



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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FMB-N

May 2, 1984

84-66

Two Baptist Churches Surrounded By Dominican Republic Violence

By Erich Bridges

SANTIAGO, Dominican Republic (BP)--The Dominican Republic's worst national rioting since the 1965 civil war calmed by the end of April, but tension remained high in two Santiago neighborhoods where Baptist churches are located.

Twelve people died in Santiago, the Dominican Republic's second largest city, during a week of violence that began April 23 during a national 24-hour strike called to protest price increases. Some of the worst fighting occurred near Santiago's First Baptist Church and another Baptist church, both located in poor neighborhoods.

"There was an awful lot of shooting and fighting around the area where (First Baptist Church) is, on that street and in and around that area," said Samuel Shaw, Southern Baptist missionary and pastor of the church, in a telephone interview April 27.

A young man was fatally shot by police near First Baptist April 26, Shaw reported. The other church had seen a "lot of action" too, he said, but he knew of no injuries among members of either church. Some 180 people attend the two churches and several small mission congregations in the area.

About 25 people made professions of faith in Christ during a Baptist-sponsored evangelistic crusade held the previous week. "We were going to have a meeting of all our new Christians on Monday night (April 23), and three different individuals of the church called me and told me, 'Just don't come.' Things were too bad for a North American to show his face in that area of town where the church is located," said the Texas-born missionary.

The area was quiet by April 27 but military forces were "everywhere to be seen and they're ready for anything to happen," Shaw said. "Things have calmed down a whole lot but there's still an awful lot of tension, particularly out here."

More than 50 people were killed and hundreds injured in rioting nationwide. None of the 14 Southern Baptist missionaries in the Dominican Republic was hurt, nor were there reports of injuries or deaths among the approximately 800 Baptists in the country.

The price rises that touched off the violence are one part of an economic austerity program required by the International Monetary Fund in return for a \$599 million loan to the Dominican Republic. The prices of all imported goods were hiked 200 percent and many food prices also jumped.

The Dominican Republic is in better economic shape than some of its Latin neighbors. Inflation has stayed relatively low and the economy grew steadily in the 1970s. But international demand for sugar and the nation's other main exports has dropped and unemployment is estimated at 40 percent. Half of the population lives on less than \$50 a month per capita.

"In my church there are people living on one meal a day," said Shaw. "That's because they can't afford to buy anything else."

'Sign From God' Leads
Criswell To Continue

By Helen Parmley

(C)-N

DALLAS (BP)--W.A. Criswell said May 1 he has received a \$3 million "sign from God" that convinced him not to retire this year, his 40th anniversary at First Baptist Church of Dallas.

The 74-year-old Baptist leader said the church had received a \$3 million gift from the family of Mrs. H.L. Hunt for a multi-story building to house a music hall, dining room and space for children's Sunday school classes.

"The gift carried two stipulations," Criswell said. "One is that we build now and the other is that the building is built in my pastorate. I have been asking for a sign from God about my retirement and this is it."

Criswell said the new building will be called the Ruth Ray Hunt Center.

"The first floor will be a large lobby-type gathering room," he said. A music hall with a capacity of 3,000 and a dining room with seating for 1,500 will occupy the second and third floors. The upper story will be classrooms for the children's division Sunday schools.

First Baptist Church is built on four blocks in downtown Dallas. With 25,000 members, it is the largest Southern Baptist church in the nation.

Criswell became pastor in 1944, following George W. Truett, who had been the church's pastor 47 years.

There has been a great deal of speculation that Criswell, who suffered a heart attack a few years ago, would announce his retirement during the celebration planned by the congregation to observe his 40th anniversary.

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(Parmley is religion editor of the Dallas Morning News.)

BSSB-N

Four Educators
To Be Honored

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5/2/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Four Southern Baptist religious educators have been named to receive the 1984 Distinguished Leadership Awards from the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association.

J.M. Crowe and A.V. Washburn of Nashville, Tenn., Findley B. Edge of Winter Park, Fla., and M. Russell Noel of Tulsa, Okla., will receive the awards during the annual meeting of the SBREA June 10-11 in Kansas City, Mo.

