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84-6

**Missionaries Show Resilience
During Tough Year In Lebanon**

By Bill Webb

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)--It's been a tough year for Southern Baptist missionaries in Lebanon.

Continued and constant warfare has required the missionaries to have the resilience they have long admired in their Lebanese neighbors.

First-termer Jim Bethea, accompanied by two Lebanese Christians, demonstrated it on one of his early visits to Sidon, in south Lebanon.

A bullet smashed through his windshield, barely missing him. Minutes later, he witnessed to the young militiaman who had fired the shot.

The bullet had been intended for another vehicle, not Bethea's car. But the stray shot created an opening for him and his companions to share their faith with several militiamen.

"The people here say it's been the worst year since the fighting started in 1975," said mission chairman Ed Nicholas, from Centerville, Mich., a veteran of nearly 28 years in the Middle East.

Shells falling as frequently as every five seconds repeatedly drove the six missionary families at Monsouriyeh to basement shelters. The town, on a hillside overlooking west Beirut, is the center for Baptist ministries to the Arab world. Baptists operate a seminary, publications office and recording studio.

Monsouriyeh also is a base for Lebanese Army artillery, making the area a target for Druse shells from across the valley. "We have learned that the noise of big guns being discharged is more deafening but not as frightening as shells exploding on landing," Nicholas and his wife, Anne, from Fort Worth, Texas, wrote in a recent newsletter.

Neither missionaries nor Lebanese Baptists take unnecessary risks, but shelling usually fails to keep members from church, Nicholas said in a telephone conversation.

"The church we belong to in the mountain town of Bikfaya is filled every Sunday and many have come to the Lord in recent days," the Nicholases wrote. "Everyone here thinks seriously, unsatisfied with superficial cliches. Believers feel the necessity of spending much time in prayer and study in order to receive wisdom for effective witness."

Baptists have been among civilian casualties. A couple from the Shouf Mountain resort town of Bhamdoun, members of Ras Beirut Baptist Church, were killed in fighting in September. Three of their young sons are still missing.

Other Baptists have been among those injured and kidnapped.

"The ominous events in this country the past year have given all of us serious doubts about what the future of this country is going to be," Nicholas said. Then he quickly added, "But you know, we are optimists and we keep looking up."

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Missionaries demonstrated their optimism by staying at their posts during the troubled year. Except for scheduled leaves, none returned to the United States. They carried out their job assignments and made themselves available to minister in refugee camps and to neighbors who suffered losses.

Baptist ministries held their own during 1983.

Arab Baptist Theological Seminary maintained the same enrollment as the year before--eight students--and amazingly didn't miss a class during the fall term despite the disconcerting sounds of war outside.

The Arab Baptist Publication Center continued its work, but had to cope with crippled mail service within Lebanon and limited air shipments to other countries because of airport closings.

"Right now we have thousands of books in the hall and in the office that need to be shipped to Egypt and the people in Egypt need the books. But the airport is closed," said publications director Frances Fuller, from Wynne, Ark.

Perhaps the most significant development in the publication center's work was the decision to produce a Middle East Sunday School and Bible study curriculum. Despite some of the heaviest fighting in over a year, 20 people converged in Lebanon in August for a basic course in curriculum writing.

Baptist Publications began publishing a quarterly magazine called "Al-Manaa'ir," the word used for churches in the book of Revelation. Lebanese pastor Jeryies Delleh completed the first translation of MasterLife notebooks into Arabic just in time for their use in a conference in Nicosia, Cyprus, in early November.

International radio broadcasts prompted 300 letters a month, with 20 or 30 of the writers telling how they accepted Christ after hearing the gospel. A few years ago, only one or two responses came in each year.

Beirut Baptist School, in the heart of west Beirut, didn't open for its fall term until Nov. 2, but drew nearly 800 students. Violence in the city and strikes called by various factions forced director Jim Ragland, a 30-year veteran from Wetumka, Okla., to call off classes from time to time.

The school was damaged Aug. 25 when a French ammunition truck blew up next door, breaking windows and damaging an 8-foot concrete wall alongside the building.

A direct hit on the sixth-floor apartment occupied by Nancie Wingo, from San Antonio, Texas, and Ruth Spence, Byron, Ark., gouged a hole in their wall and damaged their balcony.

The teaching staff at the Beirut School was bolstered with the arrival near year's end of new appointee Russell Futrell, from Pineville, La., a former journeyman to Lebanon.

The year was a big one for Jim and Stephanie Bethea, from Memphis, Tenn., and Waverly, Pa., who celebrated the birth of their third son, Benjamin, in June. They relocated in Sidon later in the year to become the first Southern Baptist missionaries to establish residence and an ongoing work in southern Lebanon.

"Again and again we were confronted with hostility, bitterness and suspicion from the people in Sidon," Bethea wrote after preliminary visits to the youth. "Yet we saw the miracle of God's love melting opposition and turning every incident into an opportunity for witness."

