



## BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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### Tornado Damages Louisiana College

PINEVILLE, La. (BP) — A tornado which ripped through Louisiana College June 5 left one person seriously injured and a wake of destruction as it shook the Baptist college.

"It is going to be at least \$300,000 to cover property damage," said Louisiana College business manager Ernie Hicks. "That is a very conservative estimate and the insurance adjusters are still working on it."

Louisiana College student Jim Moore was struck on the head by a falling tree branch, and underwent emergency surgery for a blood clot on the surface of the brain. He has been released from the hospital.

Maintenance worker Lewis Robertson, who was buried under four feet of bricks and debris, also was hospitalized when the maintenance building was demolished. He was examined and released and within two hours was back at the building surveying the damage.

Maintenance supervisor Larry Airhart searched through the wreckage of the building for Robertson. Witnesses said he kept up a conversation with Robertson, and at one point called:

"Lewis, where are you?"

"You are standing on top of me. Get off," Robertson's muffled voice replied.

College president Robert Lynn said: "We have a great deal to be thankful for. The tornado hit at 12:54 p.m., and most of the students were on the other side of the campus in the cafeteria. Most of the staff had already returned and were inside or had postponed coming back from lunch because of the heavy rains."

The tornado approached from railroad tracks running parallel to the campus and touched down on the maintenance building. Then it jumped the rest of the campus and hit Pineville and Alexandria resulting in 10 injuries, the death of a seven-year-old boy and more than \$1 million damages.

On campus, the only damage was to the maintenance building and to some 100 trees.

"We are so very thankful that no one from the college was injured more seriously and that the damage was no greater," said Lynn, who also thanked community, students and staff who helped in the crisis.

Prefab Chapels Boost  
Brazilian Church Growth

By Mike Creswell

ARARUAMA, Brazil (BP) — Baptists in South Brazil sometimes invite people to come to church buildings that don't exist.

That's because a dramatic new prefabricated chapel program can allow a sanctuary seating 175 persons to be erected in a week. A congregation thus can invite neighborhood residents to attend services at a vacant lot, confident that by the time the scheduled day arrives a fully-equipped sanctuary will be there.

In terms of growth, the program is allowing new congregations to hit the ground running, greatly shortening the time it takes for a church to become self-supporting.

The prefabricated design originated by Southern Baptist missionary Marshall Flournoy has proven so successful with the first 11 chapels that he has been asked to set up a small factory to produce parts of the chapels; they then will be shipped to church sites and set up. Eventually, Flournoy, who claims Florida as home, hopes to provide churches with low-cost baptistries, pews and other furniture at the factory being established at Araruama, a resort town near Rio de Janeiro.

Ubiraci Gusmao, executive secretary of the Brazilian Baptist Convention's Loan Board, hopes the new program will get around the familiar missions problem of needing a building to attract members, but needing a large congregation before a building can be afforded.

Since a prefabricated chapel, with 3,000 square feet, costs only \$5,000 to construct, a small mission congregation can borrow funds from the Church Loan Board for about what it would pay to rent a building, and have an attractive meeting place to draw more members.

Four of the 11 congregations using the prefabs have become self-supporting churches in under two years, a dramatic reduction of the seven years usually needed for church development in Brazil, Flournoy said.

"A mission would get started and the best men and young people of the church would spend every weekend, many of their nights and every holiday laying blocks trying to get their building up. Sometimes it would take two or three years before they would complete the building," he said.

Now that time can be spent in evangelism.

Flournoy suggests that congregations eventually build a permanent building around the prefab unit. When the permanent structure is in, members can dismantle the prefab and use it as a mission point to start yet another congregation.

One chapel at Vargem Grande near Sao Paulo was built by a group of 18 Southern Baptist laypersons from churches in the Corpus Christi, Texas, and Denver, Colo., area. Seventeen Brazilian Baptist young people worked with the team as some members did chapel construction while others visited 15,000 people in the area. Team members invited the Brazilians to the inauguration of a new Baptist church in the community, even before it was started.

Where, asked the puzzled Brazilians, seeing only a vacant lot. "It just blew their minds that we were inviting them to services in an open area," said Flournoy with a wide smile. "But we had the building up in 10 days. We had to stretch a wire two blocks to have electricity, but we had it ready. We had close to 200 people in the building, and 30 of them made decisions."

The prefabricated chapel program is ideal work for Baptist volunteers from America, Flournoy said, because it allows them to play a vital role in getting a church established, and in as little time as two weeks to be able to see their handiwork actually used for worship. Local congregations are expected to help with the cost and labor involved.

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

Golden Gate Appoints  
Grissom to Faculty

Baptist Press  
6/18/81

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP) — Fred Allen Grissom has been named assistant professor of church history at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, effective Aug. 1.

Grissom is professor of religion and director of religious activities at Virginia Intermont Baptist College. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama and the University of Chicago where he earned a master of theology degree. He also earned master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been pastor of Baptist churches in Alabama.

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In Discotheque to Plazas,  
Spaniards Accept Christ

Baptist Press  
6/18/81

MADRID, Spain (BP) — Sharing the stage with a British rock band from a discotheque to public plazas, Southern Baptist evangelist Ervin Hastey preached his way through Spain.

Hastey, evangelism and church growth consultant for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, has preached overseas many times. But this trip that saw 77 accept Christ during 18 sermons in 18 days was unusual in several aspects, he says.

Teamed with the Christian rock band Frontline from Nottingham, England, Hastey held services in public places in five Spanish cities, but the most unusual was a discotheque. About 50 church members mingled with a crowd of more than 500 as the band played and members gave testimonies.