J. Roger Skelton of Nashville, chairman of the SBREA Distinguished Leadership Awards Committee, said the recognition is given to religious educators who have retired from full-time service and who have made outstanding contributions. Twelve other persons have received Distinguished Leadership Awards since its inception in 1981.

"Tenure in religious education, pioneering effort in a distinct field of religious education, influence in the field and statesmanship in the denomination are also considered in making the selections," said Skelton.

Crowe retired in 1975 after 22 years as executive vice-president of the Sunday School Board. Earlier, he was minister of education at First Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C., and First Baptist Church, Abilene, Texas. He also was on the staffs of the Illinois Baptist State Association and the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Washburn worked 41 years in numerous positions in the Sunday school department of the BSSB, serving as secretary of the department from 1957 until his retirement in 1977. Earlier, he was a field worker for the North Carolina Baptist State Convention.

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He is the author of several books including Outreach for the Unreached and Administering the Bible Teaching Program.

Edge was a member of the religious education faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., 1947-1983. He also was founder and chairman of the board of directors of The Vineyard Conference Center and is the author of numerous books including A Quest For Vitality in Religion and The Greening of the Church.

Noel was on the staff of First Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla., 1962-1980, as minister of education and, for the last 10 years, as associate pastor, church program. He is a past president of the Southwestern Baptist Religious Education Association and the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association and has been a frequent conference leader at state and national conference centers.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press

BSSB-F

Involved Laity Seen
As Ultimate BTN Benefit

By Jim Lowry

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DALLAS (BP)--Baptist Telecommunication Network (BTN) may hold the potential to help Southern Baptist churches equip lay persons with practical skills to perform the idealistic ministries of the denomination, according to Jay R. Allen.

Allen, minister of education/administration at Memorial Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla., was one of the participants attending the National Conference on Broadcast Ministries in Dallas, during which BTN was detailed.

BTN is the denominational teaching and training network for churches, sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board. BTN will begin operation June 12, 1984, with broadcast of the Southern Baptist Convention from Kansas City, Mo.

"I think we are sitting on a threshold beyond our comprehension for training, inspiring and teaching church members," Allen said.

"The secret to growth and ministry is an involved laity," Allen continued. "When church members see and understand the needs in home and foreign missions, for instance, there is a greater possibility they will respond to those needs.

"I see BTN as a tool to help churches teach members how to minister, witness, disciple and visit," he added. "If the local church can be seen as a place where one can grow spiritually and enhance one's gifts and skills, the natural by-product will be numerical growth."

Allen said Memorial Baptist Church has been using video tapes for training for several months. In the process, he has learned a great deal about the more effective use of tapes.

He said he first started talking to his church members last fall about participating in BTN, because he was convinced of the potential of the upcoming network.

The church voted in November 1983 to participate in BTN, and committed the money for the equipment and subscription fees. At the National Conference on Broadcast Ministries, Allen talked with Broadman representatives and equipment vendors about the equipment the church would need to make the most of BTN.

Allen, a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, said he sees himself as an equipper in his church.

"It is my prayer that our church members will become aware of needs in the community and around the world through BTN," he said. "I hope we can equip them to meet those needs.

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"There are so many people who are hurting," he said, "I think responding to those hurts more effectively is what ministry is all about.

"Right now church staff members and lay persons are limited by time and economics in attending conferences on training and teaching," he continued. "Through BTN, we can bring those same conferences and denominational leaders into our churches.

"We hear the names of people now, but for the first time many of our lay people will be able to see and hear those leaders," Allen said. "In turn, they will understand how to become more involved in Southern Baptist life.

"I think the greatest delima in Southern Baptist life is in the area of communications," he said. "BTN will enable us to better communicate Bold Mission Thrust and the many other facets of ministry of the denomination with local churches. I want to know what Southern Baptist leaders are thinking and what they are doing so I can support them.

"I am grateful to men like Lloyd Elder and Jimmy Allen for putting us in the forefront of this exciting new technology instead of waiting to see what others do with it," he added.

"I think the unity of the denomination will be evident as we educate our people about missions, evangelism, discipleship and Bible teaching methods," Allen continued. "Lay persons will feel more a part of the convention and their ministry effectiveness will be enhanced by providing this model of ministry through BTN."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press

Grenada Missionary
Back At Full Speed

FMB-F

Baptist Press
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GRAND ROY, Grenada (BP)--Six months after the invasion, missionary Mike Eberhardt is back to full speed.

