



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 16, 1984

84-25

Missionaries Reevaluating Decisions to Stay in Lebanon

By Bill Webb

LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)--Fourteen Southern Baptist missionaries still in Lebanon are reevaluating their decisions to stay in that war-torn country.

Veteran missionaries Ed and Anne Nicholas arrived by commercial boat in Cyprus Feb. 15 with the news that fellow missionaries in Beirut were reevaluating their decisions to remain in light of intensified fighting, especially in the east Beirut area of Monsouriyeh.

The Nicholases, from Centerville, Mich., and Fort Worth, Texas, had been trying to leave Beirut since Feb. 12, but rough seas had prevented their departure.

"We had made the decision to come," said Nicholas, "but I was about ready to back out" when conditions seemed to be settling down Feb. 12. But then about 1 a.m. Feb. 14 "everything broke loose," he said. "We could hear rockets whistling overhead."

Pete Dunn, from Mobile, Ala., reported by phone Feb. 14 to Finlay Graham things were as bad as they had been since the beginning of the civil war in 1975. Graham is the Foreign Mission Board's associate for the Middle East. Dunn's wife and daughter evacuated with nine other mission personnel and children Feb. 10.

Arab Baptist Theological Seminary, where classes had continued despite the fighting, closed Feb. 14. The school had been scheduled to close for the semester later that week, following exams. But the decision came to cancel exams when fighting intensified in the Monsouriyeh area, where the seminary is located.

"We didn't have exams because things were just too tense to have the students there," said Mrs. Nicholas. The seminary faculty and administration were concerned about the students' safety and their ability to concentrate on exams with such conditions, she said.

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'Disfellowship' Motion Fails In Chicago

By Glenn Hewitt

Baptist Press
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CHICAGO (BP)--A motion to disfellowship Cornell Baptist Church from the Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association was defeated in a called meeting of the association Feb. 13 by a vote of 210-113. The motion was a result of Cornell's action last summer to call Susan Lockwood Wright as pastor.

More than 400 persons attended the meeting; fewer than 200 attended the annual associational meeting this fall.

Supporters of the motion argued the issue is one of biblical authority. John Jordan, pastor of First Baptist Church, Midlothian, brought the motion because he felt the Cornell church had deviated from "clear" New Testament teachings concerning the role of women.

By calling a woman pastor, he maintained, Cornell itself has broken fellowship with other churches in the association.

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Larry Phillips, pastor of First Baptist Church, Olympia Fields, prepared a written statement which declared "the issue is purely and clearly whether we really believe the Bible is the plenary, verbal, inerrant, inspired word of God." God's revelation, he declared, does not allow women to serve the function of elder, bishop or pastor.

Other messengers disagreed as to the issue at stake. Everett Anthony, director of missions for the Chicago association, spoke against the motion. Anthony argued Baptists were united around missions, but disagreed on points of theology. Theological differences, he said, could be a bar to fellowship. "It may not be wise to exercise that option," he added.

A statement prepared by the Cornell church explaining its position on the biblical issue was available at the meeting. Wright shared her testimony with the messengers, noting she has been a Southern Baptist all her life, has been active in Southern Baptist organizations and has been educated in Southern Baptist institutions. She said she had received a call from God and had an urgent desire to obey that call.

Other opponents of the motion to disfellowship mentioned Cornell's involvement in the association and mission support for more than 30 years.

Some noted biblical arguments also had been used to support slavery and to deny rights to black congregations. Still others urged the decision be left to God.

Barney Rivers, lay leader in the association for many years, read several verses from I Timothy 3 and asked, "Should we exclude every church whose pastor is pretentious or unloving, or greedy for gain or not hospitable? Why, we'd be doing this all the time."

Following the vote, moderator Ron Houston, pastor of Northside Baptist Church, Chicago, called on all present to be conciliatory. He urged Baptists to continue the issue of women in ministry, but suggested missions should be the top priority.

Jordan and Phillips stated they would not initiate further action to discipline Cornell church. Neither man could predict whether churches would leave the association over the issue.

Wright expressed relief after the vote. "We want to stay in the association," she said. "I'm hopeful, but I'm just not sure what will happen."

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(Hewitt is a student at the University of Chicago Divinity School and a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.)

Missions Shortfall Expected
Unless Basic Giving Increases

By Mary Jane Welch

Baptist Press
2/16/84

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will have to cut its budget by nearly \$2.8 million before the end of the year unless Cooperative Program giving picks up, says the Foreign Mission Board's treasurer.

