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82-05

European Baptist Leader
Taking Relief to Poland

RB

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (BP)--Knud Wumpelmann, general secretary of the European Baptist Federation, was scheduled to lead a team from Danish Church Aid to transport food and medical supplies to Warsaw, Poland, Jan. 7.

Wumpelmann is the free church (nonstate) representative to the Danish Church Aid Board. It will be his first visit to Poland since the declaration of martial law there Dec. 13.

The general secretary said drivers of trucks carrying church-originated relief supplies have encountered only expected delays at control points while proceeding to church distribution centers in Poland.

"Baptists in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) have another 100,000 deutsche mark (about \$44,000) ready for the next shipment," Wumpelmann said. This is in addition to the \$265,000 sent from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the equivalent of \$25,324 sent from Great Britain, Norway, Scotland, Sweden and Denmark.

Eight trucks of supplies from Baptists have made it across the border. John R. Cheyne, the Foreign Mission Board's relief ministries consultant, is scheduled to meet with Wumpelmann and others in Frankfurt, West Germany, Jan. 30, to discuss other urgent needs in Poland and to plan for the next three to six months.

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IRB

No Money, No Mail, Little Food--
Thompsons Settle Into New Field

By Mary Jane Welch

Baptist Press
1/11/82

MALABO, Equatorial Guinea (BP)--Even if someone had told them six years ago that mission work would be like this, Jess and Peggy Thompson would have found it hard to believe.

Neither mail nor money has arrived since the Thompsons landed in Equatorial Guinea Dec. 17 to begin Southern Baptist mission work there. But even if they had money, they might have to travel to a neighboring country to spend it.

Although it has been more than two years since former president Nguema Biyoto Masie was deposed, ending a regime which disabled the nation, Equatorial Guinea is still struggling toward rehabilitation. Food and many supplies are still scarce.

The Thompsons, who will work as agricultural evangelists, hope to help this situation.

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They were able to get rooms in the Impala Hotel, best of the few hotels in the capital city, but will have to move out soon. And even though it's the best, the hotel serves no meals. Canned food the Thompsons brought with them and meals at the home of a friend have kept them going.

The couple has found a house to rent, but like other homes there, it needs repairs to make it livable. To get food and repair supplies, they're planning a trip to nearby Cameroon--when they get money.

International flights to Malabo are regular, but the Thompsons have received no mail and no money. When other methods failed, the Foreign Mission Board tried to telegraph them money, following careful instructions from Jess. The telegram was returned marked undeliverable. A second telegram arrived, but it was made out to "Jeff" Thompson. The bank refused to honor it. John Mills, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's director for west Africa, has spent more than an hour on the phone trying to get the name mix-up straightened out. He hopes the money gets through this time.

The Thompsons' plight, he says, is typical of the missionary life in a small west African nation with poor communication. The Thompsons are not the only missionaries in west Africa who fail to receive some mail or who travel across borders to buy supplies.

Mills is confident the Thompsons will be able to work patiently through the problems. "They have the kind of tenacity and good spirit you appreciate," says Mills. "And that's what it takes to work in west Africa."

The next mission couple to arrive in Equatorial Guinea, he says, will already have their way smoothed by the Thompsons and will wonder why the Thompsons have been there so long and gotten so little mission work done.

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Baptist Pastor Leads Haitians
To Christ in Refugee Camp

By Patti Stephenson

AB

Baptist Press
1/11/82

MIAMI (BP)--In the wake of recent disturbances among Haitian refugees held at Miami's Khrome Avenue detention facility, a Sunday evening worship service led by Southern Baptist pastor Jacques Dumeroy yielded 200 professions of faith.

Dumeroy, pastor of the Haitian mission of First Baptist Church, Pompano Beach, Fla., and members of his congregation have held regular services for the more than 500 refugees at the Immigration and Naturalization Service camp.

During a recent service, Dumeroy distributed French and Creole Bibles from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and led the 400 men and women in a prayer of commitment to Jesus Christ. Reported Peter Golinski, board consultant on Haitian work, "When he asked how many had committed their lives to Christ, half responded."

