



**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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January 21, 1982

82-11

Southern Baptists Sponsor  
Fewer Refugees In 1981

AB

ATLANTA (BP)—Southern Baptists resettled only half as many refugees in 1981 as they did in 1980—although they sponsored a consistent nine percent of the total cases assigned to Church World Service in both years, according to Donoso Escobar, head of the SBC Home Mission Board's refugee resettlement office in Atlanta.

Final figures for 1981 showed 2,024 persons sponsored, compared to 4,031 for 1980. The number of sponsors also dropped from 1,453 in 1980 to 722 in 1981. Only seven Southern Baptist state conventions sponsored more refugees in 1981 than in 1980, with Ohio raising its total from 17 in 1980 to 89 in the past 12 months.

Escobar attributed the overall decline in part to the strained economy. "People are concerned about refugees, but hesitant to take on responsibilities they fear they won't be able to meet," he explained. "We've had calls from some churches who are willing to be sponsors but don't have the funds."

As an alternative, the Home Mission Board has encouraged churches to form partnerships, with two or three churches combining resources to sponsor one refugee family. Escobar predicted some Baptist associations may follow suit, drawing on the collected strength of area churches.

Among the 722 sponsors of 1981, "probably 300 sponsored more than one case," Escobar estimated. "Many churches don't know we have refugee programs or else they think we are only concerned with resettling the Indo-Chinese refugees."

Oscar Romo, director of the board's language missions division, stressed the continuing need for sponsors, "not just for the Indo-Chinese but for European refugees and others, too."

Currently, the Home Mission Board refugee office is seeking sponsors for 85 cases. "All those we're unable to place in 90 days are returned to Church World Service for assignment to another agency," Escobar said. His office has returned an average of 24 cases a month for lack of Southern Baptist sponsors.

Though a "tremendous backlog" of approximately 135 million refugees still remain in camps in Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Italy, Austria and Vietnam, the Reagan administration has decided to reduce the quota of refugees from 217,000 last year to 140,000 in 1982. Escobar also acknowledged a "backlash of bad feeling toward refugees" after the Cuban influx in 1980 adversely affected interest in sponsorship.

Escobar said Southern Baptists have begun 40 new ministries among resettled refugees around the country, and predicted more churches in 1982 will begin work with refugees who have been resettled in their communities. Romo suggested such commitments may be one factor limiting some churches from volunteering as sponsors.

"I feel confident about the overall situation, although we are in constant need of more sponsors," Escobar said. "The fact that Southern Baptists are ministering to those who are already here tells me we're accomplishing something."

January 21, 1982

82-11

Successful Center Prompts  
Opening of Second BOOST

By Leland Webb

RB

BISLIG, Philippines (BP)--BOOST now has a younger brother.

Southern Baptist missionary Harold Watson, prompted by success of the first BOOST (Baptist Out Of School Training) program at the Mindanao Baptist Rural Life Center, has opened a second training site at the satellite Rural Life Center at Bislig in the eastern portion of the island of Mindanao.

Like the original program at Bansalan, the new location can accommodate 20 students for four months of training in practical agriculture, strengthening of Bible understanding, literacy teaching and help in understanding their culture. Both programs are funded through Southern Baptist world hunger contributions.

"It's a means of providing skills to the out of school so that they become productive farmers," says Warlito Lakiquhon, assistant director and supervisor of training at the Rural Life Center at Bansalan. "It is an exercise in self-reliance and self-sufficiency."

Trainees are taught how to plant a FAITH (Food Always In The Home) garden and how to begin and maintain projects for raising goats, ducks or fish for food. They also learn how to plant and maintain crops and retain and improve topsoil on steep hillsides in the Rural Life Center's SALT (Sloping Agricultural Land Technology) program.

Selected primarily for training are Baptist young people no longer attending school and generally unskilled. Their local Baptist church and Baptist association must recommend them.

"We see the agriculture program here tying into rapid church growth," says Watson. "In BOOST, one-fourth of their training is in Bible. We try to provide them a little 'spiritual tool box'--a little doctrine, a little sermon preparation."

