



-- 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. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

July 16, 1981

81-108

**National Poverty Special
Features Baptist Leaders**

by Greg Warner

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—Reagan administration budget cuts "are asking for a social disaster on the installment plan," according to James M. Dunn.

Dunn was one of four Southern Baptist leaders featured in an NBC special on national poverty, taped July 14 in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission and scheduled to be shown nationally Aug. 2.

The hour-long special, hosted by NBC news correspondent Edwin Newman, is tentatively titled "Unto the Least of These."

Also participating on the panel with Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, D.C., were William G. Tanner, president of the Home Mission Board in Atlanta, Ga.; Samuel Simpson, pastor of Bronx Baptist Church in New York City; and Ross Hanna, Southern Baptist home missionary in Tucson, Ariz.

Against the backdrop of home missions week at the Gbrieta Baptist ConferenceC nter, the leaders debated the effects proposed Reagan administration budget cuts would have on the poor of America and how churches should respond.

Dunn said the proposed budget cuts that eliminate many social programs for the poor are a "guaranteed scenario for human needs disaster." While conceding a balanced budget is a worthy goal, Dunn said, "It is a terribly risky gamble when the folks whose lives are at stake are the poor."

Simpson agreed the loss of some social programs would have a devastating effect on poor people: "A lot of people are going to be dying if something is not done," he said.

"The budget cuts are using real bullets and killing real people," Dunn said. He cited the Reagan administration's decision to cut the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) food program, credited with preventing many infant deaths, as one budget cut that could cost lives.

Tanner said the government has not researched the effects the proposed cuts would have on poor people. "I don't think they have the data to back up what they are doing," he said.

But Hanna disagreed with other panel members, saying the cuts could be a good thing.

"Definitely there are going to be some people hurt," he admitted, "but I have faith in the government that they will be able to work together (with Christian organizations) for a better helping program. Some people will starve, but they already are."

Hanna said the poor people with whom he works in Tucs n's inner city have paid little attention to budget talk out of Washington. Instead they are preoccupied with daily concerns of hunger, housing and "existence," he said.

- more -

"The administration is trying to go back 50 years to destroy the programs that help poor people in America," Simpson said.

"There is a certain callousness," Dunn said, "reflected in cutting some of the most cost-effective, humane, genuinely helping programs." He said the idea that welfare recipients need only find a job is a fallacy because "70 percent of the welfare recipients are children."

"We must take these hard facts into account," he said, "and not simply sloganize or bumper-sticker our attitudes toward the poor."

All four panelists agreed the government has some responsibility to help the poor and that Christians cannot take up all the slack left by deleted social programs.

"There is no question the government has their responsibility and they cannot shirk that responsibility," Simpson said.

Tanner said the Home Mission Board "can be a catalyst" in the process of finding help for the poor. "We can't pick up all the slack, but we can do some things," he said.

"We can qualitatively do a better job through church structures than through massive federally-funded programs," Dunn said, "but we'd better be careful not to conclude, as some churches are doing nowadays, that the churches can pick up where the cuts are being made. There is no way in the world that can happen. That is a dream and not a reality."

The panelists suggested cooperation with the government in designing programs to fill the gap.

"The Home Mission Board is going to have to relate itself to some of these (government) agencies not in direct, but in dynamic ways," Tanner concluded. "It's not enough to say we can't meet all the needs."

Dunn challenged Christians to change the governmental systems that minister to the poor. He said Christians need to be committed not only to charity, but to justice, which would guarantee that the government has to meet the basic "inalienable" human right of food and health for poor people.

-30-

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Radio and Television Commission.

Hanna Named Language
Missionary of Year

Baptist Press
7/16/81

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP) — An Arabic Baptist missionary was recognized as the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's Language Missionary of the Year during Home Missions Week at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

Kahalil (Charlie) Hanna, of Santa Ana, Calif., who has helped start 17 Arabic-speaking Baptist churches in California during the past two years, is a catalytic missionary to Arabic-speaking people in California.

Home Mission Board language missions director Oscar I. Romo, praised Hanna's work in starting new churches in California for Egyptians, Jordanians, Armenians, Iranians, Iraqis, Lebanese, Caldeans, Assyrians and Syrians.

-more-

Hanna also has helped translate into Arabic and produce in Arabic, the Baptist Faith and Message Statement, a Survival Kit for New Christians, nine quarters of Sunday School lessons, two booklets for Woman's Missionary Union and a tract on how to establish WMU in an Arabic church.

Hanna said an average of 350 persons attend the 17 churches in California regularly. Most of them are from a Muslim background.

Hanna currently is working with a committee to produce a tract designed to help Baptists reach Muslims with the gospel, entitled "I Am a Muslim—Do You Know Who I Am, Do You Know How to Reach Me."

A missionary with the HMB since 1978, Hanna was born in Egypt where he accepted Christ in a Baptist church. He was a Baptist pastor in Lebanon for 14 years before coming to the United States in 1976, and is a graduate of the Baptist Seminary in Beirut, Lebanon.

-30-

Religious Leaders Pleased
After Meeting Reagan Aide

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
7/16/81

WASHINGTON (BP) — Representatives of mainline religious groups are optimistic the Reagan White House will listen to their concerns as well as to those of the religious right.

The optimism was expressed after representatives of four Protestant and one Jewish organization met with presidential assistant Elizabeth Hanford Dole.

