



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

-- FEATURES

produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

November 4, 1980

80-176

War Wounds Healing In Zimbabwe Churches

By Irma Duke

SALISBURY, Zimbabwe (BP)--After the ceasefire in Zimbabwe, members of the Sessami Baptist Church gathered up the best blocks from the rubble to use as seats and a podium. The war had killed their loved ones and destroyed their homes but it hadn't killed their church.

The ceasefire is nearly a year old. Memories of the grueling war years are still fresh, but churches like Sessami are picking up the pieces and showing significant growth.

"God did a marvelous job of delivering his people," exclaimed Dr. Rob Garrett, a former missionary physician who met with the church recently. The Sessami church and the pastor's home are the only two buildings out of 13 on the mission station that were not completely destroyed by guerrillas. Until the two structures can be repaired, members will continue to meet outdoors on the other side of the compound, sitting amidst the rubble from the other buildings.

Mufakose Baptist Church in Salisbury has gone from "almost dead to a crowd at the door in recent months," said Southern Baptist missionary John Faulkner, church development consultant for Salisbury. Pastor Richard Musiyiwa was literally wiped out during the war. He and his family came to Salisbury from a church in Gokwe with only the clothes they wore. They are living in a room behind the church's sanctuary.

On Musiyiwa's first Sunday at Mufakose, only six people came to worship. In two months, more than 100 people were attending the services. "We have learned faith in these hard times," he explained. He leads his church in a visitation program each week. Members visit new members and visitors and then ask if they can visit their neighbors on both sides. The church now has a youth choir with about 30 members.

Will he return to his church in Gokwe? Musiyiwa isn't sure. "I don't know what God will say to me."

Two preaching points have been started as a direct result of the war. In two townships built by the government in the last two years, two Baptist pastors who are refugees are holding services in their homes in an evangelistic project supported by the mission (Southern Baptist missionaries in Zimbabwe) and the convention. One of these townships is already the third largest population center in Zimbabwe.

"In the two-year project, it is hopeful they'll be able to grow churches," said David Coleman, a Southern Baptist missionary there. Already, Clement Chipunza has 28 regularly attending services in his home and is reaching new people every week. The mission will soon try to put up a roof for a permanent meeting place and members will add walls and other facilities as they can.

But the war has left scars on some of the work. "Our people have gone through some hard times. In many areas it strengthened the people but in other areas, when the people weren't too strong, they've fallen by the wayside," said missionary Linda Coleman.

Some people are not finding their way back into church as they return to rural areas. For example, the school at Goredema in western Zimbabwe has been rebuilt, but the church has not. Asked about the church, one resident indicated the church was dead. The people had lost their spirit.

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In some other areas, church attendance is down. Political meetings are also held on Sundays and people are expected to attend.

However, the national Woman's Missionary Union met in October for the first time in three years. More than 300 women came from all over the country to the Baptist Theological Seminary in Gwelo. A prayer meeting for the executive council was held on the hill where 56 guerrillas camped during the latter days of the war. But with enthusiasm and determination, the former vice president looked around and said, "The war did not kill the church. It will go on."

In an unprecedented move, the women gave their "week of prayer" offering on the spot so that it could go for starving people in Tongaland, an area in northern Zimbabwe. They said the people needed the food now. Almost \$70 was collected in the impromptu offering from women who had saved for months for the trip to the WMU meeting.

In this new day in Zimbabwe, Southern Baptist missionaries also are feeling a new urgency for spreading the gospel. "Because of various things, we feel like we have to evangelize now," said David Coleman. During the war, the missionaries stopped all requests for new personnel and capital development but now "we've got to desperately get a hold of our situation and do some planning," he added.

On behalf of the mission, personnel coordinator Linda Coleman submitted 21 requests for new missionaries, many of them for direct evangelism. "I think every missionary on the field feels a new kind of urgency about getting on with the most important things," she indicated. When the mission was working on contingency plans during the war, they asked the churches what institutions they thought were most needed. Their answers were the seminary and the publishing house—to train pastors and get literature to the people.

With this and the hunger for education in mind, the seminary hopes to institute a degree program for high school graduates in January. Derek Mpinga, newly elected general secretary for the Zimbabwe Baptist Convention and director of academic affairs at the seminary, said that in the past, theological programs have been directed primarily toward persons with a seventh-grade education. With this new degree program, Mpinga sees a good future for Baptists in Zimbabwe. "A great challenge lies ahead of us. Baptists in this country are a young denomination."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Mrs. Duke has just returned from a news gathering trip to Indonesia and several countries in Africa.