The BOOST schedule at both locations during 1982 will include two four-month sessions for Baptist young people and one month each for older trainees who are church leaders and for non-Baptist young people. The four-month sessions, rather than the earlier three-month schedule, will allow trainees to see an entire growth cycle for many plants.

Trainees live five to a house in buildings constructed in Filipino fashion of locally available materials. Those in each house elect their own leader and work as a team on farming and animal projects. The houses carry the labels, H, O, P and E, standing for "Home Of Progressive Examples."

Setting examples is one key to BOOST. As at the original center, the Filipino instructors at the Bislig BOOST Center--Eddie Lawian, who directs religious activities, and Nelson Palada, resident agriculturist--live in homes near the trainees, thereby becoming continual models.

The full daily schedule for trainees includes practical farm work, Bible class and demonstrations. Even the houses, the same size as many Filipino homes, are designed to provide

an example of efficient use of space and design. The assignment of five students per house "is a lesson in family planning (mother, father and three children) without imposing it on them," explains Lakiquhon.

When trainees return to their homes and put into practice some of the newly learned agricultural methods, the community recognizes them as having been trained, and the projects become examples for others.

Some who have finished the course have later returned to school, and at least four are now attending Mindanao Baptist Bible College, Davao City. Others are helping to lead and strengthen local churches.

The Bislig center, initially funded for three years, will be reviewed periodically with a view of extending the program. Ten years will be the maximum life of the center, however, says Watson, to avoid creating a permanent project that could outlive its usefulness.

After 10 years, "The facilities would be used as a Baptist camp for eastern Mindanao," explains Watson. Facilities at the satellite Rural Life Center will be used for Baptist conferences even while BOOST is going on, he adds.

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

Missouri Pastor Discovers  
Vibrant E. Europe Church

CO

Baptist Press  
1/21/82

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--A Missouri pastor who recently returned from Eastern Europe, reports that churches are growing phenomenally despite communist governments that suppress Christianity.

Jim Akins, pastor of the Birchwood Baptist Church in Independence, spent two weeks encouraging Baptists in Romania and Yugoslavia. He preached 15 times in ten days and each time the church was completely filled.

On several occasions, people stood in aisles, balconies, courtyards and pressed against the pulpit area. Atkins quickly noted that happens every Sunday.

Conservative estimates give nearly 160,000 Baptists registered in Romania. According to Akins, "All Baptists pay a price to be Baptists."

The Birchwood church sent five Romanian and two Yugoslavian Bibles to the churches there. The Missourians signed their names in the introduction.

When Akins showed the Romanians the signed Bibles, persons in the congregation broke into tears, unaware that Americans knew of their faith and thrilled that signatures accompanied the Bibles. It is dangerous in Romania to sign anything.

It is against the law to speak of Christ in a public place in Romania. Several times people would approach Akins on the street and whisper, "Are you a Christian?"

"Christ is everything to them," Akins said. "They have been stripped of everything else."

Akins found that the good news of the gospel provides a courage despite suppression and harrassment. "The key impression that will always stay with me, the rest of my life, is that even in a country with an atheistic government, with people living in poverty, Jesus Christ is sufficient to meet people's deepest needs and give them a fulfilling life."

Dunn Clarifies His Position  
On Reagan's Tax Confusion

By Norman Jameson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Confusion over President Reagan's apparent position reversal on the status of tax exemption for schools that discriminate has caused the issue to be debated primarily with race arguments.

Debate on that basis is too simplistic and neglects "subtle and profound" religious liberty issues says James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington.

Reagan at first asked the Supreme Court to drop cases against Bob Jones University and Goldsboro (N.C.) Christian Schools that the Internal Revenue Service had brought against them for discrimination. When a howl arose that the administration was racist, Reagan quickly asked Congress for legislation to deny tax exemption for schools that discriminate.

News reports then erroneously said Reagan's request was a policy reversal, when in fact the original request remained in place, unchanged. The intent of Reagan's request from Congress was to take judgments on tax exemption from the hands of the IRS and put them under the force of law.

"I have to agree if the IRS is going to evaluate tax exempt status in the light of national policy regarding race, they clearly need some direction from Congress about what the policy is," Dunn said when attending a meeting of the Southern Baptist Interagency Council in Nashville.

