



## **BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

### **NATIONAL OFFICE**

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

### **BUREAUS**

**ATLANTA** Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
**DALLAS** Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996  
**MEMPHIS** Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461  
**NASHVILLE** (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300  
**RICHMOND** Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151  
**WASHINGTON** Stan L. Hasty, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

March 24, 1981

81-49

Relations Severed, But Work  
Continuing in Costa Rica

By Bob Stanley

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (BP)--The Baptist Convention of Costa Rica, deserted by many of its own member churches, has severed relationships with Southern Baptist missionaries and the Foreign Mission Board.

No official dialogue between convention leadership and the mission organization has taken place since December, when the break occurred.

But missionaries are continuing their work in this spiritually responsive Middle American country. No longer able to cooperate officially in the convention's programs, the missionaries are working with individual churches that invite them to help and are seeking to reach new areas where the gospel has not yet been preached.

Don R. Kammerdiener, director for Middle America and the Caribbean, said the board and its missionaries "stand ready to work with any Baptist group in Costa Rica. We have no intention of pulling out of the country now or of pulling back on our commitment to this country."

No formal negotiations are under way to try to restore relationships with the convention, Kammerdiener said, but some informal conversations are taking place between missionaries and individual Costa Ricans.

He hopes the breach in relationships eventually will be healed. "We've probably made a lot of mistakes down through the years," he explained. "We are willing and eager to take a whole fresh look and find ways we may have been out of perspective and try to shape up and do a better job."

Despite the current problems, evangelistic work in the country continues to bring encouraging response, Kammerdiener said. About 3,600 professions of faith were reported in a February crusade by the Ben Mleth organization of Texas, with churches on both sides of the dispute taking part. Many missionaries were involved in the crusade.

"There's no question about the responsiveness of the Costa Rican people to the gospel," Kammerdiener said.

Roots of the problems go deep into the 37-year history of Southern Baptist work in Costa Rica, but the crisis point came last year when the executive committee of the convention requested that the local association of Baptist missionaries send home one of its missionary couples.

The mission refused. It said there was no moral, doctrinal or financial reason for the couple to be sent home.

-more-

"He (the husband) was simply not a person they wanted around," Kammerdiener said.

The mission took the position that the convention has full autonomy to name anyone or not to name anyone to its committees or boards, and that it even has the privilege of accepting or rejecting anyone as a messenger to its meetings.

But these are separate issues from approving personnel of the mission, which the mission regards as its own responsibility.

The convention executive committee said it could not talk further with Southern Baptists until the couple was sent home. Later the Southern Baptist mission decided to withhold all financial support from the convention.

Although the convention sought and finally obtained \$15,000 support from the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., many Costa Rican churches that were opposed to the convention's stand began to drop out of the convention. By the time the convention held its annual meeting late in December, there was no one left to oppose the motion to cut off relationship with the mission and the board.

The churches that have withdrawn from the convention now are seeking to form their own association.

The complex situation in Costa Rica is not one in which all the blame can be laid on either side, Kammerdiener believes. "We have made our share of mistakes," he said. "One of the major mistakes may have been in building the work with excessive involvement of foreign funds."

Southern Baptist-related work in Costa Rica dates back to 1944, when a home Bible study group approached a Home Mission Board representative in neighboring Panama, at that time under the home board because of U.S. interests in the Canal Zone. In response to this plea, the home board sent a couple to San Jose. The Foreign Mission Board began administering the work in 1949.

Through the years, it was possible to reduce subsidies to the point where all the churches are now self-supporting. But until last year the board was still providing heavy financial support to convention-sponsored programs.

The foreign board now has 15 career missionaries assigned to Costa Rica, and at any one time may have an additional 30 to 40 missionaries studying at the interdenominational language school there. A majority of evangelical missionaries who work in Latin America come to the San Jose school for a year of language study before going on to their assignments.

