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Volunteers Going Overseas

Top Bold Mission Thrust Goal

By Mary Jane Welch

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists are running well ahead of their Bold Mission Goal to increase the number of volunteers assisting missionaries overseas.

The Foreign Mission Board had hoped to send 20,000 volunteers overseas from 1978-82, but instead sent 21,883, surpassing yearly goals for every year since 1979.

"If involvement in various ministries continues to grow at its present rate, the Foreign Mission Board Bold Mission Thrust goal for involving 10,000 lay persons annually in ministries abroad will be achieved in 1994, six years ahead of the 2000 date," said James W. Cecil, who has worked with the Foreign Mission Board's volunteer ministries since 1978.

Bold Mission Thrust is the Southern Baptist Convention effort to share the gospel with all people by the year 2000.

The last decade, including five years before goals were set, also showed rapid growth with the number of volunteers multiplying almost 10 times, from about 650 in 1973 to 5,700 in 1982. The variety of volunteer jobs also has increased. Today, volunteers sew, preach, teach, build, sing, run computers, cook, and practice many other skills alongside missionaries.

Their composite story can be seen in individuals like Clyde Townsend, a Honda dealer from Dothan, Ala. In 1972, when volunteers were few, Townsend rode one of his motorcycles through Mexico and Central America and back again--a 9,182-mile odyssey that lasted 61 days.

His goal, he said, was "to see firsthand what a missionary does" and to help missionaries and national Baptists along the way by doing manual labor for them. Before he returned home, Townsend had ridden down a river in a dugout carved from a 40-foot mahogany log and scooped up turkey stew with a tortilla. He had helped add a roof, windows and doors to an adobe chapel in a remote village and had helped install wiring in another.

On the last day of the journey, Townsend noted in his diary: "I pray that the dependence and closeness that I feel toward God will always be as it is today. I had very little idea of what lay ahead of me two months ago, but now I'm back and I'm a lot wiser than when I left."

Other volunteers also shared cultures as well as their faith. In 1975, pastors and lay persons from Texas, California and Virginia led crusades which resulted in 500 people accepting Christ in Argentina. Evangelist Edgar Jones left his Texas cowboy hat in La Paz's historical museum, and Harold Branch, a pastor, was named an honorary citizen of Parana.

Their campaign, part of Baptist World Alliance's "World Mission of Reconciliation through Jesus Christ" took place during great social and political unrest in Argentina.

"They lived with us, moved among us, ate our food and shared our jokes," commented James Teel, then a missionary in Argentina. "Reconciliation is a big word. Thank God we have been with those who practice it and have known those who experience it."

Many volunteers across the years have done evangelistic work, but their number grew in 1982 when the Foreign Mission Board took full responsibility for partnership evangelism. The program pairs pastor-led teams of lay persons from the United States with churches overseas for campaigns and evangelistic projects.

Some volunteers have gone overseas in spite of personal danger. In 1978, four teams of laymen went to Honduras to fight an outbreak of dengue fever. They volunteered to carry backpack fogging devices to combat the carrier mosquito in regions where trucks couldn't go although they had been told they had a 50 to 70 percent chance of contracting the fever themselves.

The volunteers still go. In 1982, Ella Mae Baker, a teacher, took her hobby overseas. On the Indian Ocean Island of Mauritius, she started an enterprise which promises to employ as many as 350 women in making quilts for an international export market. One year wasn't enough. The program was so successful that she was invited back to help fill orders.

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(Graph mailed to state Baptist papers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press)

WMU Partnership Theme
Lived Out At Glorieta

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By Carol Sisson

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Carolyn Weatherford's actions spoke louder than her words at Glorieta Baptist Assembly during a week of WMU leadership conferences.

As Weatherford, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union, stood outlining a WMU path "characterized by the word partnership" a packed suitcase set in her room ready to leave for the General Council meeting of the Baptist World Alliance in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Weatherford's departure from conferences exploring the importance of partnership of Baptists around the world for a meeting of Baptist representatives from more than 200 countries was a graphic illustration of WMU's commitment for carrying out the conference theme of "Partnership in Prayer and Ministry." Partnership in prayer and ministry is also the WMU emphasis for 1983-84.

The 1,880 conferees registered for WMU week heard missionary testimony, concentrated Bible study and special speakers in addition to attending WMU leadership training conferences.

Using personal examples to illustrate her partnership in prayer topic, Helen Jean Parks, author of *Holding the Ropes*, told the audience Monday night "I spent 14 years as a missionary in the power of independent self before I discovered we were never meant to be independent spiritually. We were meant to be completely dependent on God."

The theme of Annuity Board President Darold Morgan's message in Monday night's patriotic general session was America, Land of Opportunity. "Patriotic emotion is not enough" to truly make America the land of opportunity, Morgan said, calling for involvement in partnership missions, giving, and intercessory prayer of Christians.