Giving is up 6.51 percent over 1982-83, but the convention operating budget calls for an 11.91 percent increase, reported Carl Johnson in the February meeting of the Foreign Mission Board. Because the Foreign Mission Board has been allocated 50 percent of the convention's basic operating budget, its budget will have to be cut 50 cents for every dollar that falls short, he warned.

"We are always alert to a possible shortfall in the Lottie Moon Christmas offering," he said, "but the possibility of a shortfall in the SBC basic operating budget adds a new dimension to budget planning."

Johnson noted two states, Arkansas and Florida, are setting the pace in giving this fiscal year by increasing Cooperative Program gifts to convention causes by 15.32 percent and 23.56 percent, respectively.

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Other financial news was more encouraging. A \$1 million gift for the board's missionary learning center from J. Harwood and Louise Blinks Cochrane of Richmond, Va., moved total gifts for the center to \$13.5 million--less than \$2 million from the \$15.1 million goal. The gift is the Cochranes' fifth to the learning center.

Workers are putting final touches on construction of the 20-building complex near Richmond on land donated by the Cochranes. The first career missionary orientation at the center is scheduled to begin April 9.

Board members heard Southern Baptists gave a record \$6.1 million for relief ministries during 1983 and more than \$7.2 million was allocated. During December and January, more than \$920,000, including \$461,136 to initiate a major developmental project in the Moretan area of Togo, was allocated.

The Moretan area, where North Carolina Baptists will carry out a three-year partnership missions project, had no Christian witness until Baptists held crusades there last fall. Plans call for agriculture, community health, vocational training, water development and road and bridge improvements, as well as evangelism.

Other relief releases for West Africa financed yellow fever vaccination in Ghana and Upper Volta to help curb the worst outbreak of the disease since the 1930s, when an effective yellow fever vaccine was developed. Latest reports from Ghana, where the epidemic was centered, indicate few new cases are being reported. In early February, the Foreign Mission Board also allocated money for 250,000 doses of vaccine for Mali to help prevent the spread of the disease to that country.

In a related action, the Foreign Mission Board approved early release of 1983 Lottie Moon gifts to purchase a fuel tanker for use in hauling diesel fuel and gasoline in Ghana, where fuel shortages forced the Baptist Medical Centre to close during the yellow fever epidemic.

A tractor-trailer rig purchased last year for grain distribution will be used to pull the 25,000-liter tank with compartments for both diesel fuel and gasoline. The fuel will be used to help distribute rice and blankets provided by Arkansas Baptists and to keep the hospital open.

The allocation for the tanker was only part of \$596,807 released early from 1983 Lottie Moon funds, mostly to cover capital expenditures while the American dollar is strong and will buy more overseas.

Also related to human needs, Don Turner, missionary to Brazil, was announced as consultant for community development. He replaces Timothy Brendle, who recently was named director of the new missionary learning center. Turner, a native of Caro, Mich., has been coordinator of disaster and hunger relief for the North Brazil mission since 1975 and was chaplain at the goodwill center in Recife for six years. He also has been professor at the Seminary of Christian Educators and part-time professor at the North Brazil Baptist Theological Seminary.

Turner is a graduate of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn.; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

In other action, the board approved recommendations for providing more opportunities for college and seminary students, including those not connected with Baptist Student Unions, to become involved in overseas missions.

In outlining the program, Harlan Spurgeon, vice president for human resources, noted about one-third of all active missionaries were involved in student missions before becoming missionaries.

Two missionary children, Hugh and Debbie Pinkston Redmon, were among the 16 career missionaries and two missionary associates named during the meeting. The two, who were appointed to Venezuela, are the children of Don and Jo Redmon, missionaries to Costa Rica, and Ed and Greta Pinkston, missionaries to Ivory Coast. The board also reappointed four missionaries and named 16 Mission Service Corps personnel and two medical receptors.

Christian Life Commission
To Honor Hatfield At Seminar

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Veteran U.S. Sen. Mark O. Hatfield will receive the 1984 Distinguished Service Award from the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Hatfield (R-Ore.), a Southern Baptist, will be honored by the social concerns agency on the opening day of its national seminar March 26-28 in Washington, D.C.

Christian Life Commission Executive Director Foy Valentine described the legislator as "a working Christian, a Baptist deacon, and an active churchman." The commission chose Hatfield for the award, Valentine added, "because he is a towering public figure who has been characterized and whose career has been distinguished by character, integrity, vision, courage and effectiveness."

Hatfield, first elected to the Senate in 1966, is the 17th person to receive the award, instituted in 1965. Last year's award went to evangelist Billy Graham.

The senator also joins a line-up of more than a dozen speakers who will address issues of Christian citizenship during the three-day meeting at the Twin Bridges Marriott.