The area director is concerned that during this period of disrupted relationships the Southern Baptist mission make every effort to bring Costa Ricans into the decision-making process.

The mission recently took action encouraging that Costa Rican Baptists be invited to serve on committees related to the various programs of its work. The church development program, for example, has already invited Costa Ricans to take part with a full voice and vote, Kammerdiener reported.

"We must," he said, "create a relationship based on the dignity and worth of local church members as they come to see themselves as full children of God with the same status and the same access to the spiritual resources we have."

Hill Panels To Study  
Sunday Election Bills

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--House and Senate committee hearings on proposed legislation to move federal elections from Tuesday to Sunday as well as other election law changes are expected by the end of May.

Spokesmen for the House Administration Committee and the Senate Rules and Administration Committee said hearings are definitely planned, though no firm date has been set by either panel.

Identical bills introduced by Rep. Mario Biaggi, D-N.Y., as H.R.84, and Sen. S.I. Hayakawa, R-Calif., as S.57, contain the Sunday election proposal.

The House Administration Committee, chaired by Augustus F. Hawkins, D-Calif., will study several legislative proposals stemming from problems which surfaced during the last national election, including President Carter's concession before the poll closings in the Pacific Time Zone, the lengthy primary season, and state-by-state spending limitations, a spokesman said.

The Biaggi-Hayakawa proposal contains three sections. First, it would change Election Day from Tuesday to Sunday after the first Monday in November for a six-year trial period during 1982-88.

Second, it would establish a uniform polling period of noon to 9 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Sunday for presidential elections in 1984 and 1988.

Finally, the Federal Election Commission would be required to monitor the bill's effect and issue a report with its recommendations to the president and Congress by Sept. 30, 1989.

The House panel is considering conducting part of its hearings on the west coast which was most affected by non-uniform poll closings in the last presidential election.

-30-

Makeshift Transit Fleet  
Rolls To Birmingham Need

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press  
3/24/81

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority collapsed under financial strain in February, but a makeshift fleet of buses and vans from black Baptist churches rolled in to help thousands of residents get to and from work.

The public transit system—some \$800,000 in debt—shut down amidst administrative and legislative squabbles over funding responsibilities. Mayor Richard Arrington then called on clergymen and "interested persons" to provide stopgap service for at least some of the 11,000 riders who depended on the buses for 30,000 trips a day.

Almost immediately, church leaders had the Emergency Volunteer Transit System (EVTS)—16 vans and buses—on the streets, carrying riders to and from downtown.

While officials bickered, the clergymen succeeded, because they ignored credit and blame and sought a solution, most observers agree.

"We realized we had an emergency. People were getting hurt, and churches had to do something to help," explained Jack Washington, white director of special ministries for Birmingham Baptist Association and co-chairman of the committee which directs EVTS.

-more-

West End maids who crossed town for \$16-to \$20-a-day jobs were being forced to pay half their wages for taxi fares or to opportunistic van owners, Washington said. And a young blind man was told, "Don't worry; don't come back," when he reported he was having trouble getting to work without regular buses.

Although the tiny EVTS fleet couldn't duplicate all the routes of the public buses, organizers geared it to reach as many people as possible.

"We examined the transit routes of the city and looked for the heaviest concentration of riders in every quadrant," said Washington, explaining five major routes were set up to carry people without charge to and from their jobs.

During a recent week, EVTS vehicles carried 1,850 passengers and logged 3,541 miles.

More people were not transported because more buses weren't on the streets. So far, only black Baptist churches have provided buses and drivers to the effort.

Washington reports insurance is a big problem for most white churches. "Some policies are written so tightly that they say the church can transport people to a religious experience and back and no more," he said.

"So what we're asking churches to do is re-examine their insurance policies, consider the need, and—even if it costs more—change the policies so their buses can join the EVTS fleet," he said.

