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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Baptist Wheels Roll On
Despite Increased Cost**

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Despite galloping increases in gasoline and public transportation costs, Southern Baptists may be on the roads in record numbers this summer to participate in church-related events, an informal survey revealed.

Officials at Southern Baptists' national conference centers at Glorieta, N.M., and Ridgecrest, N.C. and state Baptist assemblies in Alabama, Oklahoma, Missouri and Virginia predict their total number of guests for the summer will increase over 1979.

The number of church youth groups participating in mission tours registered through the Baptist Home Mission Board is expected to be at or near the total of 493 groups completing tours in 1979.

One concession to inflation may be increased travel of church groups by buses and vans.

Betty Smith, coordinator for the Baptist World Congress to convene in July in Toronto, reported that the majority of registrants from the United States will be travelling with the more than 120 bus tour groups which have registered through the Baptist World Alliance.

Second, more church and denominational leaders attending the Southern Baptist Convention this year apparently will be travelling alone, perhaps flying rather than driving, and not bringing spouses or children.

Tim Hedquist, the SBC Executive Committee official who directs planning for the annual convention, said the average number of persons registered per room in St. Louis is 1.7, down from the two-per-room figure which has been constant for the last three years.

Hedquist called the change "significant" but emphasized that no firm conclusions can be drawn until final studies after the convention.

At Ridgecrest, the music leadership conference and two of the three Sunday School leadership weeks were filled on Feb. 1, the first day reservations were accepted.

The number of reservations received for Centrifuge, the youth camp conducted for 10 weeks, would have filled the camp twice, according to Carol Ann Henderson, registrar at Ridgecrest.

Miss Henderson expressed surprise at the low number of cancellations being sent in before the 60-day deadline for getting full refunds. "We expected about 50 cancellations for the first week of Centrifuge. We got six," she said. "The gas situation is not hurting us at all."

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At Glorieta, where driving distances for participants are greater than at Ridgecrest, summer reservations of 24,222, as of April 30, were 400 ahead of the same time last year, according to Bill Hendricks, supervisor of the business section.

Reservations at Windermere (Mo.) Baptist Assembly are running 900 ahead of 1979, when a record 20,054 persons participated in conferences.

Manager Arthur Koehler said he has talked with other resort owners in the Lake of the Ozarks area and most are expecting above-average years. He feels the increases are partially caused by Missourians who plan to attend conferences or vacation closer to home this year.

Last year 34,839 persons attended the five regular assembly weeks at Falls Creek (Okla.) Baptist Assembly. "From the looks of things, this summer is going to be about the same or even bigger," said Leslie Smith, a reservations secretary.

Lois Daniel, reservations secretary at Eagle Eyrie (Va.) Baptist Assembly, said the assembly should draw an equal number or slightly more people than in 1979. "Where conferences involve young people, we are overflowing," she said.

"No drastic changes" are expected at Shocco Springs (Ala.) Baptist Assembly, according to Fran Vincent, reservation secretary. "It looks like attendance is running pretty much the same or slightly ahead," she said.

-30-

Churches Should Become
'Spiritual Thermostats'

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CLEVELAND, Ohio (BP)--Churches must be "thermostats of the divine kingdom," the pastor of one of the fastest-growing congregations in Florida told Southern Baptist state and associational leaders and black pastors from eight states.

Joe Coats, pastor of Glendale Baptist Church in Miami, addressed his remarks to the first conference directed at black Southern Baptists and Southern Baptist leaders only. No National Baptists or white Southern Baptist pastors were invited, according to Emmanuel McCall, director of the department of cooperative ministries with National Baptists for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. He said, "We wanted to speak directly to the needs of this select audience."

The conference was "to sensitize Southern Baptist denominational leaders to more effective ministries with black persons and churches and to sensitize black pastors to other possibilities in congregational development," said McCall, whose department sponsored the meeting for 89 participants, along with the North Central States steering committee.

Coats said while a thermometer is affected by the weather around it, a thermostat actually changes the climate.

"To me, that is the role of the church--to change the spiritual climate around it," he said, explaining that pastors can lead their churches to become spiritual thermostats by "building up the people in the Word of God."

-30-

Lackey Dies
In Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Thomas Bert Lackey, former executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, died May 24 in Oklahoma City. Lackey, 74, had been in declining health since 1977 when he suffered a heart attack.

Lackey died at Baptist Medical Center, a facility he was instrumental in building. During his 20 years as administrative head of the state convention, Lackey also led in building two retirement centers and a childcare facility.

He was a native of Opal, Ark., and was executive secretary in Oklahoma 1951-71. He had been assistant executive secretary the previous five years and was an Oklahoma pastor.

From 1971-75, he was consultant for hospitals and retirement centers for the state convention. He was a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University.