Partnership between states, such as Louisiana and Nevada, and between states and countries, such as Texas and Brazil were featured as was WMU's belief in partnership of Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program. A Sunday night offering of \$1,910.91 was given to the Cooperative Program.

Elmer Gobell, executive director of Summer Games Ministries, special ministry of the Home Mission Board, told conferees Monday afternoon "evangelize is the bottom line" of Southern Baptist ministries planned for the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. The second priority, he said, is to provide lasting positive effects in the California area.

Katherine Carpenter, Louisiana WMU director, was Bible teacher for the week. Introducing her, national WMU President Dorothy Sample said she had heard someone say of Carpenter, "That woman done swallowed the Bible and it just rolls out of her mouth."

A first for this year's Glorieta conference was a prayer room opened at all times for meditation and particularly intercessory prayer for missions--updated prayer requests are supplied by the Foreign Mission Board.

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Missionary Couple Denied
Jordanian Residence Permits

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Jordan has again denied residence permits for missionary pharmacist Gary Tapp and his wife, Judy, dashing their hopes for a second term of service.

The Tapps, from Chamblee and St. Simons Islands, Ga., and their two small children are scheduled to return to the United States July 9. They have been living on Cyprus since his original residence permit was revoked and hers was denied in March.

Graydon Hardister, mission business manager, said he believes the permits were probably denied because Jordan is "overrun at this time by pharmacists." He was involved with all interviews related to the applications until he left Jordan to begin furlough in mid-June.

Tapp was supposed to work as supervisor of the central stores and warehouse at Baptist Hospital at Ajloun. The hospital already has a missionary pharmacist, Bernard Fairchild, who is required to work under a Jordanian pharmacist. The mission had planned for Tapp to fill in for him when the Fairchilds begin a one-year furlough next summer.

Hardister said Jordanian authorities questioned whether a Jordanian could not handle the central stores position, which would have involved buying supplies, maintaining inventory and dispensing medicine to the pharmacy and hospital wards.

Three SBC missionaries have received residence permits since March: Geraldene Volkart, a teacher from Boonville, Mo., and medical doctors John and Ruth Roper (Six Mile, S.C. and Vineland, N.J.). The Ropers were returning to Jordan and Volkart is a new appointee.

The Tapps' residence permit problems came up about the same time articles appeared in a Jordan newspaper quoting pro-Israel statements made by New Right religious leaders in the U.S.

While it was "not a good article" for an Islamic country from the mission's standpoint, Hardister said, he received no indication in any of his meetings with Jordanian officials that it was a factor in the consideration of the Tapps' permits.

Questions related to politics or Baptist work never surfaced, said Hardister, from Pine Bluff, Ark. No one ever made anti-American statements.

Missionaries and other non-Jordanians wanting to live and work in Jordan will likely face the same scrutiny as the Tapps in the future, Hardister said. Jordan is reluctant to bring in outsiders to do jobs Jordanians are trained to fill.

Professional unions, though they have little labor negotiation power, are recognized by the government. The mission must get the approval of the doctors' union for each missionary doctor it wants to bring into the country. The mission has a good relationship with the union.

Jordanian officials revoked the residence permit of missionary nurse Ruth Ann McConnell of Hopkinsville, Ky., at the same time they revoked Tapp's. She was in Jordan for language study and now is at the Baptist Hospital in Jibla, Yemen.

The Tapps reapplied for permits in Jordan because that was the only Middle East country that could currently use a pharmacist. The Tapps served their first missionary term at the Baptist Hospital in Gaza, but left with several of the Southern Baptist missionary staff after the hospital's administration was turned over to Anglicans.

Isam Ballenger, director of Southern Baptist mission work for the area, said no other openings for a pharmacist are currently available in any of the overseas countries where the Foreign Mission Board has missionaries.

Baptists Get High Profile In National Polish Media

WARSAW, Poland (BP)--Baptists in Poland received favorable treatment on television and in national publications before Pope John Paul II's highly publicized visit to Poland.

A film developed by the state television authority in Poland, aired during evening hours June 11, featured Baptist church life.

Another film made during Billy Graham's 1978 preaching visit to Poland was shown during prime time by the state broadcast agency June 3. Prepared and released by the Graham organization, the 50-minute telecast included an introductory commentary by Michael Stankiewicz, general secretary of the Polish Baptist Christian Union.

The weekly magazine "Arguments" (the English translation) carried a major feature in its June 5-12 issue entitled "The People Who Baptize." It explained Baptist principles, democratic church organization and New Testament-based beliefs such as baptism, the Lord's Supper, social outlook and moral attitudes.

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Former Nixon Staffer Now
Directs Laity Training Center

By Janice Trusty

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ASHEVILLE, N.C. (BP)--After being immersed for 17 years in the international gloom and doom that eddies through the nation's capital, Harry Dent placed his hope in Christ rather than politics.