"But even there, Congress doesn't have the right, responding to the majority of the moment, to sweep away the freedom of religion guaranteed in the First Amendment. Its entirely possible Congress could come up with legislation that would be such a blunt instrument it would be unworkable, unfair and unconstitutional.

"Congress has passed a lot of laws the Supreme Court has later declared unconstitutional. The climate of confusion, misunderstanding and imprecision that surrounds the issue makes that possibility even more likely."

Public interpretation of the Baptist Joint Committee's position on the issue has been confused, partly because the committee's general counsel filed a friend-of-the court brief on behalf of Bob Jones University at the request of the American Baptist Churches. While, on the surface, that appears to cast them as racists, Dunn explains such categorization neglects finely drawn religious liberty issues.

"Like it or not, however odious," said Dunn, "Bob Jones University's position that interracial marriage is wrong is a clearly held fundamentalist belief. Their fundamentalist theology at the point of intermarriage teeters on the thin little hair of the possibility that miscegenation can be supported theologically or religiously.

"We're supporting the notion that on this particular instance the IRS does not have the right to assume that their interpretation of national policy takes precedence over Bob Jones University's sincerely held theological belief on this particular point."

Dunn pointed out the Bob Jones case has been in the courts 11 years and the point of contention is very finely drawn. There were no sweeping generalities about tax exemption for schools that discriminate. He said the Baptist Joint Committee's support of Bob Jones was not for their beliefs on interracial marriage, but for their right, as a religious school, to hold those beliefs without interference from the government.

Dunn still fears Reagan's original request to the Supreme Court or ensuing legislation from Congress will damage race discrimination progress made over the past years. Since there is yet no way to tell how the legislation will look, or the effect of Reagan's request, Dunn could only say "To the degree Reagan's efforts represent a retreat from racial justice, we deplore them; if they are the forerunner of a new era of Reagan racism, we must denounce them."

At the same time, he asserted that "to the degree they represent an acknowledgement that the Internal Revenue Service cannot arbitrarily and arrogantly establish and enforce national policy at the expense of religious liberty guarantees, they are correct decisions."

Daingerfield Defendant  
Found Dead in Jail Cell

C O

DAINGERFIELD, Texas (BP)--Alvin Lee King III ended speculation about his competency to stand trial for five murders in a Texas church by apparently hanging himself with a towel in his jail cell Jan. 19.

Eighteen months earlier, King walked into First Baptist Church, Daingerfield, wearing a military helmet and carrying two rifles and two pistols. He sprayed the congregation with gunfire, killing five and wounding 10 others.

Upon news of King's death, a common remark was: "All's well that end's well." Other townspeople said that King's death saved the taxpayers thousands of dollars in court costs. He was in the midst of a hearing to determine if he was competent to aid in his defense at his murder trial.

But Virgil Fielden, associate pastor of the church who was in the pulpit the day of the shooting, said he was surprised and saddened over the suicide.

"I thought he would go ahead and be found incompetent. . . . He's got some very smart lawyers," Fielden said. "Of course, I feel like he wasn't a Christian, and that makes it bad. I feel badly about it."

Church secretary Mary Allen was relieved that the families of the victims would not have to endure the ordeal of a trial.

"We've got mixed feelings about it because our people are not going to have to go through all of that," Allen said. "Our other emotion is by him doing this, no one will be allowed to reach him for the Lord. Our first reaction is 'Oh good,' but his suffering is really just beginning. It's so sad."

In July 1980 King was ruled incompetent to stand trial and spent 17 months in a state hospital undergoing psychiatric evaluation. In December doctors ruled King competent to stand trial and he was transferred to Morris County Jail in Daingerfield awaiting his murder trial.

King's defense lawyers challenged the competency ruling and on Jan. 18 the hearing began on the defense motion for change of venue challenging the competency ruling.

On Jan. 19 at 5:25 a.m., while making their checks on jail inmates, Morris County deputies discovered King's body hanging from a crossbar in his cell.

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CORRECTION:

In (BP) story mailed Jan. 18 entitled "Chancellor, Nutt Get RTVC Awards," please change fifteenth in graph 10 to thirteenth. Also, in graph seven, Chancellor teamed with David Brinkley from 1976 to 1980, not 1982.

Thanks,

Baptist Press