He is survived by his wife, Hollie; two sons, James Vernon of Nashville and Gayle Eugene of Cheyenne, Wyo.; a daughter, Mrs. Carol Oliver, Tulsa; nine grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

-30-

Baptists Encouraged Truce
In Korean Student Strife

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--In the strife between students and the Korean military in Kwangju, Korea, Baptists made themselves known as peacemakers, even though their attempts at reconciliation failed.

Four Baptist pastors and numerous church members were part of a 40-member reconciliation committee which formed in the troubled city to try to negotiate peace between the students and the military.

In a telephone report from Korea, Southern Baptist missionary Arnold Peterson told Foreign Mission Board secretary George Hays that the committee "almost pulled it off." He said negotiations were taking place and the students came close to giving in but decided to go ahead with their protests.

Even though their attempts failed, the committee, made up primarily of Christians, was highly respected by both groups and became known as concerned people.

Peterson remained in Kwangju during the unrest but joined his wife in Taejon May 28 after everything seemed to be calm. Barbara Peterson and the three Peterson children and missionary journeyman Judy Watts left Kwangju May 22. Peterson expected to return to Kwangju June 3.

One Baptist student was killed in the fighting and two other Baptists are still missing. No damage to church property was reported. Peterson said the damage seemed to be limited to government buildings and utilities.

-30-

Small Texas Church
'Changes' Young Lives

By Jerilynn Wood

GAINESVILLE, Texas (BP)--When members of Southside Baptist Church in Gainesville, Texas, say "change for children" they aren't referring to the nursery.

Every Sunday morning they empty their pockets of change when the offering plate is passed. The collection is for children in the community.

"Our church has always been involved in helping families in need and has an extra soft spot for children," said Marvin 'Red' Lancaster, pastor of the 150-member Southside church.

Not long ago a young boy in the community was brought to the church. He was cross-eyed and needed surgery.

"I told my congregation I would go to the Optimist or Lion's Club for the \$400 if we could not help him ourselves. But who do you think ought to take care of the child? I received the \$400 that Sunday morning," Lancaster said.

The church has collected the change every Sunday for seven years, which amounts to \$40 or \$50 a week. But collecting the change finances only a small portion of the ministry Southside has provided for more than 300 children and their parents which includes food, clothing, medical care, child care service, foster homes and emergency funding.

"I believe that God gave Christians a commission to eliminate suffering," Lancaster said. He works closely with the Child Welfare Department in Cook and Wise Counties.

"Brother Lancaster has been a godsend to our office ever since he arrived in Gainesville 10 years ago," said Carol Gonzales, child placement supervisor, Child Welfare Department.

"Upon his arrival there were no foster homes in our county so he immediately opened his home and then enlisted members of his church and the community to do the same. Now whenever our department locates a family in need of shelter, clothing or other necessities we turn to Brother Lancaster and Southside because we know the family will not be turned away," Gonzales said.

Another aspect of Lancaster's ministry is transporting adults and children weekly to Dallas for medical treatment.

"I would say that at least three days a week Brother Red drives into Dallas to take someone to the doctor, and he is continually working with 25 to 30 children in need of medical treatment ranging from birth defects to plastic surgery," said Wesley Bashaw, youth director, Southside Baptist Church.

"Now and then our church wonders how we are going to continue financing this program, but then we ask ourselves, 'Who can we turn down?' and we realize that we are touching lives for Christ," Bashaw said.

Lancaster quickly adds that he is very proud of his congregation. "In the past year 93 children have been to Dallas for medical treatment and members of the church have cared for more than 200 children in foster homes. Southside believes that caring for our community is simply following the example of Jesus Christ," he said.

Ouachita Supported In Russia Trip Cancellation

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. (BP)--Ouachita Baptist University's protest decision not to send their choirs to the Soviet Union has been well received, according to university president Daniel Grant.

The decision, reached in January after the Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan, received little attention until Grant wrote about it in his column in the Arkansas Baptist newsmagazine in May.

He wrote that he had been excited about the invitation from Friendship Ambassadors to send three choral groups for a tour in Russia and Romania in May and June. "It was an exciting and challenging invitation, partly because it provided a unique opportunity for Christian young people to share their faith in officially atheistic countries," he said.

But he cancelled the tour in favor of a similar tour to England and Scotland after what he called the "shocking" invasion of Afghanistan. "It (the invasion) was so clearly illegal and immoral that even the usually timid United Nations voted overwhelmingly to condemn the aggression," he said.

Grant said that, obviously, the cancellation was not done in expectation that it would bring Russia to her knees, but if enough nations responded similarly, for instance by boycotting the Olympics, "it would make a real difference in the future conduct of the U.S.S.R."

Donors who contributed for the choir trip to Russia supported Grant's decision, he said, and they approved of the alternate tour plans. Choir members, directors, students, faculty and alumni all indicated their overwhelming support of the decision, he said.