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June 22, 1984

84-90

Audit Discovers
\$35,000 Discrepancy

By Larry Crisman

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--An audit which followed the resignation of former South Carolina Baptist Convention missions department director N. Larry Bryson in March disclosed financial discrepancies in excess of \$35,000 in the missions department budget, according to Ray P. Rust, executive secretary-treasurer of the state convention.

Rust said the audit indicates financial discrepancies occurred in the department budget dating back to 1981.

The audit was conducted by the Columbia, S.C.-based accounting firm of Clarkson, Harden and Gantt.

In a memorandum to Rust and the executive committee, the firm said problem disbursements related to the missions department budget involved the years of 1981, 1982, 1983 and January and February of 1984.

The memorandum also said: "The problems encountered with disbursements from the missions department were discovered by the General Board's own internal control procedures, prior to the time that we were called in to make this special investigation. It appears that your internal control procedure did in fact function and discover the fact that improper disbursements were being made. We also understand and have reviewed the changes in your procedures that have been made. We also understand and have reviewed the changes in your procedures that have been made to assure that similar types of unauthorized disbursements do not take place.

"In our review it appears that the only person involved was Mr. Larry Bryson, and we found no indication that any other employee or outsider was in collusion with him."

Rust said full restitution of the funds in question, as well as payment of the cost of the audit amounting to \$7,680, already has been made by Bryson.

"We are extremely distressed that the audit has shown that these additional questionable activities and transactions took place," said Rust. "But I want to assure our churches and their members in the South Carolina Baptist Convention that these losses are fully insured and that no actual loss would have been incurred by any church, churches or other entities of the South Carolina Baptist Convention even if restitution had not been made."

In explaining how what he described as the "problematic transactions" took place, Rust said, "A position of trust was used to requisition funds for non-existent meetings in the name of people who rendered no service or who otherwise were reimbursed. Then personal use of these funds was made."

Bryson, a member of the denomination's Baptist Building staff in Columbia for about 10 years, submitted his resignation to Rust in a letter dated March 21. The resignation became effective immediately.

The resignation then was reported to the state convention's executive committee on March 27. At that time, Rust explained Bryson's resignation related to financial matters. With the authorization of the executive committee, Rust issued this statement:

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"The Executive Committee confirmed the action of the Executive Secretary-Treasurer in accepting Rev. Bryson's letter of resignation, which said he was resigning because of 'misappropriation of funds for which I was responsible.'"

In the course of submitting his resignation, Bryson made restitution of the more than \$1,400 known to have been misappropriated at that time.

After Bryson's resignation, however, Rust asked the outside firm of certified public accountants to perform an audit of missions department budget activities.

"All of this is extremely unfortunate, and we are deeply hurt that it happened," said Rust. "However, South Carolina Baptists can take assurance in the fact that their General Board staff as a system of accounting checks and balances that works. It was because of our routine checks that problems were detected. This, of course, led to the special audit of the missions department budget."

Rust said steps already have been taken to strengthen internal financial controls.

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New Sumatra Hospital
Nearing Completion

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By Leland Webb

Baptist Pr ss
6/22/84

TANJUNGPANG, Indonesia (BP)--Construction of new facilities for the Baptist hospital on the island of Sumatra should be completed by the end of August, according to Southern Baptist missionary Bobby Jones, the on-site project manager.

Arrangements are still being negotiated with the government for opening the new facilities and transferring the Baptist-related staff from Immanuel Hospital at Bukittinggi. More than 40 of the 72 employees and staff at Immanuel are scheduled to move.

The \$2 million for the new complex comes from a transfer arrangement worked out with the Indonesian government when it decided Baptists must leave Immanuel Hospital because of religious and political tensions in the predominantly Muslim area around Bukittinggi. Although the hospital now belongs to the government, the Baptist-led staff has continued to operate it while the new facilities are being built.

Facilities for the 50-bed hospital, yet to be named, will be complete--a surgery suite with two large and one smaller operating rooms, wards, administration offices, clinic, nurses' dormitory, kitchen, laundry, morgue, generator and storage buildings and housing for physicians and other staff members. All buildings will be fireproof, with steel framework construction and cement floors.

"It will be as close to maintenance-free as possible," Jones said, making it simpler for the Union of Indonesian Baptist Churches to support it later.

Win Applewhite, one of two Southern Baptist missionary physicians at the Bukittinggi hospital--the other is Gene Ruble--is in charge of the construction and calls the new facilities "the best-built project I've seen anywhere." Though it is not fancy, he said, quality is being built into it. He gives credit to Jones' quality control.