Dent, the former special counsel to Richard Nixon who organized White House prayer breakfasts during Nixon's first term in office, explained, "Technically, I was a 'head' Christian since age 13. But I became a 'heart' Christian at 48."

After turning down a job in Nixon's second administration, Dent began a law practice. Through Washington friends, he heard about fellow Nixon staffer Charles Colson's conversion. Unbelieving, Dent arranged to attend the next prayer breakfast. "Seeing the changes in Colson made me begin to meditate on what 'born again' is. I taught Sunday School all my adult life and I didn't know what the term meant," he admitted.

"But," continued Dent, "it was really my daughter who showed me what I was missing. Turning her back on the popular college I had chosen for her, she enrolled instead in Columbia Bible College. I thought she had ruined her life. But watching her let the Holy Spirit fill and lead her life helped put a foundation under me."

In 1981, Dent closed his law practice to prepare for full-time service as a Christian layman. He received a certificate in Bible studies from the Columbia Graduate School of Bible and Missions in 1982.

That spring, Dent was asked to direct the Billy Graham Lay Center near Asheville. In 1981, Graham and his ministry board donated 1,450 acres of mountain property five miles east of downtown Asheville to Columbia Bible College for the center.

The center will provide year-round teaching and training programs for laypersons and pastors, according to Dent. Its programs will stress biblical studies for discipleship, lay ministry and world evangelism.

The lay center grew out of the Ben Lippen Summer Ministries which Dent also directs. This program has been operating 60 years as an arm of Columbia Bible College.

Work on the lay center's facilities is expected to begin late this year. In the meantime, Dent and assistant director Roy King are accumulating "the best resource library possible" by visiting churches and organizations specializing in lay ministry. "We've found there's not a whole lot of material on lay ministry," Dent said. He added the resource cited most often is the Home Mission Board's lay renewal program.

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Dent and Reid Hardin, the HMB's lay renewal director, recognize they each have a fresh approach to the challenge of equipping and motivating laity. "Dent's program fits into our NEST (National Evangelism Support Team) program," Hardin observed. NEST is a network of support for creative approaches to evangelism and ministry.

Hardin has invited Dent and King to participate in an upcoming HMB lay evangelism conference. "Dent has the same dream as the Home Mission Board Evangelism Section," Hardin said. "That dream is to equip the laity."

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Baptist Help Thai Women
Make Money While Waiting

By Carol Collmer McLaren

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BANGKLA, Thailand (BP)--Women in eastern Thailand are making money while they wait.

In rural Thailand, women often have little to do but wait. They wait for rain to start or stop. They wait for plowing and planting seasons to come and go. They wait for crops to grow. Their husbands go off in search of work during these periods. But they must stay home and mind the kids. And while they wait, they earn no money.

But because of a Southern Baptist handicraft project, women in seven rural communities now can use this time to earn an average of \$10 to \$15 a week in Thai Country Trim.

"This does not sound like too much to us with our American standards of living," said Betty Butcher, a missionary who directs the program. "But it means a great deal to these women." One woman has added an indoor kitchen to her house with the money she earned.

Begun primarily with \$5,000 in hunger funds from the Foreign Mission Board, the project originally trained 12 people to make Christmas ornaments. Now nearly 50 women can be found cutting, sewing, stuffing and beading handicrafts at seven spots in the area.

Orders sold in the United States and Thailand include decorative dolls, napkins with rings, place mats, pillows, door decorations, shoulder bags, baby accessories and Christmas ornaments. And the women are regularly adding to the list.

Workers are paid according to what they produce. Orders now are coming in so thick that the project is supporting itself. Any general profit will be turned back into the project for further growth.

Women meet in a mission duplex apartment in Bangkok, in the two rural towns of Chacheungsao and Sa Kaew, in very small farm communities and in areas of isolated houses.

Besides learning new handicraft skills, they share their Christian witness and love. This was one major aim of the project when it began in December.

Thai Country Trim was first conceived by Khun Sangdueng, an evangelist at Bangkok Baptist Hospital. Attending church far out in the country, she realized women were unable to make ends meet. Often things like medicines and things for growing feet went unbought.

The hospital evangelism department, the Thailand Baptist Mission and Immanuel Baptist Church developed the project with her.

Workers frequently tell Mrs. Butcher and Khun Aranee, Thai work supervisor, what the project has meant to them, spiritually and physically. One of the young women used to take her two-year-old out into the hot field with her. She worked so hard that she often battled illness. "I'm so grateful the Lord has sent this work to me," she told Mrs. Butcher.

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(McLaren is special projects missionary with her husband at the Bangkok Baptist Hospital. They are natives of Oklahoma City.)

(Photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press)