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RB

82-38

Hunger Ministry Must Be Part
Of Total Thrust, Parks Says

By Bob Stanley

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board is moving with "deliberate haste" to make appropriate use of world hunger contributions but will not rush into "improper or shoddy arrangements," President R. Keith Parks told board members at their March meeting.

"This ministry," said Parks, "will be done in the name of Jesus. It will augment evangelism and church growth. It will be an appropriate part of the total Southern Baptist foreign mission effort."

Parks made the statements in the wake of recent suggestions by some world hunger advocates that the board channel some of its funds through other relief agencies to meet hunger needs in countries where it does not have missionaries, such as in Somalia.

Southern Baptists have expectations that shape the way these funds are handled, Parks said, identifying the expectations as economical, efficient administration, urgency of getting the funds to the field, desire that they be used to bear a Christian witness and strong Baptist convictions about separation of church and state.

For these reasons, he said, the board cannot channel funds through an agency that spends 25 percent or more on administration and promotion; one that accumulated an excess of \$7 million last year; agencies that utilize non-Christian distributors or others which either receive government funds or distribute through government channels.

The board has been criticized because world hunger and relief contributions, which have grown from \$889,190 in 1977 to \$5 million in 1980, have come in faster than the board has been able to initiate projects to use the money wisely. Last year the board allocated more than \$3.5 million for projects in 37 countries--a 17 percent increase in allocations but still more than \$1 million below the \$4.7 million given for world hunger and relief.

In his report, Parks noted that from the earliest days, missionaries have sought to provide food for the hungry in countries where they served, often paying for it out of their own pockets.

He affirmed the role of hunger and relief ministries as part of the board's total ministry. "Biblically, philosophically and practically, this ministry is a valid part of our work," he said. "It is done in conjunction with evangelism that results in churches. This and all other ministries are to strengthen the witness and growth of the churches."

Historically, such work has been done with budgeted funds, he added. "Now a rapid escalation of special gifts provides new dimensions for this ministry. Since we are not a single purpose agency limited to meeting hunger needs, we can maximize the impact of those funds," he said.

Observing that "the local church is the best context for this witness," Parks said that "other Christian witness beyond this is utilized when necessary. It would, however, break faith with the Southern Baptist mandate to channel these or other funds through secular agencies."

The board, he explained, is committed to "enabling people to learn to plant or to fish or to work in order that they can be self-supporting. It takes longer to plant and harvest rice than to cook and eat it, but it's worth more," he said.

In hunger crisis areas, the board does provide direct food distribution, but he emphasized that the long-range developmental approach "can save lives for generations. This ministry also allows context and time that allows a spiritual witness."

Most of the hunger and relief funds are disbursed through the board's 3,100 missionaries or through Baptist churches and conventions related to Southern Baptist work overseas.

Every dollar given for hunger and relief goes overseas, he said, but, as is true in other areas of the board's work, such funds are invested on a short-term basis in this country while awaiting use around the world. These earnings help support the board's basic budget that makes the entire program possible.

Last year, an average of nearly \$5.5 million of unallocated hunger and relief funds was on hand. These were invested on a short-term basis as part of other short-term funds, yielding an interest ranging from 12.4 to 19.25 percent.

"I can guarantee Southern Baptists that no funds are held even one day for the purpose of earning interest," Parks said. "Yet they earn interest every day until they can be utilized."

He said there is no way to separate the exact amount the board has to spend to administer the world hunger and relief program but noted it has made "significant impact" on staff time and administrative and travel costs.

Overseas, most of the hunger and relief work is done by missionaries with other assignments. He said it would be "inefficient, impossible and sometimes ridiculous to try to cost account the program functions carried out by missionaries."

He cited the example of a doctor who works in a hospital, keeps mission accounts, goes to committee meetings, preaches on Sunday and witnesses during the week. "We do not try to charge a part of his support, a portion of car expenses and other administrative costs to different programs of work," Parks said. "He is supported as a missionary."

