center had been ransacked. In an unrelated incident, an employee of the center was struck and wounded by shrapnel from a rocket explosion near his home, Stamps said in a June 22 phone call to the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va.

Stamps and family were away on vacation when fighting intensified June 4 between the Sandinista National Liberation Front and forces of President Anastasio Somoza Jr. Thousands--including the other Southern Baptist missionary couple in Managua--were forced to flee the country. Mr. and Mrs. Stamps are temporarily living in Honduras.

No deaths among Baptist families have been reported, but Stamps said he believes many have been left homeless and affected by the daily gunfire.

The Nicaraguan Baptist Convention president, Mireya de Dominguez, told the missionary in a telephone conversation: "The situation is critical...just keep on praying for us."

Mrs. Dominguez expressed gratitude for the \$20,000 the Foreign Mission Board appropriated for relief in the country. The money, however, could not be transmitted with banks closed. She said she hopes banks will reopen.

Stamps was told that scarcity of food and outbreaks of disease are "the biggest problems." Work crews, however, have repaired damaged water and electric power lines to help alleviate other problems, he said.

An estimated 30,000 Nicaraguans have sought refuge in southern Honduras, said Stamps, who added that he has "no hopes of getting back to Managua for several weeks."

-30-

Southwestern To Offer
Three New Degree Plans

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Effective in the fall of 1979, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary will offer three new degree programs.

The new degrees include a master of divinity degree with church music minor, a master of religious education with church music minor, and a master of church music with religious education minor.

The programs inter-relate in the seminary's School of Theology, School of Religious Education, and School of Church Music.

"The master of divinity with church music minor was designed especially for music students who wanted a more thorough theological background," Jesse J. Northcutt, vice president for academic affairs, explained.

The master of religious education degree with church music minor was developed to fill the need of combination ministries, according to Jack D. Terry Jr., dean of the School of Religious Education.

The major difference between the master of church music degree with religious education minor and the other combination degrees, seminary officials said, is the specific concentration in one area of religious education--childhood, youth, adult, social work, administration or psychology.

-30-

Allen Named Director
Of Student Services

Baptist Press
6/25/79

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Elizabeth P. Allen has been named director of student support services at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, according to Elisabeth E. Lambert, assistant dean of students.

In the new position, Mrs. Allen will be involved with student housing, student organizations, senior class activities and counseling.

A native of Mobile, Ala., she holds bachelor of science and master of education degrees in counseling and guidance from the University of Montevallo, Montevallo, Ala.

Since coming to Louisville in 1975, Mrs. Allen has served in the admissions office and as administrative assistant for student affairs. Prior to that she worked as a counselor at the University of Montevallo and with community mental health centers in Chilton and Shelby Counties in Alabama.

She is married to William Loyd Allen of Cuba, Ala., a recent graduate of Southern Seminary.

-30-

CORRECTIONS

In Baptist Press story mailed 6-21 entitled "Complicated' SBC Raises Mrs. Fletcher's Ire," her name should be changed to Jessie Porter in both the headline and other references in the story. Also she is from Long Beach, Calif., not Fla., as the third graph states.

In BP story mailed 6-20 entitled "SBC Seminaries Meet in Houston", the alumni president at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is Perry Sanders, not Curry Sanders as indicated.

Thanks, Baptist Press

N wlyweds Combine
SBC With Honeymoon

By Jennifer Hall Anderson

HOUSTON (BP)--Brenda and John Todd seem like a typical couple--until you learn they're honeymooning with 15,000 other people.

N wlyweds, this Myrtle Beach, S. C., couple floated on wedded bliss at the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Houston.

Sitting in the lobby of the Astro Village Hotel, where they had the honeymoon suite, he caressed her hand--diamond solitaire included.

"When I asked Brenda to marry me, Ocean View Baptist Church in Myrtle Beach began talking to me about a job," said the minister of education.

The couple set a date--just after convention time--but John cautioned his fiancée that he couldn't handle the frenzy of the convention and nuptial jitters.

But love (and probably Brenda's hazel eyes) won. Ocean View called John and instead of marrying later, they moved the date to June 2--just days before the convention. They decided to give Houston a chance and make their mark as honeymooning conventioners; John as a messenger and Brenda, an interested observer.

John admitted the whole thing may seem strange, but "Brenda is marrying into the ministry and she needs to know how I'm involved, how the Southern Baptist Convention operates and meet my friends from Southwestern (Baptist Theological) Seminary."

Honeymooners aren't the usual fare for convention agendas and John, 36, and Brenda, 29, have gotten their share of giggles. But as an elected messenger from his church, he kept his promise to report on all the meetings. Honeymoon or not, they made it to each one on time.

And who'll pay for honeymoon-er-convention? The church picks up John's tab, but the groom shoulders his bride's expenses.

"We've really lived it up," John said during the convention. "The first week we ate at all the best restaurants, went to San Antonio, Galveston and the space center... Now we eat hot dogs and at Wyatt's cafeteria."

Brenda said she "kind of dreads it being over," but admits she'll be glad to get home. John said something about already running the limit on his credit card.

Things were kind of quiet and John was reminiscing on the five previous conventions he's attended. But he turned to his bride, grasped her around the waist and decided: "This is the best convention yet."