The black churches involved in the effort aren't worrying with that obstacle, reported George Cook, black pastor of Mt. Ararat Baptist Church and the other EVTS steering committee co-chairman. "They've got the same kind of insurance the white churches have; they're just taking the risk," Cook explained.

The entire issue of involvement in EVTS is a "matter of desire," Washington admitted. "The poor, mostly black, are the ones being hurt. And the black churches have taken this problem seriously. They realize no buses means no transportation, no jobs, no food."

Washington and Cook said even though white churches might not take the step of providing their buses, they can contribute to the cause by helping finance it.

Participating churches can't charge fares for fear of losing tax exempt status, and Cook reported the bus system is costing about \$1,500 to \$1,800 a week. "We really need four more buses to cover some areas we aren't even touching," he said. "But if churches won't lend us the buses, they can either send us funds or send petitions to the legislature to pressure them to move."

Although local and state government officials are examining Birmingham's transit problem and the federal government has provided some funds to help decrease debts, the official shut-down could last until October, when a new fiscal year begins and operating funds are available.

But as long as the siege lasts and EVTS funds hold up, the church buses and vans will continue to roll, and Washington hopes that will signal a message to Birmingham.

"Part of our community is physically hurting in a time when the world is a little unsure about who and what the church is," he explained. "Christians have the opportunity to truly actualize the love of Christ, which is one of the purposes of the church."

Yet with that thought preeminent, Washington will continue to "agonize" when he gets calls from the poor, sick and elderly in neighborhoods where EVTS buses do not travel.

"Even emotions of hurt and anger arise when I see empty church buses sitting on parking lots," he admitted. "I personally see the problem we're having here...as a problem of human selfishness."

-30-

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

Ousted Congressman, New Right  
Leader Spar in Verbal Exchange

Baptist Press  
3/24/81

DALLAS (BP)--A former eight-term congressman and the leader of a new right group which worked to defeat him in his re-election bid squared off in an exchange of views at the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission annual seminar.

The free-wheeling confrontation featured Gary Jarmin, executive director of Christian Voice, and ex-Alabama congressman and Southern Baptist minister John Buchanan.

The seminar, which focuses on the uses and abuses of power in the church and in society, also featured opening-day addresses by a theologian and an authority on civil religion.

Buchanan was defeated in the Republican primary after an intensive effort by new religious right groups. Jarmin's group gave Buchanan a rating of 29 out of a possible 100 on its Christian/moral report card on 14 so-called Christian issues.

Jarmin, a former lobbyist for the Unification Church (Moonies) and worker with the American Christian Union, said Buchanan was one of 35 congressmen targeted for defeat, and added the new right "sent 22 of them back to the farm."

While the report card inferred the views of Christian Voice were the "Christian and moral" positions, Jarmin admitted a person can be a Christian and disagree with conservative stands.

He said the organization is "a" Christian voice and is not "the" Christian voice, and added he plans to change the designation "Christian/moral" on future report cards.

Buchanan, now an independent consultant based in Washington, D.C., where he works for several groups including the Christian Life Commission, noted "Jarmin comes from the Unification Church and the American Conservative Union, but has been able to devise a report card" on the Christian/moral position.

"I've been a Christian since I was nine years old," said Buchanan, also a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and pastor for several years before entering politics, "but I have never been able to derive the Christian/moral position on any political issue and delineate them as a report card."

He added if he were to draw up a Christian report card, "It would be very different," and would include civil rights, women's rights and world hunger. "I believe as a Christian nothing is more important than to bring society to the place where every person, regardless of race, sex or geographical location, has the opportunity to be the most that that person can be," Buchanan said.

-more-

He also criticized Christian Voice's rating, noting he had the second highest score of ministers serving in Congress, but the 29 "was only half as good as that of Ozzie Myers and we expelled him for taking a bribe."

Politics was also the topic of Robert Bellah, professor of sociology at the University of California at Berkeley and a specialist in civil religion.

