

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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80-37

WrapupBaptist Agency to Oppose
Spying by Church Workers

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Baptist group here representing eight national denominational bodies condemned the past FBI and CIA practice of using clergy and missionaries in intelligence gathering operations and asked for legislation to forbid their use in the future.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, meeting in semi-annual session, adopted the position statement unanimously and agreed to share it with denominational leaders and mission boards of the cooperating bodies. Its staff was also instructed to communicate the resolution to President Carter and the FBI and CIA and to begin working for passage of a law by Congress which would declare clergy and missionaries off-limits to U.S. intelligence agencies.

In other actions, the Baptist Joint Committee instructed the Washington staff to monitor the so-called "new right" and its ties with prominent religious personalities, honored resigning executive director James E. Wood Jr., and elected Porter W. Routh as interim executive director.

In asking its staff to inform member bodies on the "new right" and its religious connections, the committee heard a warning from American Baptist representative Wesley Forsline, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minn., that "what is new about the 'new right'" is the movement's vast wealth accumulated through appeals of television evangelists such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and others, and its "slick" direct-mail operations.

Wood, who will leave his position as chief executive of the Baptist Joint Committee May 31 to return to the faculty of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, was honored at a farewell dinner prior to the final session.

Wood, who has directed the Baptist Joint Committee since 1972, was presented a \$1,000 cash gift and a plaque for his "distinguished service." The committee also unanimously adopted a resolution commending Wood for his tenure of service.

Representatives of the governmental community, the Washington interfaith community, the Baptist Joint Committee, and its staff paid tribute to Wood. Participating in the recognition ceremony were Robert Maddox of the White House staff, John W. Baker of the Baptist Joint Committee staff, Jack E. Corbett of the United Methodist Church's department of church-government relations, and Routh, representing the Baptist Joint Committee.

Routh, who retired last year as executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, and served 27 years as a member of the Baptist Joint Committee, was the unanimous choice to fill the interim position.

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He anticipates joining the staff one or two weeks before Wood leaves and will serve until a new executive director is named, possibly by the time of the Baptist Joint Committee's October meeting.

The statement on FBI and CIA use of clergy and missionaries came just days after some Carter administration officials indicated they are not opposed to such a practice. It declares that "the use of clergy, missionaries and church workers for intelligence gathering in behalf of the national state immediately compromises and renders ineffective the primary role of religious workers to be carers for the humanitarian and spiritual needs of the constituents they serve."

In addition, the resolution says that Christian workers are primarily "agents of Jesus Christ" who "must not be treated or cast in the appearance of being political agents of any government."

Maddox, White House religious liaison who participated in a question and answer session with committee members, promised that he would communicate the group's concern over the intelligence gathering issue to President Carter.

In other actions, the committee set a working theme on government intrusion into religious affairs for its 1981 Religious Liberty Conference and hosted a fellowship breakfast for Baptist members of Congress.

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Aging Conference Cancelled
Due to Low Registration

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Conference on Aging scheduled for April 28-May 2 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, has been cancelled because only 65 persons had registered to attend.

A registration of 400 was needed to recover planning and program costs. Nine Baptist organizations had joined forces to sponsor the meeting which was to explore trends and needs in aging ministries.

In announcing the steering committee's unanimous decision to cancel the meeting, chairman Paul Adkins said, "We felt that due to the increasing costs of travel, the total operation of a conference this size and the low registration it seemed wise to cancel the conference for 1980."

Adkins, director of the Christian social ministries department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, said that data from two research studies and several background papers being prepared for the conference will be edited and made available at a nominal cost from his department.

Sponsoring organizations included the Southern Baptist Annulity Board, Sunday School Board, Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission, Christian Life Commission, Woman's Missionary Union, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Association of Ministries with the Aging and the Hurt Gerontology Center.

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Illinois Church Expands Ministry to Laotians

ROCKFORD, Ill. (BP)--The Valley Baptist Church here has helped to resettle a family of 11 Laotian refugees and has also started Sunday services for them in their own language.