"There's always the personal pleasure of seeing something you cut out of cardboard become a reality," mused Applewhite, who had fashioned a tabletop model early in the planning process. "We learned by our previous mistakes and our previous successes," added the surgeon, who helped oversee completion of the Baptist hospital at Kediri on the island of Java and construction of Immanuel Hospital after the death of missionary physician Frank Owens, who first opened a clinic in Bukittinggi.

After a series of delays in securing a site and permission to build, Baptists located their Sumatra hospital at Bukittinggi in 1972. Because of the hospital's influence, the Christian-resistant climate of the area has eased, according to Applewhite, though not all the missionaries agree with his conclusion.

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"The atmosphere has completely changed," he declared. Before there can be a strong witness, he said, "we have to see the atmosphere change, and it's changing."

A Baptist church now meets in a mission-owned house at Bukittinggi, but members primarily are from other areas of the country, such as Java, not from the local tribe. A branch congregation meets about two hours away.

Determined to leave a lasting Christian witness, members have launched a program they call *Lentera*, meaning "lamp." *Lentera* aims to "keep a light burning after we leave," explained Applewhite. It is designed to keep the church going and to locate an evangelistic worker in the city. By early this year members had contributed one million rupiah (about U.S. \$1,000) and "will continue to contribute after they move," reported Applewhite.

The hospital's new property faces a portion of the Trans-Sumatra Highway. The road did not exist when the location was decided. Though agreement to relocate the hospital was reached in December 1981, construction did not actually begin until late October 1983 because of repeated delays in official decisions. The delays had a good side though, pointed out Jones, because the highway was constructed in the meantime. If the road had not been there, Baptists would have had to build one to bring in equipment.

Across from the hospital is a military installation. A short distance away is a new government housing area where as many as 10,000 people already live, and expansion is expected.

Jones' wife, Bobby Jo, said rumors about the Christian hospital already are circulating, such as, "Go to the Christian hospital and you'll be given an injection of Christianity." But her husband noted, "Once the people find out that we're not here to force anyone to be a Christian, that we're here to help, it will be all right."

"Hospitals are not buildings and equipment—they're people," emphasized Applewhite. He told of Bambang Sutismo, an Indonesian physician on the Immanuel staff who did his intern work there. He became a Christian at the hospital and later volunteered to return to the staff.

"This kind of person is the basis of the future medical mission work in Indonesia," said Applewhite. "There are others like this, nurses and others, persons we feel the Lord has specifically called out."

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British Ceremonies
Include 'Eyes Of Texas'

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Baptist Press
6/22/84

LONDON, England (BP)—"The Eyes of Texas" flowed from the Hardin-Simmons University Cowboy Band's instruments as the British Rail's new electric locomotive arrived at Gatwick Airport.

The 43-member band from the Baptist college in Abilene, Texas, was one of the featured groups at ceremonies linking rail service between Gatwick Airport and the Victoria Section of London. Dignitaries arriving from London stepped on the rail platform as the band played, under the direction of Bill Woods. Two special plaques were presented to the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Mrs. Phoebette Sitwell, and the Mayor of Crawley, A.E. Pegler.

News photographer cameras flashed frequently during the band's musical numbers that lasted about one and a half hours. Director Woods and Steve Linder, of Abilene, president-elect of the band, were interviewed by the British Broadcasting Company's Radio London. Reporter Brian Deacon's face broke into big smiles as he recorded musical numbers of the Abilene musicians.

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Mother-Daughter Team
Commissioned Missionaries

By Orville Scott

Texas Review
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Baptist Press
6/22/84

DALLAS (BP)—A course in sign language at Dallas Baptist College four years ago helped open the door for Deborah Peters to become a Southern Baptist Mission Service Corps volunteer in Puerto Rico.

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Peters, 32, and her nine-year-old daughter, Lara, were commissioned May 13 by Elmwood Baptist Church, Dallas.

June 1, Peters began work for the Puerto Rico Baptist Association for two years in a ministry called "Signs of Salvation." She will teach communication skills to deaf people; help churches develop ministries to the deaf; hold camps for deaf youth in the Caribbean area, and interpret classes for deaf students at the Baptist Theological Seminary in San Juan.

In her response at the commissioning, Peters said she had read people were killed in food riots in the Dominican Republic where she will go for orientation, but "I'm safer in obedience to God there than I would be in Dallas in disobedience," she said.

Peters said as a teen-ager, she felt God's call to be a missionary. "However, when I was young adult, I went through a time of rebellion and disobedience. As a result, I am a single parent with a nine-year-old daughter. The fact Lara and I are entering the mission field is one small 'sign' of how gracious and forgiving God is."

While ministering in her local church, she learned Spanish and sign language and taught beginner sign language at Cedar Valley Community College, Dallas. Two years ago, she quit a job and took a 45 percent cut in pay to serve with Christ for the Nations in Dallas.