The "Haitian problem," as it's called in Miami, has escalated in recent months. Haitian refugees, entering the country illegally in small boats, have begun protesting their internment in detention camps with hunger strikes and demonstrations. In December, 200 protesters from the Haitian community stormed Camp Khrome fences and set Everglades grasses ablaze, enabling 101 refugees inside the camp to escape.

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Golinski said part of the Haitians' frustrations are caused by not being able to communicate with camp guards. "They don't speak English and the guards don't speak French or Creole," he explained.

The U.S. government's position on Haitian refugees has been criticized by leaders such as Jesse Jackson and Jerard Jean-Juste, head of Miami's Haitian refugee center. Because Haitians are recognized as economic rather than political refugees, few are eligible for asylum in America.

"Generally, these people are here for economic reasons and they are not in any way entitled to refugee or asylum status," Art Brill, spokesman for U.S. Justice Department, has charged. "They are illegal aliens."

Refugees who enter the country without proper documents are detained until their case for political asylum can be heard. Scarce lawyers and crowded courts keep some refugees in camps for more than seven months. Efforts to speed the hearings have been hampered by a dozen class-action suits filed on the Haitians' behalf.

A group of Miami citizens, including Golinski, met with Immigration and Nationalization Service officials in Washington in January to discuss the Haitian situation. Assistant Attorney General Rudolph Giuliani and acting INS Commissioner Alan Nelson presented five propositions, Golinski reported.

INS offered to reduce the camp population at Khrome to 325; add recreational facilities; enlist 100 more lawyers for examining the Haitians' eligibility for refugee status; and appoint a committee of INS officials and Haitian advocates to examine problems regularly. In addition, Giuliani pledged to make more frequent visits to Khrome to assess refugees' needs.

The INS would not agree to allow those already in the U.S. to remain, as Golinski had hoped. "They will be sending home all those who don't merit political refugee status so they can apply for legal permits to come back," he explained. The U.S. quota for emigration from Haiti is 20,000 persons a year, but only 5,100 met requirements for legal entry in 1981. To immigrate legally, Haitians must show proof of relatives living in the U.S. or a guaranteed job offer.

Problems don't end, however, once a Haitian is admitted to the U.S. "Most of them are illiterate and uneducated," Golinski said. "A Haitian will never tell you 'I don't understand,' so he becomes his own worst enemy." There is some resentment now among the Haitian community toward the refugees, he added. "They've been hurt by these newcomers who'll take jobs at lower pay. There's a lot of ill will."

Among Miami's seven Haitian Baptist churches, however, members are struggling to meet refugees' needs. "The people at Pompano Beach mission take an offering for refugees at Khrome each week and carry packages with them to the camp," Golinski said. "All the Haitian churches are helping the refugees find jobs, and food."

The Southern Baptist refugee center in Miami, run by Haitian pastor Renaud Balzora, is helping many Haitians already settled in the area who need food, clothes and English lessons. "The center has been searching for sponsors, but they've had little response from Baptist churches," Golinski said. "Our people just aren't responding well to these needs."

Golinski predicted President Reagan's plan of using Coast Guard vessels to escort Haitian refugee boats back to Haiti will not deter the refugees from coming. "The biggest deterrent has been holding them in Khrome," he declared. "There are still 40,000 waiting in the Bahamas, but they don't want to come and sit in detention camps when they get here."

As for follow-up of those who made commitments to Christ at the camp service, Golinski said it would be difficult, but he hoped to be able to distribute literature and Bibles in the camp. "The distribution of Scripture among them is the key," he noted. "Their overwhelming response to the gospel is evidence that God is moving among them at Camp Khrome."

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Fire Destroys Sanctuary
Louisville's St. Matthews

CO

Baptist Press
1/11/82

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Firemen fought the blaze "like it was their own home or church on fire," but flames still destroyed the sanctuary and church offices of St. Matthews Baptist Church Jan. 10.