Parks said he is convinced that, despite delays caused by the necessity to gear up for such a large world hunger effort, the Southern Baptist plan integrating its world hunger program into the total worldwide Bold Mission Thrust effort is the best way to help hungry and needy people around the globe.

"We are nearing the time when all the resources which Southern Baptists desire to apply to this part of our witness can be used," he said. "I wish that long-awaited urgent needs in evangelism and other areas could be funded this well also."

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Cincinnati Baptists Start
Five Missions In One Day

Baptist Press
3/10/82

CINCINNATI (BP)-- Five church-type missions were established in a single day by Cincinnati Baptists, the biggest one-day achievement in a two-year effort to launch new missions.

The starts are part of an outreach effort by the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio called "104 Miracle Weeks," an attempt to start one new mission a week in 1981-82. So far, about 50 church-type missions have begun.

The five new missions cover a 30-mile range from middle-class suburbia in the northeast to a low-income neighborhood along the Ohio River in the southwest. One started in a building across the street from the main entrance to the University of Cincinnati.

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The campus area site will be a Baptist Student Union center, said Glen W. Ray, missions director for the Cincinnati Baptist Association which is buying the two-story residence for about \$100,000.

Two new missions rent space in local public schools. Another rents space in the YMCA and another a lodge hall.

Three of the five new missions began in areas where Southern Baptist congregations existed a decade ago and were either disbanded or left denominational affiliation.

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BSSB

Study Shows Needs
For Urban Priority

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
3/10/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--While 46 percent of the U.S. population is concentrated in the 50 largest metropolitan areas, only 25 percent of Southern Baptist members and 16 percent of the denomination's churches are located there, a recent study shows.

The survey, comparing 1970 and 1980 U.S. census data from the 50 largest Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) with 1970 and 1980 data from the SBC Uniform Church Letter, was conducted by Kirk Hadaway, research director of the Center for Urban Church Studies. SMSAs include the population of a city and the surrounding counties which make up the metropolitan area.

Hadaway said the study shows "where our priorities need to be. If our major strength is not where the people are, we need to concentrate our efforts in these urban areas."

On the positive side, Southern Baptist growth in the 50 SMSAs outstripped population growth for the 10-year period. The population increased by seven percent while SBC resident membership increased 15 percent and the number of churches grew by seven percent.

The largest percentages of SBC growth were in cities outside the South, while SBC growth in several southern cities failed to keep pace with the population.

New Orleans experienced a decline both in number of churches (seven) and membership (1,832) while the population increased 13.4 percent to 1.2 million. Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point, N.C., lost 21 churches and 551 members while the population grew by 14.3 percent, to 827,385.

Miami, Fla., showed a gain in churches but an 18.8 percent loss of members (8,072), while the population increased 28 percent.

Baptist growth outpaced population increases in only one of the six SMSAs in Florida and Texas. San Antonio membership showed a 22.9 percent gain and the population grew by 20.7 percent.

Hadaway said the decline and slow growth in southern cities indicate "we have not been able to capitalize on the Sun Belt migration."

On the other hand, in New York City, the nation's largest metropolitan area, Baptists showed a net gain of 2,935 members (140 percent) and 22 churches (110 percent). Large percentage gains were also registered in Newark, Philadelphia and Milwaukee.

However, Hadaway emphasized that while the percentage gains are significant, the number of Baptists in these cities is still quite small.

He noted that Baptist work showed significant numerical gains in several SMSAs located in border states of traditional Southern Baptist territory. For example, St. Louis showed a gain of 10,755 members and 23 churches while the population registered a 2.3 percent decline.

SBC resident members in the 50 SMSAs increased from 2.1 million in 1970 to 2.4 million in 1980, but the SBC membership share of the population remained at 24.6 percent.

Of the 50 largest SMSAs, 17 are located in states where Southern Baptist work is well-established. They are Dallas-Fort Worth (8), Houston (9), St. Louis (12), Atlanta (16), Miami (21), Tampa (24), Kansas City (29) and New Orleans (33).

Also: San Antonio (36), Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood, Fla. (37), Memphis (42), Louisville (43), Nashville (44), Birmingham (45), Oklahoma City (46), Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point (48) and Norfolk/Virginia Beach/Portsmouth (49).