Illinois Baptists Elect
Layman, Black Pastor

Baptist Press
11/4/80

COUNTRY CLUB HILLS, Ill. (BP)--Messengers to the Illinois Baptist State Association elected a layman and a black pastor as president and vice president during their 74th annual meeting Oct. 28-30.

Craig A. Ridings, a Rockford attorney, is the first layperson in 54 years to head the convention, and Don Sharp, pastor of Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church in Chicago, is the first black ever elected to office by the convention.

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In addition to naming officers, messengers meeting in this southwest suburb of Chicago also installed Ernest E. Mosley as executive director, commended the state Baptist newspaper and resolved to let the Bible speak for itself.

Also, 16 new churches were accepted into membership, including a church for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, the first Southern Baptist church of that type to be established in Illinois.

Messengers adopted a 1981 budget of \$6,063,608, including a Cooperative Program goal of \$3,606,400, of which 41 percent will be shared with Southern Baptist Convention causes, the same percentage as this year.

The most spirited discussion came when a motion was made to increase the SBC portion by one percent. That motion failed, but a subsequent motion, which asked the IBSA board of directors to increase the SBC portion by at least a half a percent a year for each of the next five years, was passed.

Messengers adopted 12 resolutions which ranged from energy-efficient buildings to dissidents in the Soviet Union. One commended the Illinois Baptist for "comprehensive and balanced reporting" of the issues confronting the denomination.

Another noted that "human theories about how the Scriptures were inspired have become divisive of our fellowship and are being used by some groups within our denomination as a test of fellowship and a basis for employment in Southern Baptist institutions."

The resolution urged allowing "the Scriptures to speak to us for themselves rather than argue man's statement..." and added that Christians should listen and talk to one another in Christian love rather than about each other in a divisive spirit.

The IBSA will hold its 1981 meeting in Urbana, at Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church, Nov. 3-5.

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National Meeting Proposes Fellowship of Baptist Men

Baptist Press
11/4/80

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--A group of 101 Southern Baptist laymen and pastors from 17 states has voted in Memphis to organize a national fellowship of Baptist Men.

The action came at the close of two days of inspirational addresses and small group discussions about how Southern Baptists can use their vocations to make Bold Mission Thrust a reality through their churches and denomination.

The decision to form an organizational umbrella encompassing various vocational groups of laymen followed brief reports by each of the 10 vocational groups on how they want to become involved in sharing the gospel with the world during the next 20 years.

Larry Otis of Tupelo, Miss., convener of a vocational group on agriculture which included former SBC president Owen Cooper of Yazoo City, Miss., made the recommendation to organize the fellowship.

The recommendation calls for each of the 10 fellowship groups to nominate one representative and one alternate to an organizational committee, with the Brotherhood Commission adding another seven men to it.

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The committee would perfect the organization of a fellowship of Baptist Men to include a charter, bylaws, temporary officers and commissioners. The temporary organization would be authorized to set up an office at the commission, seek volunteers and secretarial help, establish and raise a budget and take other necessary action to initiate the organization.

A national meeting of Baptist Men would be held within 20 months to consider the charter and bylaws, the recommendation said.

The vocational groups elected the following persons to the organizational committee:

Pat Baughman of Hilton Head Island, S.C., sales; Bob Kersten of Maitland, Fla., education and communication; George L. McGuffee of Monroe, La., law enforcement and elected public officials; Donald I. Gent of Evansville, Ind., health services; J.B. Crawley of Campbellsville, Ky., engineering, construction and data processing; Norvell Jones of St. Louis, finance, banking, insurance and investments; Ralph Stewart of Memphis, management and manufacturing; Sam Platt of Columbus, Miss., transportation; William Rhodes of Atlanta, legal; and Cooper, agriculture.

The commission was expected to name its seven representatives at a semi-annual meeting of trustees in Memphis within a week.

Gent, a hospital administrator and secretary of the SBC Executive Committee, who proposed the meeting four months ago, presided.

More than 400 leading Baptist laymen were invited to attend regional meetings the Brotherhood Commission conducted in April and May at the request of the Executive Committee to identify ways the men could become involved in Bold Mission Thrust.

One of the recurring requests was for a national fellowship, Gent recalled.

"We believe there may be a role for a fellowship of Baptist Men with the Brotherhood Commission as the umbrella," Gent said.

James H. Smith, executive director of the commission, emphasized the men would focus on fellowship and evangelism, not politics, and aim at helping churches involve their men in missions, particularly mobilizing them to implement Bold Mission Thrust.