Missionaries are quick to point out they are not alone in their commitment to Lebanon.

"People here are anxious to spread the word of God," Nicholas said. "They are working. But we need civil security here that the work may go on in a better way."

"Pray for our president and our leaders and for the safety of the people, that they may lead a normal life."

HMB Names 67 Persons
To Mission Posts

By Patti Stephenson

ATLANTA (BP)--Four missionaries, two missionary associates, and 59 persons receiving pastoral aid were approved by the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board during its January session.

The committee also elected James L. Hill of Kansas City, Mo., as associate director in the church extension division, and Tommy D. Eggleston of Conyers, Ga., as a national consultant for special mission ministries.

Appointed missionaries were Stephen and Carolyn Cloues of Birmingham, Ala., and Fayiz and Emilia Saknini of Smyrna, Ga. New missionary associates were Rodney and Camille Minor of Norcross, Ga.

Hill succeeds Jerry B. Graham, who is now assistant to the vice president of missions. He will focus on church starting in the eastern United States.

Hill has been director of church extension and language missions for Blue River-Kansas City Baptist Association since 1979. He was a church planter apprentice in Blue Springs, Mo., and pastor of churches in Iberia and Nelson, Mo. He graduated from Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, Mo., and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

Eggleston will provide expertise in the areas of special events and creative arts for the HMB. Since 1981, he has been as a research assistant at the HMB and as minister of music at Northminster Baptist Church in Conyers. He has composed numerous anthems published by Broadman Press. He is a graduate of William Carey College, Hattiesburg, Miss., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

The Cloues will remain in Birmingham as he becomes director of church extension. He had been a church extension and planning consultant in Birmingham since 1978.

He is a graduate of Worcester (Mass.) Polytech Institute, Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta; and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. She is a graduate of Texas Christian University, Fort Worth.

The Sakninis remain in the Atlanta area as he becomes a catalytic language missionary. Since 1980, he has served as a general language missionary for the Georgia Baptist Convention and was a missionary to the Lebanese in Atlanta 1976-80. He also has been pastor of churches in Tripoli and Beirut, Lebanon, and is a graduate of the Arabic Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon. She is employed by J.P. Allen in Atlanta.

The Minors will be church planter apprentices in Norcross, Ga. He is former associate pastor of West Memorial Baptist Church in Houston, and former associate director of Reach Out Ministries in Atlanta. He served as a Home Mission Board evangelism intern in Atlanta 1974-76. He graduated from Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., and Southwestern seminary.

Camille Minor is a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Texas. She is a former secretary for Dimensions in Christian Living in Fort Worth and served as a public relations writer at Southwestern seminary.

Approved for church pastoral aid were: Alvin and Donniella Auch, Half-Moon Bay, Calif.; Allen and Sharon Barnhill, Cheyenne Wells, Colo.; Gerald and Kay Bontrager, Mentor, Ohio; Danny and Mary Evans, Traverse City, Mich.; Michael and Margot Fry, Metamora, Ill.; Wesley and Vicki Gillespie, Dwight, Ill.; Eric and Carol Hatch, Rohnert Park, Calif.; Russell and Pamela Johnson, Riverside, Mo.;

Cecil and Cherly Jones, Springhill, Kan.; Jack and Lisa Jones, Lake Isabella, Calif.; Paul and Tonya Logue, Lafayette, Colo.; George and Joan McRoberts, Lancaster, Ohio; Clifford and Josephin Marity, Ontario, Canada; Earl and Connie Morley, Saratoga, Wyo.; Danny and Coleen Owen, DeSoto, Kan.; Clifford and Lynda Ramsey, Seneca, Kan.;

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Robert and Deborah Shelton, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Dean Schreiber, LaGrange, Ohio; Larry and Marilyn Stewart, Columbus, Ind.; Paul and Lisa Temple, Norwalk, Iowa; Bob and Lorraine Tompkins, Belcamp, Md.; Larry and Lynn Wartsbaugh, Thomasboro, Ill.; Troy and Bobbie Wilkinson, Phoenix, Ariz.; Raymond and Scotty Wilson, Williamsburg, Ky.; Robert and Helen Ysennagger, Brandon, Manitoba, Canada; Randolph and Patricia McCollum, Hartsville, Kan.; Steven and Sheila Holbrook, Bend, Ore., and Charles and Tommie Walker, Columbus, Ohio.

Approved for language pastoral aid were: Roland and Rachel Lopez, Tucson, Ariz.; and Thira and Montira Siengsukon, Prairie Village, Kan.

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Navajo, Hopi Indians
Lose High Court Bid

By Stan Hastey

Baptist Press
1/11/84

WASHINGTON (BP)--For the second time in its current term the U.S. Supreme Court has turned aside claims by American Indian tribes that development of recreational facilities on land they consider sacred violates their free exercise of religion.