The violent October coup and subsequent American-Caribbean invasion of Grenada--Grenadians like to call it the "rescue"--put the Southern Baptist evangelist on hold briefly, along with most everyone else on the island. But daily life is returning to normal and Eberhardt is doing what he came to do: evangelism.

His efforts have paid off in the town of Grand Roy, where a former cultist, Kendrick, became a Christian in March. Eberhardt feels that one conversion could result in the evangelization of the whole town, one of Grenada's larger communities.

Eberhardt started a Sunday school and worship service last year in Grand Roy. No regular evangelical witness had existed there previously. He built attendance to about 40, but the group contained only one Christian family. Kendrick was coming, though, and listening.

One day Kendrick stopped Eberhardt and said, "Pastor, something's going to happen here in Grand Roy, and it all hinges on one person. When that person makes a decision, this whole community is going to be open to accept the gospel."

"I think that person is you," the missionary replied. Kendrick thought for a moment and said, "I think so too." In March he stepped forward to profess his faith in Christ, along with two women of the mission congregation.

Eberhardt visited Grand Roy a few days later and Kendrick showed him a two-page written testimony he had prepared to give to some members of the Bahai faith in the area. He also told the missionary, "You said we needed eight to 10 baptized believers to form a church. I'm trying to find nine who will (be) baptize(d)!"

With co-workers like Kendrick, Eberhardt's church-starting prospects look good. Eberhardt has also begun a weekly radio program featuring Bible teaching and modern Christian music.

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Southwestern Seminary Student
Challenged By Boston Marathon

By Tim Tun

SWTS
(C)-F

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Like most Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary students, Mike Wester is usually on the run. In fact, running is the first thing he does in the morning. He rises at 5 a.m. six days a week and "hits the floor running"--literally.

Wester is a marathoner. And on April 16, Wester experienced every runner's dream. He ran the 88th Boston Marathon.

"My last five miles, after 'Heartbreak Hill'--that was the most enjoyable for me," Wester said. "I must have passed about 100 people in those last five miles. I wore my seminary shirt and the fans yelled for me...and that gave me a psychological boost." Wester finished the 26.2-mile race in 2:28:30, a personal record, for 156th place out of 6,604 entrants.

"Conditions weren't all that great," he said. It was about 40 degrees, the wind was in his face and gusting, and there was a cool drizzle the entire race. But since I ran well time-wise, that's a plus," he said. "I don't see myself as striving for world-class runner. It takes so much time."

Nonetheless, Wester has achieved some notoriety as a strong competitor among runners in the Fort Worth area. In late February, he finished second in the Cowtown Marathon; he finished fourth in 1983.

"My purpose in life is not to run," he said, "but my ministry. If running takes away from my ministry, I will not run. But right now, it is helping my ministry."

The benefits are both spiritual and physical, Wester said. During his early morning runs, he takes the time to "pray for others, to examine myself," Wester said. "Many of my high points of worship have come during a run."

He also said running helps him to develop non-Christian relationships, which lead to witnessing opportunities. "It gives you a chance to establish common ground," Wester said. "As a minister, I can use my running to become involved in the community."

The physical benefits of running include a release of tension and increased energy, Wester said. "Every minister needs a release....Regular exercise is important."

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(Tim Tune is co-news editor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.)

Festival Honors
Wayne Oates

Southern
(C)-N

Baptist Press
5/2/84

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--More than 650 ministers and educators from throughout the nation gathered in Louisville, Ky., recently to honor Wayne E. Oates, senior professor of pastoral care at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The three-day event featured seven plenary lectures on the theme "Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care: The Agenda for Tomorrow." Approved as a pre-conference workshop of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, the conference also offered 17 workshop topics for its 458 registrants.

To top off the celebration, Southern Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt announced his goals to seek funds for endowing the Wayne E. Oates Chair of Pastoral Care and Psychology of Religion at the 125-year-old institution.

The banquet featured numerous recognitions and presentations as well as the life dramatization of Oates by StorySource, Inc., a drama concept group.

Westminster Press will publish the conference's plenary addresses in a work entitled, "New Dimensions in Pastoral Care."

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