"I'm going to predict that this meeting will go down in history as one of the important meetings of Baptist Men," Smith said.

Smith emphasized the fellowship included a place for the pastor who he described as "the number one man in the church."

"We want the pastor to be the equipper of his men to do the work of the ministry," Smith said.

"This is not a group of men who want to offset the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference or elect a president of the Southern Baptist Convention or the United States. It is a group of men who want to help churches involve other men in missions," Smith added.

Smith said he sees no conflict between the fellowship and the Brotherhood organizations his agency services in 17,000 churches.

Two Former SBC Presidents Take Action Lauding Smith

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Two former presidents of the 13.4 million member Southern Baptist Convention—Adrian Rogers of Memphis and W.A. Criswell of Dallas—have taken actions lauding the current SBC president, Bailey Smith.

In Memphis, Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church and immediate past president, led fellow pastors of the Shelby Baptist Pastors' Conference to pass a resolution praising Smith as "spiritually vibrant, morally pure and doctrinally straight."

Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas and president 1968-70, issued a written statement to Baptist Press in the wake of controversy concerning the 70-year-old pastor's published remarks critical of Smith.

In speaking in support of Smith, both men alluded to Smith's remark that "God does not hear the prayers of a Jew," made at the National Affairs Briefing, a conservative political-religious gathering in Dallas in August.

Criswell's statement came "in view of recent press releases concerning my own words" about Smith and the Jews, and noted the famed preacher still disagrees and is "exercising that cherished Baptist principle of the right to an alternative opinion."

The "recent press releases" were stories in the religious and secular media which quoted a letter Criswell wrote to a Dallas rabbi expressing "deep regret" about Smith's remarks. Criswell enclosed a copy of a letter written by J. William Angell, professor of religion at Wake Forest University, a Baptist-connected school in Winston-Salem, N.C., and said it "will speak the heart and persuasion of our Southern Baptist people."

Angell, in his letter, written to a New York rabbi, repudiated "in the strongest terms the reprehensible views" of Smith, calling them "untrue, unscriptural and unkind...far removed from the teachings and spirit of the Jesus whom he pretends to serve."

Angell inferred Smith is a "self-righteous bigot," who "is one of a group of Southern Baptist power politicians who, unfortunately, have maneuvered themselves into places of leadership." It further compared him with "Haman, Hitler, Arafat and Khomeini."

Criswell was not available for clarifying comment, but sources close to the pastor say he was not completely aware of the contents of Angell's letter when he enclosed it with his own note.

In his written comment to Baptist Press, Criswell lauded Smith "as one of the greatest preachers in our era," and noted Smith's accomplishment of baptizing more than 2,000 converts in a single year as "unequaled in recent Christian history."

It further noted Smith "loves the Jews...(and) believes that God's special blessing rests upon the Jewish people and the State of Israel."

Criswell concludes: "With confidence and anticipation I rejoiced when he was elected president of our Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis and I shall no less rejoice when he is reelected president in Los Angeles next June."

Rogers, in a meeting with fellow pastors this week, presented a resolution he had jotted on a napkin which noted: "We want him (Smith) to know of our thoughtfulness for his service and pledge to him our love and prayers."

In preliminary remarks, Rogers called Smith a "sincere, doctrinally-pure president," who "is not stupid."

"I was there when Bailey Smith made his now-famous remark. It was a side comment as he was praising Jesus. Had he had more time to frame it, he would have framed his statement better, or perhaps not at all," he said.

Rogers, whose resolution was seconded by Jerry Glisson, pastor of Leawood Baptist Church and Rogers' appointee to head the SBC committee on committees, said he was not speaking directly to the controversy: "I don't want a resolution about whether God does or does not hear the prayers of a Jew, but I do want us to affirm our president."

"We need to stand behind him. The worst thing we can do is take cheap shots at him."

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White House Staffer
Arranges Sacred Music

By Gail Rothwell

Baptist Press
11/4/80

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)--A Southern Baptist who has prepared musical arrangements for every U.S. president since John F. Kennedy says his first priority is to find out how best to "invest my time for God."

Bob Walters, who has composed and played record backgrounds for Johnny Mann, Victor Borge, Doc Severinsen and the Statler Brothers in addition to his work as White House staff arranger, says, "As colorful as my work may sound, it is a rather normal job for a writer-player."

One of Walters' most challenging jobs at the White House is to arrange and perform music for visiting heads of state. "We try to find music that will meet needs in a genuine effort to communicate good will to the visiting officials," he explains.