Bellah attributed part of Ronald Reagan's victory in the presidential election to "the a-moral majority" which he says is a much larger group than the Moral Majority.

He also said he believes the Reagan administration "marks a turning point in history. "It was not simply a change of administration or a change of party, but a change of regime."

The new administration, he said, is shifting away from a direction the nation has been following for 50 years and which has supported social policies, the needs of the working class, the poor, the blacks, and others.

The shift, he claimed, emphasizes corporate capitalism over human needs.

"For 50 years we have been making a moral revolution; now, in 1981 we are seeing the beginning of a counter revolution," he said, adding the shift is marked by authoritarianism.

Some of the shift, he added, was caused by the decline of the frostbelt in the Northeast, with a leadership which expressed itself in the Democratic Party and in the moderate and liberal wings of the Republican Party.

With the rise of the sunbelt has come the rise of the "cowboy capitalist," a different breed which lacks the tradition of religious commitment, social conscience and education, Bellah said.

"The television show 'Dallas' is the perfect expression of the ethic of the a-moral majority. There are no moral heroes on 'Dallas,'" Bellah said. "There are big crooks and little crooks and the moral of the show is that it is better to be a big crook than a little crook."

He also pointed out big government is not the problem, but is merely a "symptom of a way of life which worships wealth and power."

The use of power for self-serving ends, particularly by the church, was discussed by William Hendricks, professor of theology at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

The church's use of power in an effort to influence government may be based either on a seeking to be prophetic or on being self-serving, he said, adding that in the prophetic dimension, the church is called on to go into society and to be responsibly active in politics, taking a stand for justice and peace.

Too often, Hendricks added, church groups claim they are using power prophetically when actually they are using it for self-serving ends.

"Religious claims, when they speak as God instead of for God, may be idolatrous at best and blasphemous at worst," Hendricks said.

American Pastor Learns  
To Wait in Philippines

By Don Phillips

MINDANAO, Philippines (BP)--Adjustment was very difficult for me.

To an American on a time schedule, "we wait" were hard words to understand. And I had heard them time after time, mostly from Eli Castillanes, a 23-year-old pastor.

His church is located 200 American steps off the canal bank in a rice field. The only way to reach the church is to cross a footlog and walk the dike, a narrow pathway about six inches out of the water.

When it came time for the first night service to begin, Eli walked outside the church building, came back in and said, "We wait." An hour and a half later he walked back outside, then returned to say, "We begin." The second night I think we waited two hours.

All the waiting grated on my nerves, so the next night I walked out with him to inform him I was ready. Outside in the darkness God really humbled me as I saw why "we wait."

I could see lights bobbing as families from all over that community made their way to the church, carrying their kerosene candles. Some were coming as far as three miles in the darkness, crossing footlogs and rice paddies to get there. Eli would not begin the service until all the lights had reached the church.

-30-

Don Phillips, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Statesville, N.C., spent two weeks recently in the Philippines in revival services.

---

Largest Simultaneous Crusade  
In Philippines Nets 14,200

Baptist Press  
3/24/81

MINDANAO, Philippines (BP)--The largest simultaneous evangelistic crusade ever conducted by Southern Baptists in the Philippines has resulted in more than 14,200 professions of faith and more than 2,500 baptisms.

By the time the New Life Crusade began in February, 367 locations in Mindanao and the Visayas had requested guest evangelists. To reach as many of these as possible, the 84 U.S. pastors, nine musicians and 10 Southern Baptist missionaries participating averaged only four days in each place.

"We could have had a lot more decisions had we not spread ourselves that thin," said missionary Jim Slack, statistician for the Philippines mission.

A 1978 crusade, where the guest evangelist stayed a minimum of seven days in each location, averaged 55 professions of faith per site. This crusade averaged nearly 50, according to Slack.

Missionaries and Filipino pastors will continue the crusade through April for those places which U.S. participants did not reach. Slack projects 1,800 additional professions of faith by the end of April.

