



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

January 22, 1982

AB

82-12

Atlanta Church Is Haven  
For Stranded Motorists

By Patti Stephenson

ATLANTA (BP)-- When the ice and snow of a January storm swirled into Atlanta at rush hour, a Southern Baptist church became a real "sanctuary" for hundreds of stranded motorists.

Clairmont Hills Baptist Church is at one of the city's busiest intersections, and when snow and ice swept into town late one afternoon, traffic slithered to a stop, literally on their doorstep.

Doug Lawson, minister of music and youth, who lives next-door to the church, was helping push cars up a steep slope beside the church when an elderly woman whose car had stalled asked if she could go inside to rest. When Lawson opened the church doors, other stranded drivers began lining up to use telephones and restrooms. One family who had stopped at the grocery store began sharing food with the famished crowd.

Lawson and Mickey Kirkincoll, minister of education who also lives nearby, began perking urns of coffee and passing out coats and shoes from the church's crisis closet.

Lawson recalled when one woman arrived in high-heeled shoes asking for something sturdier to walk in, he inadvertently gave away the church organist's low-heeled shoes. "She didn't mind since it was for a good cause." Lawson recalled.

By evening, the crowded church had been declared a Red Cross shelter and volunteers had been brought in to provide supper for 176 people. The growing group "was from all walks of life and really pulled together," Lawson said. The two ministers made coffee runs to police and motorists still out in the street and chatted with their black, white and Chinese visitors. "We provided tracts and opened the church library so people could read," Lawson said. "We were available if someone needed to talk."

An emergency developed when a man who had been on his way to the hospital for his first checkup since heart surgery began having chest pains. Lawson waited with him through the anxious moments until the Red Cross arrived to take him to the hospital.

That night, 150 people bedded down on pews in the sanctuary. The next day, Red Cross workers provided more meals and began ferrying people home in four-wheel drive vehicles.

Before the crisis ended, the church had housed some 400 people.

As they left Clairmont Hills Baptist Church in the wake of the storm, many people expressed their thanks to Lawson and Kirkincoll. One of those who took refuge that night wrote a letter of appreciation. Camilla Briner, who had been unable to get home to Stone Mountain, wrote: "The lights in your church and its open doors were like a lighthouse in a storm -- the most welcome sight I've had in a long time. I had been looking for a place to stop and passed up two other dark churches."

Briner, in appreciation, enclosed money to "pay for the heat, the coffee and the comfort you gave us all. I was proud to be a Baptist."

Lawson hoped the experience would reap some prospects who were impressed by the church's impromptu expression of caring.

"This was the best use our church has been put to in a long time," Lawson declared. "To everyone that thanked us, we said we were glad to do it in the name of the Lord. That is what this church is here for."

-30-

Free Staffers Inside Prison  
Now Have Ministry To Them

By Tim Nicholas

CO  
Baptist Press  
1/22/82

PARCHMAN, Miss. (BP)--Inside the walls of Mississippi State Penitentiary live more than 3,000 people. Most are inmates--convicted of crimes against the State--locked in against their will.

But also within the confines of the sprawling facility, better known as Parchman, is a group of people living there of their own volition. These are the staff and their families who live in Parchman housing, now 130 "free world" families. Other employees live outside the gates.

They live a world apart. Even friends visiting cannot just drive up to their houses--they have to pass the guards at the gates. That keeps out unwanted salesmen, though, said one resident.

But it is a life of isolation. It's 30 miles to the movies. "It's not fair to our children bringing them up here," said a resident about the lack of recreational facilities. Another added, "But they're a lot safer here than on the streets of Jackson."

To meet the special needs of these families, Ovis Fairley directs Parchman Prison Ministries for the Sunflower Baptist Association. His goal is to develop a spiritual ministry for the prison staff and their families.

Apparently, Fairley is being welcomed with open arms. Until he can get his own offices, the prison has allowed Fairley to use a room in the chaplains' office. He has full freedom across the facilities to visit staffers and prisoners alike.

Since his arrival in July 1981, Fairley has visited in more than 80 of the staffers' homes, "to let them know I was available at any time to help them with their spiritual needs."

He has organized two home Bible studies, led in five Backyard Bible Clubs which enrolled 50 kids (local church volunteers staffed them), and plans for revivals in the future.

In an "eatin meetin," with staffers, Fairley asked how he could serve them. They told him the Bible studies were a good start and asked for worship services.

"One comment I picked up on," said Fairley, "was 'I'm glad you're here, there's always someone coming to help the inmates, but never anyone to help the staff.'"

In his home visits, Fairley said he found few who said they would not be interested in home Bible studies. However, "They have not come stumbling over themselves to attend," he said. Fairley said he believes the people have "good excuses" not to attend. Many have night classes, for example.

-more-

One woman attending the Bible studies, explained to the Mississippi Baptist Record that "It never dawned on me that we could have something for the staff." She said the staff has much more time with inmates than a chaplain, who "will be with a man maybe an hour." She said the inmates will either be on best behavior with the chaplain "or else load him down" with problems and needs

"If you've got a Christian staff member who will be there eight hours" that staffer will "see needs maybe even the fellow can't even voice," she said.

Though many staff families attend churches on the outside, their lives are primarily inside the gates and "everything here is centered on the inmates," said one staffer. Therefore, Fairley's presence is welcomed.

"To me it was thrilling to get this idea started," said a staff wife. There will never be enough chaplains to go around, she said. "The employees--that's where it (a witness) needs to be."

"I feel excited about the work," said Fairley. "It has so many possibilities. For the first time they (the staff) have an available pastor."