Though no official estimate of damage had been made, pastor J. Altus Newell felt it would exhaust the church's \$3.1 million fire insurance. An insurance company agent said "the damage is so bad we may not even be able to come up with an origin."

Educational and recreation facilities suffered only smoke damage because of firewalls installed in a 1978 remodeling.

Neighbors reported the fire at 6:39 a.m. after hearing an explosion, according to Larry Atwell of the Louisville fire department. Although cause of the fire has not been determined, it appears to have started in the foyer of the sanctuary, directly above the furnace.

Firefighters had to battle not only the flames, but the fourth coldest day in Louisville history. The wind chill factor dropped to minus 50 degrees as water and equipment froze.

The congregation will meet in the chapel and classrooms of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for up to 16 months until the sanctuary is rebuilt.

"Somebody said to me this morning, 'Your church has burned up,'" Newell told his congregation assembled at Southern Seminary while the church still smoldered. "So my word was, 'The church facilities, part of them, have burned. St. Matthews Baptist Church is alive and well.'"

Although Newell clearly distinguished between the church facilities and the people of God, he admitted, "I see a lot of commitment there. I see a place I really love. Part of me is going up."

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'Educator' Editor Joins
Congressman Bill Boner

CO

Baptist Press
1/11/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--H. Rex Hammock, director of communications for the Southern Baptist Education Commission and editor of its magazine, the Educator, has resigned to become press aide for Fifth District Congressman Bill Boner.

He will join Boner's Washington staff Jan. 25.

Hammock, 27, joined the commission in June 1979 after graduation from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Samford University. While in Louisville he was director of news and information and edited the school's alumni publication. He also worked for the Louisville Courier-Journal.

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Stranger to Southern Baptists,
Now Ready for Mission Field

CO

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Sandra Achenbach had never met a Southern Baptist until she graduated from college. Her mental image of one grew from Mark Twain.

So she is a bit surprised to find herself a student and Southern Baptist foreign mission candidate at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

When Achenbach, from Elizabethtown, Pa., graduated from college, she said, "I have had a good life and God has been very good to me. I want to do something for someone else."

Not willing to make a lifetime commitment, she discounted the small mission program of the Church of God, the faith in which she was reared, and chose instead the short-term Mennonite mission program that recruited Christians to teach in foreign schools.

The Mennonites originally sent her to a Catholic school in Nigeria, but when she arrived, she was placed in the Baptist High School Jos. That's how a Church of God woman, sent by the Mennonites, began teaching in a Baptist school.

Achenbach returned to the states after four years. "When I got home I did not like it. People were so unhappy here with so much. Working for money did not seem to make one happy."

The vice principal at Jos asked Achenbach to return to the Nigerian school and suggested she join the Baptist church. She accepted the two-year assignment, but ignored the suggestion.

"As soon as I got there, I knew God wanted me to make this a lifetime commitment," she says.

However, she was still reluctant to join the Baptist church. "I felt like God was asking me to cast aside everything I grew up with. Finally, I knew there was just no other way to find any peace."

After talking to Foreign Mission Board area director John Mills, Achenbach was content in her decision to change denominations. At his suggestion, she enrolled at Midwestern, preparing for a lifetime commitment in foreign missions.

"I have even reached the point that if something happens and I cannot go back to Nigeria, I know I am doing what God wants."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Perry Webb Sr.
Dies in San Antonio

CO

Baptist Press
1/11/82

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Perry F. Webb Sr., pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, died in a hospital Jan. 10 after several weeks of poor health. He was 84.

Webb retired in 1961 after 24 years in San Antonio, during which First Baptist Church was the third largest church in the Southern Baptist Convention, with 7,984 members.

Webb was active in all levels of convention life and was a member of the SBC Executive Committee in 1959 and 1960. He also had pastorates in Malvern, Blytheville and Pine Bluff, Ark.

He is survived by his wife, Thelma; daughter Rebekah; son Perry Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La.; six grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

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