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Hunger, Refugee Aid
Challenges Are Given

By Gwen Long

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Every Southern Baptist church should sponsor an Indochinese refugee family, declared James L. Pleitz, preacher at Home Missions Week at the Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Pleitz issued dual challenges to Southern Baptists to become more involved in the refugee resettlement effort and to become more sensitive to helping alleviate world hunger.

The world hunger challenge drew immediate response: participants at the week contributed \$7,990 to a special offering which will be used to help in the battle against world hunger.

"I think that is very significant," said William G. Tanner, executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. "The offering represents a great measure of concern on the part of the people at the conference center for this week."

In making his challenges, Pleitz preached on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and said: "If we're going to compare standards of living, we're much more like that rich man than we are like Lazarus. We have more than most of this world ever dreams of having."

Most Christians aren't selfish, he said: "We simply don't know about the appalling need that exists on every side."

Pleitz described the plights of 400,000 refugees condemned to remain in overcrowded camps or to be expelled to open sea to die. Southern Baptists have increased their efforts to aid the refugees, and in July, Tanner urged every association of churches--almost 1,200 of them--to sponsor a refugee family.

"We're forging ahead on refugee relief," Tanner said. "I'm seeing a lot more excitement and interest in aiding the people from Southeast Asia. I think that excitement is contagious, and I really believe we are moving into a new time when we will be able to do much, much more for the refugees."

"The challenges to our people to aid the refugees and to give to world hunger are just expressions of the New Testament concern to minister to the hungry, the enslaved, the lonely, the homeless. We are trying to learn to do what the Master tried to teach us," he added.

In urging every one of the 35,000-plus Southern Baptist Convention-affiliated churches to sponsor a refugee family, Pleitz said: "Refugees are industrious, hard-working people who are soon on their own. Sponsorship is something we can do to help, and if we don't do it in a hurry, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves."

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As he urged participants to "give sacrificially" to the offering for world hunger, Pleitz said: "While I am sharing with you about this, 400 persons will starve to death."

He added: "We are our brother's keeper. We may not keep our brother, but we are our brother's keeper."

The solution, he said, is for Christians to recognize their stewardship obligations. "We are stewards, not owners, of material possessions. We have problems with that. That's why we have problems giving to God that which we feel we own. When we realize that nothing is ours, then it is easy to give liberally, with an open heart and hand."

Southern Baptists, he charged, have not become serious about giving sacrificially to world hunger because pastors and denominational leaders have not excited the people about it.

"I say we're too protective. We ought to give our people a chance to respond and we'll find that they're not going to take that money away from the church budget offering. If we really touch their hearts, they'll give and they may give more generously to the church offering, too."

Pleitz, however, urged Southern Baptists to keep their minds and hearts on the priority of evangelism. "The rich man did not die and go to hell because he did not feed the hungry beggar; but because he'd never eaten the Bread of Life.

"If we get stirred up about feeding hungry people and forget to tell them about Jesus, then we have failed miserably."

Pleitz, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, concluded: "We need to do both. We must feed the hungry and aid the homeless, but we must also be concerned about evangelism."

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Anderson Named Language
Missionary of Year

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ATLANTA (BP)--Jimmy Anderson of Shawnee, Okla., has been named language missionary of the year by the division of language missions at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Anderson, 47, is the second person honored with the annual award, made during Home Missions Week at one of the Baptist conference centers.

Anderson, a Creek Indian, is general missionary to the Muskogee-Seminole and Wichita Indian Association in eastern Oklahoma. He is a missionary associate and was appointed in December of 1964 by the Home Mission Board. He became general missionary in 1974, after serving as pastor in New Mexico and Oklahoma.

The area he serves includes 68 churches and 10,000 square miles.

He was born in Kansas City, Mo., and grew up in Holdenville, Okla. He is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma and Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pa.

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Prior to appointment by the Home Mission Board, he was assistant to the general missionary of the Creek-Seminole Association in Okmulgee, Okla., and pastor of the Navajo Baptist Mission in Fruitland, N.M. Since appointment, he has been pastor in Tehatchi and Gallup, N.M., and in Shawnee.

Anderson says in the next 25 years the Indian population will grow from 800,000 to more than 2.5 million. "It took Baptists 100 years to get 500 Indian congregations," he said. "We need 700 more by 2000 A.D. You talk about missions challenge. . . ."

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Directors of Missions
Given 'Two-Bit' Tour

By Dan Martin

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ATLANTA (BP)--South Carolina directors of missions got a first-hand look at problems in metropolitan areas when they were treated to a "two-bit" tour of Atlanta.

The directors participated in the tour as part of a metropolitan awareness seminar at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"Transportation is a fact of life in the metropolitan areas," Don Hammer, director of the department of metropolitan missions at the Home Mission Board. "The day of the big, gas-guzzling car is nearly gone. More and more, we will have to depend on mass transportation in the urban areas."

The role of cities in American life was spelled out by John Havlik, director of evangelism education and writing: "We are living with urbanization. Constantly and continually, we will live in the cities. Nothing is going to change that, except for nuclear war, and then those few who are left will go to the caves."

Havlik added that God is calling Southern Baptists and other Christians to make a commitment to live, work and evangelize in the city. "There is much concern in our country today for the plight of the boat people, but there are people in Atlanta who are naked and hungry, too," he said.

"We must confront Pharaoh in his palace and demand that the people be set free. . . especially the elderly, the poor, the disenfranchised," Havlik added.