The Center for Urban Church Studies was created in 1980 under joint sponsorship of the Home and Foreign Mission boards, Sunday School Board, Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood Commission and six seminaries.

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Kenyan Witch Doctors
Find New Power Source

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KONZA, Kenya (BP)--As other members of the Baptist Church of Upete, Kenya, watched, a former witch doctor publicly burned her witchcraft objects.

Wambui Nguva's testimony was simple: she had tricked people for years. The objects had no power. She had come to believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God, who holds all power.

Southern Baptist missionary Harold Cummins read from Acts 19:19 about a similar incident in the early church when new believers burned their magic books.

Mrs. Nguva is the third witch doctor to become a Christian in recent months, says Cummins. Two former witch doctors are members of the Baptist Church of Kinzuu. One of the former sorcerers, Richard Mubee, has led more than 100 people to become Christians and helped start three new Baptist churches.

Belief in witchcraft and sorcery is still widespread in the Ukambani area, says Cummins. Most misfortunes, such as illness, miscarriage, sterility, drought and death, are attributed to witchcraft. But more than 75 Baptist churches now exist in the area, most started in the last 10 years.

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Flying Dinosaurs
Sign of Spring

Baptist Press

WACO, Texas (BP)--Those winged creatures flying north again this spring are not really birds at all.

They are flying dinosaurs says a Baylor University biologist who calls modern birds "tiny dinosaurs who grew feathers and learned to navigate the skies."

The only difference between a sparrow or thrush and one of these small dinosaurs whose bones have been found in the fossils of the Mesozoic Age is a cosmetic one, says John C. Patton, assistant professor of biology. These little dinosaurs somehow managed to sprout feathers.

Evidence suggests that feathers were attached to the skeletal frames of creatures known as "Archaeopteryx" long ago. When fossils were examined closely, imprints of the feathers surrounded the skeletal frame.

Biologists theorize these small dinosaurs, whose name means "old winged one," survived by adapting to the environmental pressures pitted against them. Feathers protected them from the icy cold as temperatures dipped.

When other larger dinosaurs failed to adapt to changing conditions and died, mammals that had previously played a lesser role became the dominant vertebrates and grew warm, furry coats. Eventually, these furry-coated mammals became such a threat to the smaller, feathered dinosaurs that they took to the skies to save their skins.

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Offshore Workers Receive
Video Bible Study Tapes

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.

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ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--Videotapes of Bible studies and worship services will provide an additional ministry to Louisiana offshore drilling workers.

Jimmy Brossette, associate in the Louisiana Baptist Convention's missions division, said two sets of 14 videotapes have been prepared for distribution to oil drilling rigs in the Gulf of Mexico.

"Nine of the tapes will be a 'Study of John,' taught by John Sullivan, pastor of Shreveport's Broadmoor Baptist Church, and filmed as part of that church's Bible Institute.

"Three of the cassettes are worship services of Lafayette's First Baptist Church with Perry Sanders preaching and two of the cassettes are worship services from Alexandria's Calvary Baptist Church with John Alley, preaching," Brossette said.

This is a pilot program Brossette said. "We do not have any experience in this type ministry because no other convention has tried it. We do not know how long the tapes will last, for example, because the salt water may reduce the life of the tapes."

Tape distribution points have been established at the Buras-Triumph Baptist Church in Buras to serve rigs in southeastern Louisiana, and at Brossette's office in Alexandria for the southwest. First tape distribution will be on the 48 rigs where the convention now has Bible distribution.

"Men on the rigs have been asking for such materials," Brossette said. "And each rig has video cassette players provided by the drilling companies to show movies. We have received permission to use the players for our programs.

"Men on the rigs work 12-hour shifts for seven days. They can play the tapes on their off-shifts. When they return home they will bring the tape they have been playing and pick up another when they return to the rig."

Each tape is 60 minutes long and professionally produced. Copies were made by the LBC Media Services Department and are in color. Funds for the tapes were provided from the 1981 Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering.