



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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'El Nino' Thrashes South America; Baptists Work To Relieve Suffering

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Months of rain and flooding have cut a swath of destruction and human suffering through South America that Southern Baptist missionaries and local Baptists are struggling to relieve.

The flooding killed more than 100 southern Brazilians, drove some 350,000 from their homes in July, left just as many Argentines homeless, caused the deaths of nearly 1,000 Peruvians over six months and wreaked havoc in Paraguay, Ecuador, Bolivia and Uruguay.

Many scientists and meteorologists are blaming the destruction on "El Nino"--"The Christ Child"--a normally gentle Pacific Ocean current that has turned savage this year. Some say last year's El Chichon volcano eruption in Mexico caused the freakish change in the current's impact on weather.

The Foreign Mission Board has dispatched more than \$634,000 to the seven countries for purchase and distribution of food, clothing, medicine and other supplies. Funds also have financed temporary shelters and church repairs.

Floods devastated three states in southern Brazil, where missionaries are working with Brazilian Baptists to distribute food and supplies to 1,500 families, including some stranded in areas still reachable only by mission plane. Missionaries have contributed more than \$1,000 of their own money to the relief effort.

Flooding in six northeastern provinces of Argentina "has turned into both a natural and a national disaster," according to missionaries. About 350,000 people have abandoned their homes and towns or have been evacuated by the government. Water has stayed high in many areas and there is talk of permanently abandoning or relocating some cities.

"The picture is that of roads and bridges washed out, homes and factories and farmlands being flooded, precarious housing, widespread disease and unemployment at an all-time high," says an Argentine Baptist Mission report. Argentine home missionaries, local Baptists and seminary student volunteers have distributed more than 800,000 pounds of food, milk, clothing, shoes and medicine paid for by Southern Baptist relief and hunger funds.

In northern Peru, 12 feet of rain in six months dissolved adobe homes and roadways and temporarily turned that part of the country into "one huge lake," in the words of one missionary. In Peru's richest agricultural region, Piura department, rains destroyed 80 percent of an anticipated bumper crop. The department's capital, also called Piura, with 250,000 residents, was isolated from land communications for four months. Missionaries and Peruvian Baptists teamed up to provide medicine, temporary shelter and food in the hard-hit Piura and Chiclayo areas.

Fourteen mudslides destroyed the chapel and two walls and dumped three-and-a-half feet of mud on the Baptist encampment at Santa Eulalia, in the mountains east of Lima. Before the camp was damaged, Baptists sheltered and fed 50 refugee families whose homes had been destroyed.

The Foreign Mission Board released \$42,400 to pay the air freight to Ecuador of more than \$250,000 worth of antibiotics, cold and cough medicines, anti-parasite and trauma medicines provided by MAP (Medical Assistance Program) International. The free medicines were distributed to flood victims through an Ecuadorean evangelical committee.

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In Guayaquil, Ecuador, \$40,000 in South rn Baptist relief funds helped build a bridge, repair hom s and provide drainage pip s and badly needed landfill. Many of the materials were used in a ghetto area of 300,000 people. The assistance helped earn Ecuadorean Baptists a reputation for practicing what they preach, according to missionary Ed Ables.

In Paraguay, more than a year of chronic flooding has plagued city and countryside alike, drowning crops and driving thousands of people into refugee camps. Some sizable communities have been evacuated permanently.

Missionaries and Paraguayan Baptists have distributed food, medicine, supplies and plastic roofing in several areas, particularly among the Maka Indians, who lost their homes and hunting grounds to flooding. Many of the Maka now huddle in a makeshift camp near Asuncion, Paraguay's capital.

Missionaries also have aided the Lengua Indians, whose crops have been destroyed. Lengua children are "very malnourished," reports missionary physician Bill Skinner. He hopes \$20,000 in Southern Baptist hunger relief funds will help keep them alive until another crop can be harvested, possibly by the end of this year.

Skinner and missionary colleague Tom Kent have led medical teams into flooded areas r gularly, treating patients and dispensing medicine. Baptist medical resident Gabriel Rodriguez recently treated 295 patients in two days in the Concepcion area.

Flood victims receiving aid respond to evangelistic witness, Skinner says. Of some 2,000 people aid d in the city of Encarnacion, about 140 attend worship services and more than 75 have made professions of faith in Christ.

In addition to the South American destruction, "El Nino" has been held responsible for coastal flooding in California and floods in the Mississippi Valley, 19 heavy tropical storms in the Pacific during 1982, drought in the Philippines and Hawaii and Australia's worst drought.

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Hee Haw To Pay
Tribute To Nutt

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A September broadcast of "Hee Haw," the country entertainment show, will feature a tribute to Grady Nutt, the show's "Prime Minister of Humor" who died in a plane crash Nov. 23, 1982.

Darrell Adams, a Southern Baptist singer/songwriter from Louisville, Ky., will perform "In the Sweet Bye and Bye" on the Sept. 17 broadcast of the show in memory of two "Hee Haw" cast members who died during the past year: Nutt and Jimmy Riddle.

Adams sang the same song at a memorial service for Nutt in Louisville following the performer's death and was invited to sing on the show's season opener by a "Hee Haw" producer.

Nutt was returning to his Louisville home from Cullman, Ala., where he had spoken to y uth at First Baptist Church, when the private plane in which he was riding crashed. Two pilots also died in the mishap.

"Grady made everyone feel like they w re special," said Adams, a friend of Nutt's. "He was a giver. His was not a standard ministry but an effective one. Southern Baptists have an empty spot."

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Parks: Lack Of Personnel
Means Unreached World

By Gail Rothwell

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--"The only thing keeping us from winning the world to Christ is a lack of people willing to go," R. Keith Parks told more than 2,800 students attending the 30th annual Student Conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

Challenging students to catch a vision for a lost world, Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va., said, "If you are going to be disciples of Jesus Christ, then you are going to have to be concerned about the world."

He noted even though Southern Baptists have committed themselves to a Bold Mission Thrust goal of reaching the world with the gospel of Christ by the year 2000, "We are still only sending five percent of our trained people to save 95 percent of the world," he said.

Parks said statistics show overseas countries are open and responsive to the gospel, but there are usually four times as many requests for missionaries as there are persons to fill the positions.

Most Christians are afraid to let go of the comfortable life they lead, Parks believes. "We hold on to what we've got, afraid to sacrifice anything for Christ. We play our little religious games and aren't interested in anything outside the walls of our comfortable church or Baptist Student Union building."

Parks noted the average Southern Baptist church spends 92 percent of its gifts on itself and "while we are busy holding on, the world is literally dying and going to hell."

Challenging students to die to self and live for Christ, Parks said, "Only you can choose to let Jesus Christ live in you. Satan can't keep you from it, but God won't make you do it."

In addition to Parks, speakers at the conference sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's national student ministries, were Ralph Neighbour Jr., director of TOUCH Ministries, Houston, Texas, and author of "The Survival Kit for New Christians" and James Flamming, pastor of First Baptist Church, Richmond.

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Baptists Urged To Launch
Surprising Peace Initiatives

By Tim Fields

Baptist Press
8/23/83

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--The world is on the brink of nuclear suicide and Southern Baptists must respond with surprising initiatives for peace, participants at a Christian Life Conference were told.

Glen Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., said historically Christian peacemakers have embraced the Christian ethic of either a just-war theory or pacifism.

"I believe there is a third Christian ethic for peacemaking that goes far beyond the other two," he said. "The third ethic is biblically based and Christ-centered and can be supported both by just-war theorists and pacifists."

The third option, Stassen said, is for Christians to take surprising and transforming initiatives for peacemaking.

The pattern for these initiatives for peace begins with Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, Stassen said. "Too many people see the Sermon on the Mount as a set of high ideals far higher than our practice, or a set of hard demands far stricter than we are willing to follow," he explained. "The result is a wide gap between Jesus and us, a guilt trip for us and an ignoring of Jesus' teaching."

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"The Sermon on the Mount is not a set of high ideals," he said, "It is the announcement of how God is now acting to deliver us from our bondage and how we can participate in what he is doing to deliver us."

"God is doing something radically new and we are to participate in this new action by loving our enemies.

He said Jesus gave four important authoritative teachings related to a strategy for Christian peacemaking.

"First, Jesus said we should take a surprising, transforming initiative to love our neighbors," Stassen said. "Jesus said, 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; and if he insults you by striking you on the cheek, turn the other cheek.'

