



-- BAPTIST PRESS

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Like Century Plant, Church Finally Blooms in Surinam

PARAMARIBO, Surinam (BP)--When members of a lethargic Surinamese church finally got involved in completing their church building, their enthusiasm spilled over into evangelism, too.

Southern Baptist missionary Leo Waldrop had worked with the people of Calvary Baptist Church in the predominantly Hindu Village of Doekieweg for eight years when he challenged the members to finish their three-year-old building.

A construction team from Rocky Creek Baptist Church in Lucedale, Miss., had helped members build the structure but the eaves were incomplete, the foundation and baptistry rough, the paint faded and the floor bare.

Work with the church had been discouraging. Believers trickled in one by one but streamed out two by two to go to Holland, return to old ways or get involved with other groups and activities.

A core of faithful members was gradually strengthened by Bible study, retreats and associational meetings. Still, lethargy and a small membership seemed to be the destiny of the village congregation.

With some grumbling and a lot of indifference, the church accepted Waldrop's challenge to complete the building and then hold a reopening ceremony and an evangelistic campaign, all during the September school vacation period.

"As the work progressed, a spirit of excitement, pride, unity and sharing began to develop," Waldrop said. And plans began to develop for promoting the evangelistic campaign.

Promotional announcements were made on television and radio, in newspapers and on three street banners hung in the village. Excitement intensified as the members realized it was their church that was being promoted throughout the city of Paramaribo.

An evangelist--a converted Hindu--was secured to preach and prayer groups met frequently prior to the campaign.

The church was full as parents, friends and backsliders attended the services. One member confessed to Waldrop, "Brother, I can't stand it. It's wonderful."

The missionary was reminded of his excitement at seeing a blooming century plant, which sometimes doesn't bloom for 30 years, when his family first arrived in Surinam.

Likewise, he believes, the flower of fellowship and evangelistic fervor had finally bloomed in Calvary Baptist Church.

Nazareth School Faces Cuts As Financial Woes Increase

NAZARETH, Israel (BP)--Triple-digit inflation and an unexpected hike in teachers' salaries are threatening to severely curtail Nazareth Baptist School's 33-year-old ministry.

Compounding the school's financial distress is a government-mandated 25 percent salary hike for elementary and high school teachers, including the 27 at the 600-student Baptist school. Higher fees assessed students in September will not offset the unexpected salary increases effective the end of October.

"This may be the last year of operation of the school as we have it now, with kindergarten classes through grade 12," said assistant headmaster Fuad Haddad.

He predicted that part or all of the primary grades will have to be dropped if more funds are not found to offset Israel's rampant inflation that topped 130 percent in the first nine months of the year.

Since the primary school takes the largest share of the school's operating budget, cuts probably would begin with kindergarten and the first six grades, according to Southern Baptist representative Ray Hicks, the school's director.

He and Haddad say it is a "pity" to make such drastic changes in the school because it maintains a good academic rating with the government and has excellent standing in the community. Despite constant increases in school fees, parents insist that their children continue, Hicks said.

An official of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, which contributes a little over 20 percent of the school's \$300,000 budget, said much of the Baptist influence in Nazareth and the whole Galilee area has been due to the school.

Through this school "Baptists have become known and respected," according to J. D. Hughey, the board's director for Europe and the Middle East. "Doors have opened for a Christian witness. It is unashamedly Christian. Regular chapel services and even revival services are held in the school for faculty and students."

In an effort to continue the ministry, the school has set up a development fund in Israel and the United States and has appealed to more than 900 alumni in the two countries. An estimated 40 percent of the projected budget for the next academic year will depend on gifts from this fund, Haddad said.

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Missouri Baptists
Raise College Status

By Bob Terry

Baptist Press
10/30/81

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (BP)--Approval of an \$11.6 million budget and the upgrading of Hannibal-LaGrange College, Hannibal, to senior college status, highlighted the 147th annual meeting of the Missouri Baptist Convention in St. Louis.

Hannibal-LaGrange College, as a senior college, will be able to offer a full range of baccalaureate degree programs. Currently, the school offers only three baccalaureate degrees--theology, church music and religious education. It will immediately offer a

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bachelor of science in education degree for music major and add other degrees through 1985.

No messenger spoke against the executive board recommendation to upgrade the school to four-year status, and only a handful of negative votes was recorded when the actual vote was taken.

The \$11.6 million budget for 1982 is divided into an operational budget of \$11.2 million and a challenge goal of \$400,000. Thirty-five percent of all undesignated receipts will be channeled to Southern Baptist Convention causes, an increase of one-half percent from 1981.

T. T. Crabtree, pastor of the 3,400-member First Baptist Church of Springfield since 1971, was elected convention president.

Messengers approved resolutions against abortion, except to save the life of the mother and in cases of proven incest and rape, and against gambling and domestic violence.

In other resolutions, Missouri Baptists were urged to care for "the truly needy" in light of cutbacks in government assistance, promote better race relations and encourage multilateral arms negotiations as a step toward world peace and local security. They voted to support alcohol treatment programs, the preservation of the family farm and to oppose tuition tax credits.

The 1982 Missouri Baptist Convention will be held in Kansas City, Oct. 25-27.

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Volunteers Transforming Rice
Home Into Baptist Landmark

By Patti Stephenson

Baptist Press
10/30/81

NORTHBORO, Mass. (BP)--When Bill Crofts first came to Northboro looking for the Luther Rice home, people scratched their heads and could not recall such a place.

But, thanks to Crofts and other volunteers, the Luther Rice home will soon become a Southern Baptist landmark in this small New England town near Boston, where Rice, the far-sighted man who organized Baptists nationally, was born in 1783.