Pastor George W. Kimball said a total of 33 Laotians attended the first worship service, which met downstairs while regular services for Valley members were conducted in the sanctuary.

The Laotian service, led by Lao Vang, 30, was in their native language. A brother, Tou Fou, taught a Sunday School class for adults and teenagers, attended by 15 Laotians. Their children attended regular classes of their own age group.

Lao Vang, who has been in the States for about five years, lives in Rochelle, Ill. Another brother, Joshua Vang, is a staff member of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta, working with refugees.

Although Vang is not an ordained minister, he has had a couple of years of Bible school training. He was employed by Chrysler Corporation until a recent lay-off.

Those attending the first service came not only from Rockford, Ill., but also Belvidere, Ill., and Rochelle, Ill. Kimball said 10 other Laotians in Rochelle would have attended, but had no transportation.

The East Park Baptist Church in Belvidere has agreed to sponsor two more families of 17 Laotians, who are expected in the States soon.

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Missionaries in Rhodesia Hopeful Work Can Expand

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GWELO, Rhodesia (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries in Rhodesia are hopeful of continuing ministry in the wake of elections Feb. 27-29 which named Robert Mugabe to head a new majority government.

The elections were the fruit of a peace settlement ironed out in three months of talks in London aimed at ending a seven-year guerrilla war for majority control of the country.

Ralph L. Rummage, chairman of the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Rhodesia, said March 3 that missionaries, whose travel had been restricted by the war, hope to work again in all areas of the country.

"We're here for one reason--to preach the gospel and make disciples, and we're going to leave the political aspirations of the new leaders to them. Whatever develops in the country, we will be law-abiding residents," he said. "We will be happy to continue to be here to preach the gospel."

According to news reports, Mugabe's party captured 57 of the 100 seats in the national assembly and the party of Joshua Nkomo, another leader in the patriotic front guerrilla force, took 20 seats. The remaining three black seats went to the party of United Methodist

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Bishop Abel Muzorewa, prime minister of the interim bi-racial government that preceded the peace agreement. In earlier elections, the party of former Prime Minister Ian Smith won the 20 seats reserved for whites.

The name of the country, which has been considered the British Colony Rhodesia since the December signing of a cease-fire agreement, is expected to become Zimbabwe, the name preferred by black nationalists, when the new government takes office sometime around the first of April.

Rummage said the greatest need of Baptist missionaries and Rhodesian Baptists at this time is prayer. "Have Baptists pray that our pastors here will give themselves totally to the preaching of the gospel and not involve themselves in any activities that would keep them from preaching," he said. He also asked prayer for missionaries as they project future work.

The mission also has a critical need for new missionary personnel, especially church development consultants who would travel in a given area, beginning and strengthening churches, said Rummage. The mission has submitted 12 personnel requests to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The personnel shortage, he said, has limited the mission's relief work to helping individuals through local churches. In the Gwelo area where he lives, Rummage has encouraged Baptist churches to take up offerings, supplemented by Foreign Mission Board relief funds, to help needy individuals. The church can then follow up by meeting the individuals' spiritual needs as well, Rummage said.

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Baptists Aid Refugees
Displaced By Long War

Baptist Press
3/5/80

KAROI, Rhodesia (BP)--Baptists in Rhodesia provided a church as a classroom for refugee children as one way of helping those displaced by the country's seven-year guerrilla war.

The Baptist church in Karoi and three other buildings near Tangwena Township served as classrooms for 250 children in grades 1-6 until a new classroom building was completed for the term beginning in January, said W. Kamuzangaza, pastor of the church, in a report to Southern Baptist missionary David M. Coleman.

He also told of projects aided by money donated through the organization of Baptist missionaries in Rhodesia. In Tangwena Township, where approximately 800 refugee families have settled, projects include establishing sanitary facilities, medical care, feeding infants and children, and distributing blankets and secondhand clothes.

Although some pastors in rural areas have had to relocate, many Rhodesian Baptist pastors, like Kamuzangaza, have continued their ministry. "They are a leaven among their own people," said Davis L. Saunders, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board secretary for eastern and southern Africa.

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