In order for the directors and their wives to get a first-hand look at the city, Hammer gave each person 25 cents and turned them loose to ride public transportation through the heart of Atlanta

"This is the 'two-bit' tour," Hammer said. "It costs a quarter to ride from downtown Atlanta to the outskirts on MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority). We'll give you the first quarter, but if you lose it or forget to get a transfer, the second quarter is on you."

To make the tour, directors rode two buses and one of the new MARTA trains to the station on Atlanta's east side. They had to transfer twice.

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The bus tour took them through the heart of Atlanta, a city receiving wide publicity because of high crime rates and a zooming number of murders. By mid-August, more than 150 murders had been committed there this year.

Directors, however, rode the mass transit system at a "safe," though busy, time. They caught the buses and train in the midst of the rush hour, riding the 11-miles from 4:35 to 5:30 p.m. on Friday afternoon.

"Pay attention to the people around you. Talk to them. See what is going on," Hammer urged the directors.

As the "tourists" caught Bus 23 on West Peachtree, they scampered aboard three or four buses, grabbing seats and standing space as it was available.

Enroute downtown, they went through a panorama of metro scenes: buildings being built and demolished; spanking new steel-glass-concrete office buildings standing side by side with deteriorating turn-of-the-century grimy brick buildings; exclusive condominium dwellings standing cheek-and-jaw with junk-strewn, ramshackle frame dwellings.

There were beautiful, new, expensive hotels and run-down flophouses, storefront churches and elegant cathedrals with locked front doors and screened-off stained glass windows, nude "Las Vegas" bars and reservations-only restaurants.

As the bus wove through traffic on Peachtree Street--Atlanta's most famous thoroughfare--directors and their wives spotted several flashily dressed--black and white--prostitutes plying their trade even at that early hour.

One woman tour member saw two men lying in a little park near the downtown area. "Don't think nothing about it, honey," said a black woman security guard sitting nearby. "They's just drunks. They're there all the time."

As directors looked around the buses, they spotted people from all segments of life sitting on the blue and white seats. Men in expensive three-piece suits sat near men in khakis, redolent of a day's work in the hot summer sun.

"It was a wonderful experience," said Larry Bryson, missions department director of the South Carolina Baptist Convention. "It will be something for us to think about . . . to think about the people who are moving in the transportation systems."

As the directors and their wives were "debriefed" at a dinner, James Nelson, director of the associational missions division, called on them to "commit ourselves anew to being on mission for God. Being on mission personally is the best thing that could happen to any of us."

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(BP) photos will be mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press

Ingenuity, Love, Miracles
Lead Baptists to Manobos

By John Brackin

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MINDANAO, Philippines (BP)--Southern Baptist ingenuity, coupled with God's love and a miracle, have paved the way for witness to some 30,000 Manobo tribespeople on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines.

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Animists who believe spirits inhabit trees, rocks and other inanimate objects, the Manobos live in a vast mountain wilderness in northeastern Mindanao. Ninety percent of them have never gone to school and few have ever heard of Jesus or seen a Bible.

But earlier this year, 39 datos (chiefs) met with Southern Baptist missionary James I. (Boe) Stanley at the Mindanao Baptist Rural Life Center in Bislig on the eastern coast of Mindanao. They had come because their supreme datu, Manlapanag, the high priest of the Banwa-on Manobo tribe, had ordered it.

The first meeting developed after Filipino evangelist Arsenio Garilao, a member of the Ilonggo Tribe, became friends with Manlapanag. The friendship is a miracle in itself, for the two tribes have been traditional enemies for generations.

But because of Garilao's ministry, the 72-year-old supreme datu has made a profession of faith and asked Stanley to baptize him. When Manlapanag mentioned his people needed to improve their farming techniques, Stanley invited him and his sub-chiefs to visit the Rural Life Center.

During the group's three-day visit they received basic information on erosion prevention, rabbit raising, goat production, gardening and crop rotation.

The first evening, the tribal council huddled under an open-sided shelter watching religious films as a cold rain misted across the plank benches they were sitting on. Most of them had never seen a movie before. They had not slept for 36 hours, but at 9 p.m., when Stanley asked if they would like to see another film, they cheered.

The next night more films were shown during the worship service and 25 datos made professions of faith.

When the datos returned to their barrios, they eagerly shared what they had learned. A follow-up visit the next week convinced Stanley that the Manobos were ready for him and other Southern Baptist missionaries to work with them. The barrios whose datos had accepted Christ already had designated sites for Baptist churches.

Because of Baptists' concern for the Manobos' health and lifestyle, they have declared that Baptists are the only religious group with which they will work. In a resolution presented to the Bethel (Philippines) Association of Baptist Churches and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, requesting benevolent aid, the datos explained why they had chosen Baptists: "They are the first religious denomination that is concerned not only in our spiritual needs but also in our present state of living, which is very bad."

To meet those spiritual and physical needs, a two-week crusade, including medical and dental clinics, was scheduled for August. And \$100,000 was appropriated at the August Foreign Mission Board meeting to provide long-range farming and sanitation aid.

Included in the agriculture portion of the project are tools and large animals for clearing the land and sowing crops and small animals for food-raising projects. Also there are plans for mobile clinics, literacy instruction, wells to help eliminate diseases from drinking polluted river water, and nutrition education.

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Brackin is a missionary in the Philippines. Stanley is a native of Dodge County, Ga.

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