



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 17, 1984

84-26

Foreign Mission Board Sending Volunteers, Vaccine To Mali

BAMAKO, Mali (BP)--Four Southern Baptist volunteers--a doctor and three nurses--will go to Mali in early March to help prevent a yellow fever epidemic from spreading into the West African nation.

Walter Moore, emeritus missionary physician now living in Mena, Ark.; Harriet Gibson, former missionary now living in Germantown, Tenn.; Amanda Holmes of Highland Springs, Va., and Susan Jacobs of Wilmington, Del., are expected to arrive in Mali March 5 with 250,000 doses of yellow fever vaccine.

The four will follow World Health Organization suggestions to encircle an outbreak of yellow fever in northern Ghana and prevent its spread. Because the vaccine must be kept cold, they will use a system of kerosene refrigerators and cold storage boxes to store it.

Shortly after the outbreak was recognized in Ghana, Southern Baptist volunteer Helen Greaves of Hawthorne, Calif., flew to Ghana with 100,000 doses of yellow fever vaccine to help with an inoculation program around Baptist Medical Centre, Nalerigu. Latest reports indicate the disease, which was striking those under 30, is declining and only a few new cases are being reported.

The Foreign Mission Board also shipped vaccine to neighboring Upper Volta.

The Mali volunteers will work with Norman and Beverly Coad, Southern Baptists' only missionaries in the arid West African nation. The Coads, who began work there in September, hope Southern Baptists will also be able to meet government requests for 5,000 tons of grain to help with famine in the northern part of the country. Altogether, the government has asked for 330,000 tons of grain from worldwide donors, but expects to receive only 100,000 tons.

Because rains were late and sparse, this year's millet crops were very poor, and because the Niger River did not flood as usual, rice also failed. Pasturage for livestock is so sparse that many are dying and the price of cattle has dipped to \$2.50 a head. Whole villages in the area are emptying as people head south hoping to find food.

Southern Baptists hope to import donated grain in June, just before a new harvest when food is expected to be particularly scarce. The Foreign Mission Board is seeking donated grain so that Southern Baptist funds may be reserved for shipment. The price of freight from Abidjan, Ivory Coast, to Bamako is \$200 a ton.

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Leavell Calls For Return
To New Testament Teachings

By Gail Rothwell

Baptist Press
2/17/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Calling for a return to "New Testament teachings," Landrum Leavell said many problems faced by Southern Baptists today are the result of straying from the teachings of the Bible.

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Speaking in Nashville at a conference on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department, Leavell, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, addressed such topics as baptism of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, ordination and charismatic Christians.

Leavell said only in recent years have Southern Baptists begun to learn more about the Holy Spirit. "We have sat idly by and let other denominations get a monopoly on the Holy Spirit and watched them distort the meaning of charismatic," he claimed. "We have allowed these 'charismatics' to intimidate us in regard to the Holy Spirit. You don't have to speak in tongues to be filled with the Spirit."

Emphasizing "if you are a child of God you are a charismatic Christian," Leavell said most Southern Baptists do not understand being baptized in the Holy Spirit is automatic conversion.

"At conversion the Holy Spirit becomes a permanent resident in your life. He said he would never leave and that is an absolute," said Leavell. "Those folks out there dabbling in sin are the ones who are worried about losing their salvation."

Leavell explained although the baptism of the Holy Spirit is automatic, "how much we are filled with the Holy Spirit depends on our willingness to daily empty ourselves of sin and allow the filling of the Spirit.

"The command of the New Testament is to be filled with the Holy Spirit--but we are not going to be filled against our will."

According to Leavell, all Christians are given at least one spiritual gift and are responsible for using that gift. "God gives gifts for the purpose of serving him and for the uplifting of the Kingdom."

He said Christians do not have a clear distinction between "THE gift" and gifts of the Holy Spirit. "The gift is the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ and it comes only by man's invitation. Spiritual gifts are by God's invitation. You can't get spiritual gifts until you've accepted the gift of salvation," Leavell explained.

Leavell also believes Southern Baptists are abusing the New Testament concept of ordination. "You don't have to be ordained to effectively administer your spiritual gifts," he stressed. "You can't go beyond the teachings of the New Testament which state one provision for ordination is the husband of one wife."