In Albacete, the one of the five cities nearest Spain's terrorist activities, Baptists were allowed to have a concert and testimonies in a public plaza. Hastey could make only brief remarks there because all conferences were prohibited to prevent terrorists from meeting. The concert was allowed because it was considered a social function.

In Madrid, some band members who had used drugs before becoming Christians gave their testimonies, and two young drug users came forward to make professions of faith in Christ, Hastey said.

The meetings were part of Spanish Baptists' five-year plan for missionary expansion, a program which would have been prohibited a few years ago.

"I heard several times pastors and laymen express the joy they felt in having religious liberty to be able to have meetings like this and be protected by the government if anything went wrong," said Hastey.

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Southern Seminary's Simmons  
Opposes 'Human Life Bill'

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP) — Southern Baptist ethicist Paul Simmons has urged a Senate panel to reject an anti-abortion proposal that declares human life begins at conception.

Simmons, associate professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., told the subcommittee on separation of powers that S. 158 introduced by Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., is "extremely problematic" on both theological and religious liberty grounds.

Proponents of the measure, including subcommittee chairman John East, another North Carolina Republican, contend the legislation would allow states to pass laws outlawing abortion since it would protect fetuses as "persons" under the Fourteenth Amendment.

Simmons said the bill's declaration that human life begins at conception misses the issue. "The real concern is whether or not the fetus is to be regarded as a person, not whether it is a 'human life,'" Simmons said. "Most people agree that it is 'human' and 'alive.'"

"The terminology of 'human life' cannot be substituted for the vastly more complex question of 'person,'" Simmons said.

Saying his religious perspective on personhood is shaped by the Bible—"which for me, is authoritative in all matters of faith and practice"—Simmons said the "biblical portrait of person is that of a complex, many-sided creature who reflects God-like abilities."

While admitting the Bible doesn't give "careful explanations of when one becomes a person," Simmons stressed that the graphic images of personhood contained in the Bible stand against efforts such as S. 158 to define zygote as a person.

Because he sees the bill's definition of human person as contrary to his own biblical and theological understandings, Simmons told the panel he strongly objects "to this effort to impose one religious notion on those of us who do not subscribe to that belief."

Simmons argued the bill violates the First Amendment by both moving toward the establishment of religion and the inhibiting of the free exercise of religion.

Citing wide disagreement within the religious community on abortion, Simmons contended that the intent of S. 158 undermined religious liberty. "Until and unless this society can develop a consensus of personhood of the fetus, we should not impose one religious point of view upon everyone," Simmons said.

Simmons appeared before East's committee during its seventh day of hearings. Other religious leaders included Rosemary Radford Ruether, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill.; Rabbi Henry Stegman, American Jewish Congress, New York; William Thompson, Stated Clerk of the United Presbyterian Church, New York; and Robert Destro, Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, Milwaukee, Wis.

The committee, which looked at medical-scientific, constitutional and public policy questions raised by the proposal in earlier hearings, is expected to begin marking up the bill after Congress' July Fourth recess, according to a spokesman for East.

SBC Newsroom Marvel  
Of Efficiency, Cooperation

LOS ANGELES (BP) —It is the best Carl Carter has seen.

Carter, religion editor for the Birmingham (Ala.) News, says the newsroom at the Southern Baptist Convention is tops. He and other reporters who cover the meeting consistently give the newsroom service provided them high marks.

The operation "sets a standard for other denominations," says Frances Meeker, religion editor of the Nashville (Tenn.) Banner.

W. C. Fields, director of Baptist Press and public relations director for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, oversees the newsroom operation, which includes complete darkroom facilities.

According to Fields, the newsroom tradition originated 22 years ago as a service to news gatherers covering the convention. This year, 350 people were accredited to the newsroom.

It's staffed by news and public relations personnel from most SBC agencies who cover everything that moves for five days. SBC photographers shoot major events and prints are available within hours for media and messengers.

Fields says the newsroom is a "voluntary cooperative effort by Southern Baptist Convention professionals who really enjoy working in news and with the news media."

The newsroom budget this year is \$44,100, despite the fact that each SBC agency picks up the tab for its personnel sent to staff the newsroom.

Dan Martin, news editor of Baptist Press, manages the newsroom. He is available around the clock to reporters who need clarification of issues debated or miscellaneous bits of information.

His dealings with reporters can be incredibly diverse: "One minute I may be talking with a reporter about a life-or-death issue in the convention. The next minute, somebody's griping at me because we're out of coffee."

Vern Myers, Baptist Press editorial assistant from Nashville, Tenn., supervises 12 women who turn edited news stories into releases. These are often used by secular and religious reporters as background material for stories they write.

The women are responsible for typing, proofreading, and mimeographing the stories. Teenagers acting as SBC pages place each release in reporters' preassigned press boxes.

The pressure sometimes gets to volunteers, Myers admits. Helpers have been known to burst into tears and leave. "But they always come back," she says.

Reporters rely on the releases and on the closed circuit TV hookups in the newsroom.

Lilla Ross, religion editor of the Jacksonville, Fla., Times Union, who has covered the SBC for four years says, "My first convention I tried covering from the floor and it's impossible for something this size. Now I stay in the newsroom and watch it on closed circuit TV."

Cecelia Wright, religion editor of the Memphis, Tenn., Press-Scimitar, appreciates the SBC staff's openness when denominational controversies flare. "Even when something's controversial, they seem to get everything out in the open," she says. "They're not trying to cover anything up. That's a credit to them."