In an unsigned order issued Jan. 9, the Supreme Court let stand rulings by a lower court in cases brought by Navajo and Hopi Indians to prevent expansion of a ski resort in Coconino National Forest near Flagstaff, Ariz.

Attorneys for the Navajos and Hopis had argued in legal papers filed with the high court that the federal government, by approving the ski resort expansion, unconstitutionally burdened the Indian tribes' religious beliefs and practices. They also contended the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 requires the government to protect Indians' religious freedom on the same basis it protects that of all other citizens.

But in a pair of rulings last year, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia held that the 1978 law, while requiring the government to consider Indian religious claims, does not require deferring to those claims in all instances.

The high court's refusal to disturb those rulings is consistent with a similar action last November in which Sioux and Cheyenne Indians failed to convince the court to review South Dakota's development of a state park on sacred land.

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Dunn Pledges To Fight
New U.S.-Vatican Ties

By Stan Hastey and Larry Chesser

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WASHINGTON (BP)--President Reagan's appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican will be fought in Congress and challenged in court if necessary, according to James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

In the aftermath of the joint Vatican-U.S. announcement Jan. 10 that full diplomatic relations will be restored after 116 years, Dunn said: "We are not giving up. The president's action is not the final word."

Dunn said BJCPA will seek to rally opposition to the confirmation of William A. Wilson, the longtime Reagan friend and California real estate developer designated by the president as ambassador. The Baptist Joint Committee also will oppose a request by the State Department that Congress reprogram the fiscal 1984 budget to permit funding for the new diplomatic relationship, he said.

If those efforts fail, Dunn added, the Baptist Joint Committee will support a legal challenge in federal court. Americans United for Separation of Church and State announced Jan. 10 it will file suit challenging the action if efforts to derail it in Congress fall short.

A likely leader of congressional opposition appears to be Democratic presidential hopeful Ernest F. Hollings of South Carolina, who said Reagan's action "is a violation of the First Amendment and sets a bad precedent of policy."

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Hollings, ranking minority member of the Senate subcommittee where the State Department reprogramming request will be debated, declared "sending a diplomatic representative to the Holy See constitutes the recognition of one religion over all others."

But Sen. Richard G. Lugar, R-Ind., sponsor of the 1983 amendment which cleared the way for Reagan's action, hailed the move: "The Vatican is a vital focus of international affairs, and it is fitting that we should have an ~~ambassador~~ full-fledged ambassador representing our interests there."

A key dispute in the ~~upcoming~~ debate on Capitol Hill undoubtedly will be the sharply differing views between the ~~administration~~ and its opponents over the question of whether the new arrangement violates the constitutionally mandated separation of church and state.

Presidential spokesman Larry Speakes and State Department spokesman John Hughes insisted repeatedly the move did not violate the First Amendment's ban on an establishment of religion.

"It's not a violation of church and state," Hughes told reporters, "because for a long time we have recognized the Holy See as having an international personality distinct from the Roman Catholic Church."

In a White House briefing Speakes likewise discounted the argument the move improperly entangles church and state, saying instead Reagan merely responded to an opportunity provided him by the congressional action lifting the 1867 ban.

The U.S. should maintain diplomatic ties, Speakes said, because "the Holy See is an international focal point of diplomatic contact" and because "the United States holds Pope John Paul II in high esteem." He added: "We respect the great moral and political influence which he and the Vatican exercise throughout the world. We admire the courageous stance he takes in defense of Western values."

In announcing his agency's intention to fight the new relationship in Congress and the courts, however, Dunn reiterated his view the basic issue in the controversy is separation of church and state. "For the administration to pretend the naming of an ambassador to a church has nothing to do with religion is a ludicrous leap of logic," he declared.

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New WMU Building
Cornerstone Filled

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1/11/84

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Almost 300 people gathered Jan. 8 in the partially completed national headquarters building of Woman's Missionary-Southern Baptist Convention for cornerstone ceremonies.

Climax of the 20-minute program was the placement of historical materials in a copper time capsule located in the floor of the lobby. The cornerstone was placed atop this capsule.

State WMU and WMU-SBC prepared boxes to be included in the capsule. Each state WMU box held a copy of that state's history, a list of WMU staff, a list of missionaries currently serving from that state and any other materials indicative of their role in WMU. Their boxes were presented in the order the states came into WMU.

The boxes were presented by state WMU presidents and executive directors in Birmingham for the 1984 executive board meeting. In exchange, WMU-SBC presented each state with a brick from the new building.

WMU-SBC placed manuals, current magazines, a copy of the WMU history, organizational chart and list of employees and copies of all ceremonies related to relocation in the capsule.

Representatives from the Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va., the Home Mission Board, Atlanta, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., attended.

WMU will occupy the new building this spring.

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