In keeping with his view of New Testament teachings, Leavell said he cannot condone the ordination of women.

Recommending Southern Baptists take a closer look at the concept of ordination, he cautioned pastors against ordaining persons "for a tax break. Ordination sets apart those called for special service. Not everyone has to be ordained to serve God.

"You can jeopardize the work of the Southern Baptist Convention by ordaining the wrong kind of people," he added.

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Southern Baptist Witnesses
To Blitz Summer Olympics

By Todd Turner

Baptist Press
2/17/84

LOS ANGELES (BP)--Organizers of Summer Games Ministries, Southern Baptists' outreach effort during the summer Olympic games, hope to have several hundred volunteers sharing the gospel one-to-one with spectators at the quadrennial event.

Volunteers will distribute 400,000 tracts in English and Spanish, 25,000 scripture pamphlets as well as New Testaments and tracts in as many as 10 other languages, according to SGM executive coordinator Elmer Goble.

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Don Hall, director of missions for Crescent Bay Baptist Association and head of SGM's direct witness task group, said volunteers will do more to share their faith than "just pass out tracts."

The emphasis will be on first establishing relationships, Hall explained. When a volunteer "finds an opening, through friendly conversation, he can then share his testimony."

Hall said, "I hope we will do a real quality witness here so that when the people go back home, they will say 'Boy, those Southern Baptists are great people.' I believe sometimes we have hurt our image by trying to put on too much pressure."

SGM will hold seven training sessions for local volunteers, using the Sunday School Board's "Survival Kit for New Christians" and the Home Mission Board's "MasterLife" materials. Church and college groups from outside Los Angeles must have similar training before they arrive, Hall noted.

Most volunteers will work at Exposition Park, one of two main Olympic villages and site of the coliseum, sports arena and swimming pool. Hall hopes to place additional witness teams at 22 other Olympic sites covering 200 miles.

SGM's witness effort will stress follow-up, Hall said. "We want those individuals (who accept Christ) to go back to their homes and become involved--not just saved but with changed lives."

Hall plans to write the director of missions in areas where new converts live and encourage visits by local Baptists. Volunteers will also follow contacts with personal letters.

Hall believes this effort will have a lasting effect on local churches as volunteers return to their congregations and share their experiences.

In a trial run, SGM trained 36 volunteers to witness at the 1983 Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade. Though mostly students have ministered to the crowds that gather for the parade in years past, SGM involved adults from local churches in the ministry. "At least seven decisions for Christ were made that weekend," Hall reported.

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Winter Texan Joins
Valley Relief Effort

Baptist Press
2/17/84

WESLACO, Texas (BP)--Like many others, the Alfredo Chavez family came to the Rio Grande Valley to find work.

But in late December, a prolonged freeze wiped out the citrus and many of the field crops, leaving 15,000 families unemployed, many destitute.

Not only was it cold, but Weslaco, where the Chavezes live, was flooded. They had no food or heat. The parents and their seven children read the Bible, sang and prayed God would meet their needs.

As they were praying, there came a knock at the door. It was Roberto Viveroa, pastor of the Calvary Mission of First Church, Weslaco, who had braved the flood waters to bring food.

The Chavezes said they were depending on something to happen, but could hardly find words adequate to express their gratitude to Pastor Viveros and Winter Texans from the Lakeview Camp near Weslaco.

The Winter Texans from Lakeview are part of an estimated half million retirees from the midwestern and northern United States who come to spend the winter in the Rio Grande Valley.

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Texas Baptists such as Robert Smith, director of missions for the Rio Grande Valley Association and layman "Smokey" Boyle of Harlington, are helping lead worship services and Bible study for the Winter Texans.

But Winter Texans are also ministering said Smith. The Lakeview group provided food for more than 40 needy families and utilities for about a dozen others.

Texas Baptists' administration committee following an appeal by Governor Mark White, authorized the State Missions Commission and Christian Life Commission to direct hunger and disaster relief programs including a relief offering in the churches Feb. 19.

Donations should be forwarded to the state convention treasurer in Dallas, designated Texans' Valley Disaster Relief Fund.

Also, a missions division task force which visited the disaster area, recommended one to two-year partnerships between valley and upstate churches, salary supplements for pastors and work crews to repair pipes and walls in 12 churches and roofs on another half dozen.