Then she learned of the need for a missionary to the deaf in Puerto Rico and applied as a volunteer with Mission Service Corps.

At her commissioning service, Texas MSC Coordinator Sam Pearis issued a challenge for more volunteers. He said about 60 percent of MSC volunteers are Texans. "Southern Baptists probably have the greatest missionary force ever assembled," said Pearis, "but many more volunteers are needed."

Last year, he said, the Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board needed 1,750 new missionaries but only 332 were available. Pearis said Mission Service Corps can use anyone from high school students to retirees in a variety of ministries around the world.

He urged Baptists to "pray, give and go. We have well over 1,000 volunteers who could go if they had financial support."

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Sutton To Head
Alabama WMU

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Baptist Press
6/22/84

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Beverly Sutton, interpretation section director for Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, has been named executive director of Woman's Missionary Union of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, effective Oct. 1.

She will replace Mary Essie Stephens, who retires June 30 after 30 years as executive director of Alabama WMU.

Sutton's previous positions with WMU, SEC were Acteens consultant, 1975-1979; and more recently, field services director.

Sutton, 43, is a native of Austin, Texas. She holds a bachelor of science degree from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, Texas, and a master of religious education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Prior to coming to WMU, SEC, she was youth director at First Baptist Church, Amarillo, Texas.

She was an elementary school teacher in Denver, and Fort Worth; a science teacher in Dallas, and student director at Hendrick Memorial Hospital, Abilene, Texas.

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FMB-6

Thai Water Project Introduces Spiritually Dry Area To Gospel

By Maxine Stewart

CHANTHABURI, Thailand (BP)—A Southern Baptist project to create water ponds for needy villagers has opened two spiritually dry areas to the gospel.

The ponds benefit two drought-stricken villages, one where Thai refugees from the Cambodian border have settled and another where 279 families suffering from Hansen's disease (leprosy) live on 4,300 rai (1,720 acres) of orchard land granted by the government.

"This makes me want to be a Christian," said one man living in the Nikhom Leprosy Village as he watched fresh spring water flowing into an 18-foot-deep, 30-by-60-foot hole. "I have never felt this way before, but I have seen so much work, and this water has to be from your God. I would like to know your God."

In most instances, the ponds will provide water for drinking, bathing and laundry. They will also be used to irrigate the parched orchard land that represents the lepers' only source of income. Each pond is equipped with a pump. The banks are too steep to climb—primarily to keep out water buffalo and other animals—so each pond has a bamboo ladder in case anyone falls in.

Mission Service Corps volunteer Steve Allen, from First Baptist Church, Amarillo, Texas, directed the project. When missionaries in Thailand were given an appropriation from the Foreign Mission Board's hunger relief and general relief funds to begin working, Allen contacted public health officials in Chanthaburi Province. Basing their choices on private needs, officials selected spots for the ponds. Sixty of the ponds are fed by their own springs; the other three will hold rainwater.

The first pond brought great excitement. In the midst of the dry season, 14 feet of crystal clear spring water filled a gaping hole eight hours after the ground was opened. The people were amazed.

"There's not a Christian in this village (Pong Nam Ron)" said Allen. "But the people kept saying, 'This has to be from your God.'"

Somkiat Sawangsawai, the Christian contractor hired to do the digging, witnessed to the village people as he worked. He and his men repeatedly told villagers the ponds were not from the government, but were from Christians in the United States. As the people thanked the workers, they kept telling the villagers to thank God.

"This makes me a believer," said a villager who for years had forbidden his wife to even speak to a Christian. Allen delivered a Bible to the man, and as they sat on his porch reading scripture aloud, several people gathered from nearby. The people approached the porch quietly, and then sat down and listened.

A widow came to Allen and asked for a pond. "We were unable to help her because of our limited budget," Allen recalled. "But she said she wanted to hear about God. We sat and talked for a long time. By the end of the day we had promises of seven adults and four children to attend church on Sunday."

The cost of the ponds averaged about \$360 each. Several times contractor Sawangsawai reduced his charges to make other ponds possible, Allen said.

A Thai neurologist, Dr. Varoon Lachaprasit, is developing a team from the newly organized New Life Baptist Church in Chanthaburi to witness at the project points every Friday. A woman in the church who plans to be on the team will witness to Chinese-speaking people.

One man living in Nikhom Leprosy Village saw a genuineness in Christianity he hadn't identified before. "I have studied many religions," he said. "Even my neighbors and me, we don't help each other. I know very little about Christians, but you showed us a love that no one else has. I told my wife that Christianity must be very different from anything I've ever studied."