-more-

Anticipating good response, following the convention's 20 percent annual growth rate, Filipino Baptists had set goals of 30,000 decisions and 10,000 baptisms. Baptist Center, the publication agency of the Philippine mission, prepared 195,000 pieces of literature especially for the crusade.

Already preparation for a partnership evangelistic crusade in Manila during February of 1982 is under way, with goals set of reaching 30,000 unchurched Filipinos. This effort was initiated by the U.S.-based World Evangelism Foundation which plans to phase out its operations by the end of 1981 in light of the SBC Foreign Mission Board's emphasis on partnership missions.

One of the New Life Crusade participants, Jerry Abernathy, in charge of evangelism for Oklahoma Baptists, said one of the churches he visited was almost dead before the crusade. Only the pastor and his family had been attending. But 88 decisions were recorded. In the last service the pastor's wife expressed her gratitude for the crusade, for the decisions and also for the hope they now had for the work to continue.

Eddie Howard, pastor of First Baptist Church, Grants, N.M., told how an unscheduled Bible study in a town with no established church brought a 92-year-old man to Christ. When Howard returned four days later to baptize the new Christians, he learned the elderly man had died the day after the Bible study.

-30-

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

New Language Study Method  
Offers "A Touch of Love"

By Elizabeth F. Smith

Baptist Press  
3/24/81

JERUSALEM (BP)—"Shalom, Yaffa," the young couple greets a teenage girl in a wheelchair. Yaff's verbal response is limited to grunting sounds, but her bright eyes and wide smile reveal her pleasure in seeing her American friends.

After a few moments of affectionate conversation with Yaffa, Carson and Lou Ann Brisson move down the hospital corridor to meet other young patients. Some of these children and teenagers have lived all their lives in this orthopedic hospital. They are accustomed to seeing volunteer workers, yet each child responds with pleasure to the Brissons' attentions.

Some of the little patients eagerly await Carson's help with arithmetic, typing, English, Hebrew and educational games on the classroom computer. Lou Ann heads for the crafts room to assist the children, arriving by wheelchair or on rolling beds, in macrame, crochet, weaving or enameling. Some linger near Lou Ann for a personal word and a hug before settling down to work on the day's project.

The Brissons, new members of the Israel Baptist mission, arrived in January 1980 to begin Hebrew study. Volunteer work at the hospital is part of a new language study plan designed by a mission committee. Suzanne Mantooh, committee chairman, believes volunteer work gives the Brissons' a beneficial break from their months of intensive classroom study. When they return to formal study, they will have a strong base on which to build.

-more-

Both Carson and Lou Ann say the children realize they are learning Hebrew and offer to help with vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. "They are quick to point out our mistakes and laugh with us as we struggle with the strange sounds of Hebrew," Carson admits with a twinkle.

"We give a touch of love," Lou Ann says, explaining their four hours, three mornings a week at the hospital. The Brissons also work one morning a week in the pottery restoration section of the Israel Museum.

A tutor twice a week helps with Bible reading, Scripture memorization, vocabulary and conversation. Sessions at their kitchen table often stretch beyond the three-hour lesson because Abir, their tutor, "has become a very close friend," Lou Ann says.

The Brissons met Abir on a shabbat (Sabbath) morning at West Jerusalem Baptist Church. An 18-year-old high school senior, Abir is an Arab of Greek Orthodox background. Her mother, an educational television worker, is a graduate of Nazareth Baptist School.

Abir's family and the family that owns the apartment building where the Brissons live are surrogate families for the newcomers from North Carolina. These Israeli families—one Arab and one Jewish—offer help not only with Hebrew but also with understanding various cultural, social and religious aspects of life in Israel.

The Brissons move to Tel Aviv next summer to coordinate evangelistic work among university students. There they hope to extend "a touch of love" to those Arab and Jewish students—just as they have to the children at the orthopedic hospital.

-30-

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