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CSM Represents Challenge,
Opportunity For Southern Baptists

Baptist Press
2/17/84

SAN JUAN, P.R. (BP)--Social changes during the next 16 years will pose challenges and opportunities for Southern Baptists, says Paul Adkins, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's Christian Social Ministries Department.

Addressing more than 50 state and national CSM leaders during an annual conference, Adkins warned against allowing the rapidity of changes in a high tech society to immobilize Christians.

Christians can respond to change by playing the "ain't it awful game," he said, adding a nostalgic approach limits ministry possibilities.

He also cautioned against the trend to embrace every new idea or program while abandoning "tried and true" methods. A more appropriate response is for CSM workers to "view change realistically and become flexible and adjust accordingly," said Adkins.

Adkins, citing findings from a Princeton Theological Center study, predicted the economy will remain healthy despite high unemployment. Though the unemployment rate dropped to 8.2 percent at the end of 1983, Adkins said a truer figure would include another half percent, representing unemployed workers who've given up or are ineligible to collect benefits.

Prosperity is on the rise for some, said Adkins, noting 640,000 people, or one of every 363 Americans, are millionaires. But wealth represents a challenge for Baptists as well.

"Christian social ministers will be forced to remind affluent Americans not to forsake the blue collar workers," asserted Adkins. "Church budgets will not be forced by affluent Americans to forego priorities."

Blue collar workers face further unemployment threats as machines replace human labor and high tech jobs require advanced job skills. Without job training, blue collar workers will continue to see the highest unemployment.

Unemployment gives rise to crime and child abuse, added Adkins. "Child care will be mandatory for churches in urban settings as the number of working mothers increases," he said.

Adkins cited reports that 25 percent of all persons in the United States are guilty of or have been victims of child abuse. He further said counseling for hostile adults "must be in the churches," along with places for runaways. Each year, more than 50,000 children disappear in the U.S.; more than one million children run away home each year.

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Changes also will affect the elderly, said Adkins. "With the graying of America," he charged, "the elderly must not be so much entertained as challenged to exercise their gifts in ministry."

Persons 75 years or older will make up eight percent of the population by the year 2000, with another 33 million people age 65 or older, reported Adkins. He encouraged churches to provide housing for senior adults, saying it presents "an unlimited opportunity for ministry."

The future of public education seems ~~plagued~~, said Adkins. Public schools face an annual dropout rate of 25 percent among the 45 million American school-age children, he reported. In 1979, he added, 47 percent of blacks and 39 percent of whites were functionally illiterate.

"Churches with tutorial and literacy programs will be performing community service while attracting prospects," Adkins said.

The face of the American family is changing, added Adkins. In 1983, 35 million Americans lived in homes headed by a single parent; 10 percent of young adults say they will never marry, said Adkins.

"The model of the white, middle class family of four cannot remain the model for the church for the future," he said. Women and singles must be given more visible leadership roles in the church, he added.

To respond to changes, Adkins advocated churches hire more ministers of counseling and social work.

Southern Baptists' Christian social ministries must become more ecumenical if they are to be redemptive in the eighties and nineties, said Adkins. "Evangelistic inbreeding can result in all the right answers for the wrong questions," he asserted. Cooperation with other religious groups is needed to adequately meet the needs of people, he charged.

He called for workers to use an approach "that would be warm but not a cheap prostituted version. You must be open with your clients, yourselves and your colleagues," he said. Ministries "must be loving and caring for all persons," he added.

Reconciliation "in terms of relationship with others and a relationship with God" must remain the goal of Christian social ministries, said Adkins. "God has committed to us the servanthood of reconciliation. We in Christian social ministries are at our best when we are serving."

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Southern Seminary Professor
Honored By Former Student

Baptist Press
2/17/84

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--John Joseph Owens, John R. Sampey professor of Old Testament at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, had been honored with the establishment of a cash endowment in his name.

Funded by Pierce Matheney Jr., professor of Old Testament at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., and a former student of the Hebrew scholar, the endowment will finance the John Joseph Owens Hebrew Prize in Biblical Studies. The scholarship will be given annually to a Midwestern student showing superior progress in Hebrew studies.

Owens has taught at Southern for 42 years.

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