Though many staffers are active in local churches, there has been no on-going program at Parchman itself. One resident told Fairley, "We've been here 12 years and we've never had anybody we could claim to work with us on spiritual matters."

Said chaplain Wendy Hatcher, "We could use several more just like him."

-30-

Stewardship Man Miffed  
At Reagan's Tithe Claim

CO

Baptist Press  
1/22/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--President Reagan's verbal support of tithing backed by tax returns that show only 1.4 percent of his income was given to charitable causes has drawn reaction from the executive director of the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission.

At Reagan's Jan. 19 press conference, he said though his tax returns do not show significant contributions to charitable causes, he has given money to individuals. Such gifts are not tax deductible.

"The Bible teaches we are not supposed to look about at the things we'd like to do and take the money that ought to support Kingdom causes and use it to support things that appear good to us," said A.R. Fagan, director for eight years of the Southern Baptist Convention agency that promotes giving.

Fagan, a strong believer in the Baptist tradition of "storehouse tithing," 10 percent of a person's income being contributed through the local church, illustrated his feelings about the president's giving level by comparing it to his own.

"In 1979, Reagan made 21 times what I did and I gave considerably more than he did," Fagan said. "In 1980, his income was nearly 10 times as much and I gave, through my church in both instances, considerably more than he did.

"In addition to that, I supported such things as Good Will, United Way and individuals that I had personal contact with who had needs."

-more-

Fagan favors the government's withdrawal from social welfare programs because he sees care for the unfortunate as the responsibility of the church. "The place for human compassion is not in government, but in persons caring for persons," he said.

Though it is unrealistic to think that churches can immediately pick up the slack caused by slashed government programs, he feels churches can and eventually will fill the gaps.

The 35,600 churches of the Southern Baptist Convention last year received \$2.7 billion from their members. Of that, they passed on \$444 million to mission and relief causes beyond themselves.

-30-

CO

Seminary Keeps Door Open  
Poland Baptists Growing

Baptist Press  
1/22/82

WARSAW, Poland (BP)--Despite difficult times in Poland, the Baptist Theological Seminary in Warsaw has kept its doors open, and Baptist churches are growing.

Universities in Poland reopened only for graduating classes and postgraduate students after the holiday break but the seminary started a new class with 14 beginning students, according to Knud Wumpelmann, general secretary of the European Baptist Federation, who recently returned to Germany after a trip into Poland.

Polish Baptists baptized more than 100 converts during 1981, Wumpelmann reported, increasing the membership of the Polish Baptist Union's congregations to 2,600 believers.

Because evening services and weekday meetings begin early enough to allow those attending to get home before the curfew, church activities have not been affected under martial law in Poland, said Piotr Dajludzionek, president of the union.

-30-

BSSB

New Bold Mission Thrust Goal:  
More Grassroots Participation

By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press  
1/22/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust goal to share the gospel with everyone in the world by the year 2000 has yet to become a grassroots movement, according to several denominational leaders.

Participants in the Bold Mission Thrust Steering Committee meeting in Nashville learned there are more people involved in missions and more money is being given but in some areas, results still fall short of goals.

The committee, led by Woman's Mission Union Executive Director Carolyn Weatherford, met with representatives of seven SBC agencies to hear reports by which to gauge the denomination's progress.

Gerald Palmer, vice president of the Home Missions Board's missions section, said he does not expect Southern Baptists to have placed the gospel in hearing of the world by the year 2000, but the convention will be farther toward it than ever before.

Denominational leaders are developing plans and working to create a mindset of missions participation to make Bold Mission Thrust a true grassroots movement in which any size church can have a part.

Sunday School Board Bible Teaching Division Director Ralph McIntyre said Sunday School enrollment is projected at 7.5 million for 1980-81, toward the goal of 8.5 million by 1985.

-more-

The Home Mission Board report estimates the goal of 5,800 new churches and missions in the 1977-82 period will be met, since the total stands now at 5,690.

Palmer said half the increase in new churches is lost each year because of churches which cease to operate. Most of these are established churches in large cities.

Palmer said since the inception of Mission Service Corps in 1977, 534 volunteers have been placed. The goal is 5,000 by 1985.

Short-term volunteers assigned by the Home Mission Board in 1981 totaled 34,200. Of that number, 28,000, or almost 82 percent, were touring youth groups.

The mission education report indicated coordinate curriculum among SBC agencies was beginning to disseminate information to a greater number of church members. The coordinated curriculum is to teach small and large churches how to have a mission effort in the local church--no matter what the size.

"There is a willingness and a commitment of the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention for potentially a saturation of local church members with mission information," according to William R. O'Brien, executive vice president of the Foreign Mission Board.

O'Brien said if Bold Mission Thrust fails, he hopes it is because Southern Baptists choose not to participate, not because they had never heard about it. He added that these are historic times in the Southern Baptist Convention because of the new levels of cooperation among agencies.

The number of missionaries assigned by the Foreign Mission Board totaled 3,136 during 1981, of which 2,668 were career missionaries. O'Brien said he expects the denomination to reach the goal of 5,000 career missionaries by the turn of the century.

Giving by Southern Baptists since the inception of Bold Mission Thrust in 1977 has outpaced inflation, according to A. R. Fagan, executive director-treasurer of the SBC Stewardship Commission. All but one of the state conventions have increased the percentage of giving to the national Cooperative Program since 1977.

Since 1977, the Cooperative Program has increased 61.8 percent to more than \$84 million in 1981, while Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong offerings for foreign and home missions have risen by 63.8 percent to total nearly \$63.5 million last year.

The report of the Bold Mission Thrust Steering Committee will be compiled and distributed to members of the Executive Committee of the SBC in their semi-annual meeting in February.