However, at the same time, the four Protestants asked that the administration appoint someone other than Morton C. Blackwell as their contact person.

Charles V. Bergstrom, a Lutheran executive who arranged the meeting with Dole, said the group suggested Blackwell, assigned earlier to deal with Protestant groups, is too closely identified with new right and religious right causes.

"We need another contact" in the administration, Bergstrom declared.

Others present for the meeting with Dole and one of her chief assistants, Diana Lozano, were Mary Jane Patterson, director of the Washington office of the United Presbyterian Church; Paul Kittlaus of the United Church of Christ; David Saperstein, representing the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; and John W. Baker, general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Bergstrom, who heads the office of governmental affairs for the Lutheran Council in the USA, said he was "very impressed" with Dole, an active United Methodist. He said the group of religious representatives had spoken, "very, very openly" about public policy differences between the mainline denominations and those of the religious right.

The meeting's main purpose, he said, was to acquaint members of the president's staff with the cooperative efforts of faith groups through their Washington offices. Christian denominations and other religious bodies maintain two basic cooperative organizations in the nation's capital, he explained.

One of these, the Washington Interreligious Staff Council, meets twice a month to map out common strategy for influencing current legislation. By common agreement, some issues which divide the religious community, such as abortion and public aid to parochial schools, are off limits.

-more-

The other organization, IMPACT, has as its main objective the mobilization of individuals across the country to lobby Congress at any given moment on an issue of common concern.

The group meeting with Dole also informed her that once each quarter, heads of 10 to 12 of the nation's largest faith groups meet in Washington for breakfast, usually with members of Congress. Bergstrom said the group suggested to Dole that President Reagan be scheduled to meet with those leaders in the near future. Dole's response was "very positive," Bergstrom said.

Besides Blackwell, two other administration officials have been assigned to deal with religious bodies, Dole informed the group. Jack Burgess, also assigned to work with the business, labor and agriculture sectors, will be liaison to the Catholic community. Targeted as liaison to Jewish groups is Jacob Stein, whose other assignments include dealing with the National Security Council and the U.S. Commission to the United Nations.

Blackwell, who according to a previous White House announcement, had been given responsibility for relations with all religious groups, openly identifies himself with new right groups, including the recently named Council for National Policy, a coordinating group of some 50 conservative leaders. The new group is headed by Richard A. Viguerie, the new right's direct mail specialist, Paul Weyrich, who heads the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, and Howard Phillips, leader of the Conservative Caucus.

-30-

Fire Destroys
Pastor's Home

Baptist Press
7/16/81

ROBINSON, Ill. (BP) — A fire started by a spark from a clothes dryer did \$70,000 damage to the parsonage of the Highland Avenue Baptist Church July 11.

Insurance covered some of the building but none of the contents. Pastor Jack Oglesby said his family lost most of their furnishings. The family dog was found dead behind an organ.

Salvaged from the fire, and unharmed, was a film scheduled for showing in the church Sunday night, "Some Through the Fire."

"We showed it as planned," Oglesby said.

-30-

Westside Gains Respect,
Loses White Membership

By Luther C. Alexander Jr.

Baptist Press
7/16/81

MIAMI (BP) — Four years ago, West Side Baptist Church was about to give up the ghost.

Racial and ethnic changes in the church's neighborhood had cut into its all-white membership, and the congregation was headed toward relocation, merger or extinction.

Then came James H. Pollard, a self-described "redneck" pastor from Tennessee.

Pollard, 43, didn't try to maintain an all-white church in a predominantly-black and Hispanic neighborhood. Instead, he sought to fill the church with the people who lived nearby.

What he got was a multi-ethnic congregation, a reputation in the community as a church that cared and a lot of grief from some old-line members.

-more-

"I have lost members," he said. "I've had white flight because they knew I was going after everybody in the community—blacks, Hispanics. They might say they left for other reasons, but I know that's why they left.

"I'm a Tennessee hillbilly. I wore cowboy boots before Travolta...and I'm probably what you'd call a redneck, but I've never looked at color. If you've got a need, you've got a need."

The church now has 325 members. Through its child care facility, space for a senior citizen meals program and a free clothes and food closet for the poor, the church tries to prove its interest in the community.

"You know, we're attempting what most people say can't be done: Trying to build a multi-ethnic, multi-racial church. But it can't be done the old ways," he said.

A chalkboard on his office wall is a reminder. It reads: New church, new people, new opportunities, new ministries.

Pollard admits that it's as close to a magic formula as things get this side of heaven.

West side and Iglesia Bautista, the Hispanic Baptist church in its neighborhood, jointly conducted an English-Spanish worship service to kick off West Sides' Hispanic ministry department.

Many Broward County churches have scrambled to establish missions for the refugees that flood Miami. But Pollard thinks such efforts often support segregation while reinforcing the notion that the church is doing the refugees a favor.

Few churches, he said, allow Blacks and Hispanics into the mainstream. Fewer have changed to accommodate cultural changes in their communities. And many seem content to leave it that way.

Iglesia Bautista will provide West Side several of its members to direct the anglo church's Hispanic outreach.

Because 10 to 15 percent of the persons near West Side speak Spanish, they should be a part of the community church, too, he said.

"We believe that we can minister in this neighborhood—if they'll allow us to," Pollard says. "I really believe we can reach this neighborhood, and I think we should."

Alexander, a former writer for the Kansas Baptist Digest, is a religion writer for the Miami Herald.