Speakers include a trio of Hatfield's colleagues: Sen. Robert Dole (R-Kan.), Rep. Claude Pepper (D-Fla.) and House majority leader Jim Wright (D-Texas). Collectively, the three legislators represent more than 60 years of Congressional service.

Among other speakers will be theologians Bill Hendricks of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., and Harvey Cox of Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass., pollster George Gallup Jr., physician Helen Caldicott of Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament, Boston, Mass., and church historian Pablo Deiros of Argentina.

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SEEDS Co-Founder Resigns To Direct
Atlanta Soup Kitchen

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DECATUR, Ga. (BP)--Andy Loving, a co-founder of SEEDS magazine and hunger educational ministry of Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga., has resigned as administrative director of SEEDS to become a street minister at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Atlanta.

Loving, 37, will run the city's largest soup kitchen which feeds 400 a day five days a week. He will also develop other ministries to Atlanta's poor and homeless.

A graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., Loving helped found SEEDS seven years ago with SEEDS editor Gary Gunderson. He has been an outspoken advocate of hunger causes among Southern Baptists.

Loving noted his experience at SEEDS led to his decision to seek "more direct involvement" in hunger ministry. "At SEEDS, we've learned if the church is really going to respond to the hungry, church people need to be in touch with the poor," he said.

In announcing his resignation to the Oakhurst congregation, Loving said, "I am going to work for an Episcopal church but I am still a Baptist." He said he would remain a member of Oakhurst and continue to speak on hunger issues as a Southern Baptist.

Loving will work part-time with SEEDS through March.

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First Black Missionaries
Eye Service, Not Record

By Jerilyn Armstrong

Baptist Press
2/16/84

DALLAS (BP)--The house is for sale and the front room is filled with boxes. It is moving time for the Cornelius family with the final destination being Abuja, Nigeria.

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David and Elwanda Cornelius have the distinction of being the first black couple appointed as missionaries by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Although the decision to go into missions was not to make a statement or to set a record, they are conscious of the example they are setting.

"My desire is our family might be an example to black youth who are considering the ministry," said David. "Most black young people see the pastorate as the only avenue of service. They do not realize full time Christian service can include music, student work, educational work, missions and many other areas. Maybe we can shed some light on the subject."

David graduated from Texas Christian University with a B.S. degree in chemistry and worked for 10 years as a chemist in Dallas.

In 1970, he began taking evening courses at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Seven years later, after completing all the courses, he "had to make a decision. Was the Lord leading me into full time service or was I going to be a knowledgeable layman?"

David did feel the Lord's leadership and left his job to go to seminary full time. He completed his M.Div. degree in 1980 and was accepted into the doctoral program.

"While listening to Foreign Mission Board President Keith Parks speak during Student Week at Glorieta in August 1979, I began to realize that perhaps the Lord was directing me into something besides a pastorate in Texas," David said. "I really had never considered missions, because it was not something a black person could do effectively, or so I thought. But the Lord was beginning to change my mind."

David did not mention the possibility of full time mission service to Elwanda until they were back in Dallas. "I slammed the door shut," said Elwanda. "That was too far from home for me and I wanted no part of it."

In January 1982 David became pastor of Fruitdale Church in Dallas while completing his dissertation. "I was very happy in my pastorate and my exposure to another phase of ministry but missions was still on my mind and an important part of my local ministry," he said.

During a foreign missions emphasis at the church the next December, the Lord began opening the door Elwanda had shut.

"David's patience paid off," Elwanda said. "The Lord began working in my life over several years until the thought of leaving my home was not as scary if that is where he wanted us to be." She told her husband she, too, was now open to mission service.

They began the application process and soon ran into a brick wall. All along David had specifically felt the Lord leading him to Africa. But that was the one place Elwanda was dead set against.

"Our compromise was to look at openings in Brazil. So during Foreign Missions Week last summer we made plans to speak with missionaries from Brazil to find out about the country, its needs, living conditions and other details," David explained. "The first two days the only people we spent time with were from Africa. It seemed as if the Lord were leading us by the hand and saying, "This is where you are to serve," he said.

David will be serving as a general evangelist in Abuja and he and his family will be the first Southern Baptist missionaries to live there. Elwanda will be listed as a homemaker, assisting David in his work. The couple has two children, ages 12 and 11.

Abuja is the new federal capital of Nigeria and is in the process of being built. The city's population is expected to be one million by the year 2000.

Orientation for the Cornelius family begins in April and plans are for them to arrive in Nigeria the first of July--in time for the annual missions meeting there.

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