Several years ago Walters helped a former Vietnam prisoner of war put the finishing touches on music he had written with a razor blade on the bottom of his bunk in a Hanoi prison. The man had later transferred the music to pieces of toilet paper and taught it to fellow prisoners.

After their release the officers flew to Washington where they performed the music. "Just to see this music was exciting to me," says Walters.

Other White House assignments Walters has completed include a string arrangement for Julie Nixon Eisenhower's wedding and, during the Kennedy administration, a Christmas program featuring 100 male voices.

Walters notes differences in presidential preferences, saying the Fords requested more festive music while the Carters have preferred quieter listening styles.

"I recently came to a point where I decided I needed to be a steward of my time and money," Walters says. "I realized God wants me to use them for him."

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He attended an instrumental workshop at Wingate College to learn more about instrumental music in churches and to be more fully informed as to what exists in religious music. He believes good music can effectively help people know how to worship. The workshop was sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board with the North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia Baptist Conventions.

"I like to teach congregations to sing hymns," he declares. "I let them know they are singing to God, because sometimes it is so easy to turn the brain off and let the mouth do the work."

"I see the purpose of a music ministry as edifying and uplifting Christians and, at the same time, trying to present the gospel message to those who don't know Christ," Walters says.

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(BP) photo mailed to Baptist state newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press.

High Court to Decide
Key Church-State Case

Baptist Press
11/4/80

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Supreme Court has agreed to decide whether church-related schools can be forced to comply with a U.S. Department of Labor ruling that they provide unemployment compensation to teachers and other employees.

In spite of the fact churches and associations and conventions of churches are specifically exempted from coverage under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act, Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall issued a ruling last year declaring that schools owned and operated by churches are covered.

Marshall's application of the law has resulted in a flurry of legal challenges. The case accepted by the high court came on appeal from the South Dakota Supreme Court.

In that state, St. Martin Evangelical Lutheran Church and Northwestern Lutheran Academy challenged a state law implementing Marshall's order. The church and school lost at an administrative hearing but won when they took their case to a South Dakota circuit court. That court was reversed, however, in a ruling last March.

Since that decision, neighboring North Dakota's high court ruled in June that Marshall's order was invalid and that the church exemption in federal law applies to church-run schools as well.

A similar decision was reached in September by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans in a pair of cases involving the states of Alabama and Nevada. Those states had earlier been taken to court by the Department of Labor upon refusing to implement Marshall's order.

In addition to those legal tests, the matter is presently alive in several other state courts.

Churches and church-operated schools have argued Marshall's order runs counter to the First Amendment to the Constitution by excessively entangling the state in church affairs and by requiring excessive surveillance of church schools by federal and state governments. They also point to a U.S. Supreme Court decision last year that the National Labor Relations Board has no jurisdiction to require nonpublic schools to permit lay teachers to unionize.

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Yet another argument cited is that because the high court has held repeatedly that non-public schools may not receive direct financial aid from federal or state governments, they should not be subject to interference in their internal affairs by government agencies.

The South Dakota case will be heard by the high court later in its current term.

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Northern Plains Baptists
Approve \$1 Million Budget

Baptist Press
11/4/80

CASPER, Wyo. (BP)--Messengers to the Northern Plains Baptist Convention 13th annual meeting Oct. 29-30, approved their first \$1 million-plus budget.

As adopted, the budget calls for total expenditure of \$1,078,788, an increase from the \$963,199 budget of 1979-80.

According to Roy Owen, executive director of the convention, contributions from the churches are broken into a three-phase goal. "The victory budget calls for our churches to contribute \$497,065, up almost \$50,000 from a year ago," he said.

"The challenge budget calls for our churches to raise \$511,835, and the hallelujah goal calls for \$530,932," Owen said.

In the victory budget, Northern Plains Baptists will contribute 17 percent to worldwide causes through the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program, the same percentage as in the 1979-80 budget. In the challenge phase, it would be 17.5, and in the hallelujah goal, it would be 18 percent, Owens said.

The convention also heard reports of the highest baptismal figures in the history of the convention, as well as in registration of messengers.

The 153 churches and 50 church-type missions recorded 2,125 baptisms, an increase of 45.5 percent over the 1,461 a year ago.

Some 375 persons registered as messengers, also a record.

Resolutions adopted include one challenging the churches of the convention to pray diligently for the 1981 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Los Angeles, asking for "a greater awakening as to energized evangelism and missions at home and around the world."

Messengers reelected Mannon Wallace, pastor of Sunnyside Baptist Church in Cheyenne, Wyo., as president, and set the 1981 annual meeting in First Southern Baptist Church of Great Falls, Mont., Oct. 28-29.

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