To celebrate his 200th birthday in 1983, Southern Baptists have undertaken the restoration and development of his birthplace. The property, acquired by the SBC Home Mission Board in 1968, is also the site of Luther Rice Memorial Baptist Church and the offices of the Baptist General Association of New England.

A national committee appointed by HMB President William G. Tanner is overseeing renovation of the turn-of-the-century house built on the same foundation where the Rice home originally stood.

A nearby barn and blacksmith shop will house a visitors' center, library, conference center and a historical collection of Rice's writings. Musical dramas depicting his life and Southern Baptist history will be presented in an outdoor amphitheater.

Volunteers are providing most of the labor for this restoration, according to Bill Wilson, HMB director of Christian Service Corps.

For Crofts, a civil engineer from Christiansburg, Va., a recent stint in Northboro marked his 10th trip as a Christian Service Corps volunteer. With his wife, Ellen, he took two weeks

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of vacation to supervise major remodeling of the house, living in their travel trailer and sharing meals with three other couples: James and Jane Adams of Claxton, Ga.; Beth and Eldon Crawford of Columbiana, Ala.; and James and Helen Helms of Lincolnton, N.C.

Following plans designed by architect Hamish Frazier, another Christian Service Corps volunteer, Crotts and his crew tore out the downstairs kitchen and moved it upstairs; installed plumbing and fixtures for an upstairs bath; and replaced several windows.

The second floor will be used as an apartment for the curator of the property. Dr. Rufus Crozier, a former professor at Missouri Baptist College in St. Louis, and his wife now live in the home as Mission Service Corps volunteers.

The first floor is being restored in the federalist style of the early 19th century, when Rice's work was just beginning. Mrs. Cecil B. Day of Atlanta is furnishing these rooms with period antiques. They will be open for tours, but will also provide a meeting place for Baptists, according to M. Wendell Belew, chairman of the restoration committee and director of the HMB missions ministries division.

During their stay, the women also worked with pastor Charles McGuire of Judson Memorial Baptist Church in Lawrence. They visited neighborhoods and tenement apartments and stuffed envelopes with letters telling Lawrence residents about the church.

"It was an eye-opening experience," Ellen Crotts admitted. "Many people were polite and seemed interested. Not many knew who Southern Baptists are, though."

There's much work to be done before the June 18, 1983, dedication, Belew noted. He predicted the finished homesite will be "much like a state park with a Christian witness" and where visitors can see "what Southern Baptists are doing in missions around the world."

Wilson said it's a fitting memorial for the man who most influenced early Baptists to organize in support of missions. "New England is where Baptists began in America," he explained. "Roger Williams came here to start the first American Baptist church. Yet when New Englanders hear of Southern Baptists, they say 'who?' We hope a visit to the Luther Rice home will help answer that question."

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Lottie Moon Gets
Personal Gift

Baptist Press
10/30/81

SADDLEBACK VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Pastor Rick Warren soon learned that in carefully planned communities of Saddleback Valley, Orange County, Calif., country clubs draw more regular members than churches, and Southern Baptists are virtually unknown.

A new Christian at Saddleback Valley Community Church where Warren is pastor, stopped by the church before leaving town for Christmas holidays.

He brought with him a check for \$200 made out to Mrs. Lottie Moon.

"He had no idea who Lottie Moon was," Warren said.

"He just knew we'd been talking about her for the last month and that she seemed to be in need of money."

Lottie Moon was an early Southern Baptist missionary to China for whom the annual SBC Christmas offering for foreign missions is named. The 1981 goal is \$50 million.

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Calm Texas Meeting
Funds Mission Effort

WACO, Texas (BP)--Texas Baptists focused on worldwide missions, stood firmly against tax credits and secularism and supported equal rights for women at their annual meeting.

Veteran observers said it was one of the most harmonious sessions of the 2.2-million-member convention in years.

Messengers adopted a Cooperative Program budget of \$45.4 million, including \$16.2 million, or 35.7 percent, for national SBC causes. The percentage is 0.2 percent greater than in the 1981 budget.

D. L. Lowrie, 46, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lubbock, was elected convention president. Lowrie is also chairman of the 192-member Texas Baptist executive board.

Evangelist Billy Graham, who spoke at a Bold Mission Rally attended by a standing room only crowd of 11,000, stressed the urgency of being bold missionaries for Christ.

Graham said he has never encountered in his lifetime such concern, fear and depression in the world.

"Scientists, theologians, sociologists and others are predicting the end of civilization as we know it," said Graham. "But the answer now, as it has always been, is Jesus Christ," thundered the famed evangelist.

The convention adopted a resolution on church-state separation urging Baptists to "oppose tax credit proposals and other schemes to provide government financial support for religious elementary and secondary education."

A resolution on "the role of women" encouraged equal pay, advancement and opportunities for improvement for women but opposed the Equal Rights Amendment.

The convention reaffirmed the biblical role which stresses the equal worth but not always the sameness of function of men and women.

A resolution supporting Bold Mission Thrust, the SBC goal to present the gospel to every person on earth by the year 2000, noted Texas Baptists have made an evangelistic partnership with Brazilian Baptists.

"We pledge our continued prayer and support to Baptists in Brazil and continue to commit our energies to the priorities of Bold Mission Thrust," the resolution said.

Other resolutions urged churches to sponsor refugees and called for the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission and other appropriate agencies to develop ministries to prevent child abuse and help troubled families.

The resolution on secularism reasserted the convention's historic position that God rather than man is the measure of value in the universe.

A report to the convention by its Christian Life Commission urged Baptists to rally to the plight of the poor in the face of new government policies.

Baptists were urged to encourage the state to increase the amount of monthly support through AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children).

The 1982 convention will be Nov. 9 - 11 in Corpus Christi.