"These negative commands do not mean we are not to resist evil. Jesus certainly resisted evil but he did not develop a vengeful spirit. Jesus always emphasized positive initiatives."

Stassen said the late President Anwar Sadat of Egypt used the ethic of a surprising peace initiative when he became the first Arab leader to go to Jerusalem to see Prime Minister Menachem Begin and the Jewish Parliament.

"Christians need to practice this kind of biblical peacemaking in their own relationships," he said, "and they need to press their own governments not to get in a self-righteous style of international relations but to take positive, transforming initiatives for peace."

The second peacemaking teaching is to avoid self-righteously judging others and putting a stumbling block in their path.

"Christians especially should see through the self-righteous declarations of their governments and demand real and serious talking and seeking of agreement rather than merely talking for propaganda advantage," he said.

Jesus' third principle of peacemaking is to "love your enemies, pray for your persecutors and bless those who persecute you. When you love your enemies and pray for them it does not mean that you favor what they do that is evil. It means you identify with their good interests," he said.

"The Soviet Union has an interest in not being destroyed by nuclear war, in not being subjected to destabilizing and dangerous nuclear buildup, and in not having their economy stagnated by the huge economic costs of such a buildup," Stassen explained. "These are interests we can identify with."

Ron Sisk, director of the Christian Life Commission's programs of support for peace with justice, told conference participants that Southern Baptists have recently set the stage for such peace initiatives based on prayer. "The Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Pittsburgh this year voted to begin observing a convention-wide Day of Prayer for World Peace on the first Sunday in August beginning in 1984," he said. "This day on our official denominational calendar will focus Southern Baptist attention on the most powerful force for peace known to humankind--the power of prayer."

Jesus' fourth strategy for peace, Stassen said, is for Christians to associate readily with the poor and the oppressed. "If we truly fellowship with the lowly and oppressed we will soon be working for human rights and against world hunger and by doing so we will be participating in God's peacemaking in the world.

Jesus' ethic of peacemaking can become a special contribution from Southern Baptists to the world, Stassen said. "Our Baptist heritage suggests we will not merely be tools of the establishment but will support initiatives that have a transforming impact on the state.

"The ethic of surprising, transforming peacemaking initiatives is a practical and preventive ethic for all areas of life. Christians may practice this ethic and may push their governments to practice it," Stassen stressed.

Husband, Wife Receive
Doctorates At Baylor

WACO, Texas (BP)--Lonnie and Karen Hayter became Dr. Hayter and Dr. Hayter Aug. 13.

He received a doctor of philosophy degree in religion, and she received a doctorate in educational psychology during commencement at Baylor University.

"We didn't plan it this way, it just happened," said Hayter. "We both started at different times, and it just seemed to fall into place." Mrs. Hayter said, "Getting the degrees at the same time gave us a good concept of what the other one was going through. It gave us an idea of the stress level that the other one was under.

"It has been a painful and growing experience and has strengthened our marriage," she said. "It tested our limits. Although I could not have done it alone, I do not want to do it again this way."

Hayter, pastor of Live Oak Baptist Church in Gatesville, Texas, began work on his doctorate in 1980. From 1978-80, he was associate dean for student development in the Division of Student Affairs at Baylor. He served as director of freshman programs for the Baptist Student Union at Baylor from 1969-73 and as BSU director from 1973-78. His bachelor's degree is from Baylor.

Mrs. Hayter, a psychologist at the Texas Department of Corrections in Gatesville, earned a bachelor and masters degree from Baylor. Before beginning work on her doctorate in 1978, she taught educational psychology at Baylor.

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Filipino Pastor Reaching
Thousands Through VBS

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TARLAC, Philippines (BP)--Twenty-two churches and preaching stations have been started in five years using a plan of witnessing to children and adults through Vacation Bible Schools.

The plan was developed by pastor Abraham Magtanong of First Baptist Church, Tarlac, who hopes to plant new churches in each of the 544 districts of the province.

Working with seven other churches in the Tarlac Baptist Association, Magtanong leads teams of workers to set up morning Bible school sessions at various locations.

Workers then visit the children's homes in afternoons, and preparations are made for Bible studies or preaching services in the area during evenings.

This year during a six-week period workers conducted 36 sessions of Bible school and started 88 regular Bible studies. They report 22,530 people were told about Christ and 2,445 asked for baptism, accepted Christ or committed themselves to special service.

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