

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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August 16, 1984

FMB-F

84-116

Malians Thankful for Grain;
5,000-Ton Shipment Arrives

By Mary Jane Welch

BAMAKO, Mali (BP)--One man wept as he received a 100-lb. bag of grain from a Baptist mission team at Kolokani, Mali.

For two years, rains had not come and he had been unable to provide his family that much grain, he said. "This year the Baptist mission came in the place of the long-awaited rain clouds and they have brought us a harvest of grain," he said.

This man is one of several in the West African nation of Mali who've expressed appreciation for the 400 tons of sorghum Southern Baptists distributed during July, said missionary Beverly Coad. That grain was secured by the U.S. ambassador to Mali as a stopgap measure until 5,000 tons of U.S. government grain arrived from the United States.

The first truckload of the U.S. corn secured by a group of interested Baptists in Washington arrived Aug. 7 in Bamako, the capital. Southern Baptist missionaries will be responsible for distributing it to hardest-hit areas of Mali.

The U.N. Children's Fund estimates 100,000 children in Mali will starve to death this year because of drought and food shortages. The crisis promises to stretch into another year. The rainy season should be well underway, said Coad, but so far no rains have fallen.

The Southern Baptist-sponsored distribution team in Mali has trucks lined up to move the grain into needy areas as fast as it arrives in Bamako from the Ivory Coast port of Abidjan, said Coad.

By giving a 100-lb. sack of grain to each family of five with a government registration card, Baptists can expect to reach about 500,000 people with grain, she said. Under normal conditions, a family of five would use a 100-lb. sack of grain in a month, she said, but many families in Mali have been eating only once every four days to stretch their food. Some families also will use some of the grain as seed.

After Baptists experienced problems with transportation from Abidjan to Mali, Mali's minister of interior and minister of transportation sent a telegram to the government coordinator in the port asking that the grain for Southern Baptists be given top priority for shipping among the hundreds of thousands of tons of grain waiting in the port.

"Thank you" have come to the distribution teams as they've worked in areas as far north as Nara, an isolated village which is a six-and-a-half-hour drive north of Bamako. There, authorities went on national radio to express their appreciation for 100 tons of grain distributed in their area.

Still, the situation in Nara deteriorated seriously in just the week between her husband's visits there, Coad said. "What we're doing here is like irrigating the Sahara Desert with a five-gallon bucket. It's just a drop in the bucket as far as really meeting needs," she said.

At one distribution point, villagers brought small plastic containers of milk to the Baptist mission team as a gift. When team members tried to refuse it, not wanting to deprive the people of their only meager source of nourishment, the villagers replied, "This is the only way we can thank you. If we had something better, we would gladly give it."

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Another village brought two goats for the team to take back to the people of America to show their appreciation.

Although Southern Baptists are financing the grain distribution, it is a cooperative effort between almost all evangelical groups in Mali, Coad said. She and her husband, Norman, started Southern Baptist mission work in Mali last fall and are still the only Southern Baptist missionaries in the country.

A team of Malians composed of two Moslems, two men related to the Christian and Missionary Alliance and two related to the Gospel Missionary Union actually distribute the grain, while Norman Coad coordinates the program.

Southern Baptist Mission Service Corps worker George Foshee (Colorado Springs, Colo.) recently arrived to be field distribution coordinator for six months and Howard Mayberry (Gastonia, N.C.) is expected to arrive soon to coordinate grain warehouse operations, also for six months.

The presence of two Moslems on the team has helped quiet suspicions of favoritism among the predominately Moslem population, Coad said. The government has sent inspection teams to make sure the distribution is even-handed, and those teams have had nothing but the highest praise for the Malian team and their handling of the distribution, she added.

"The main thing this is doing is showing that we're a caring people and that we're doing our very best to try to meet needs," she said. Because grain has been available to everyone who comes along as long as it lasts, people have said, "The Protestants have done what they said they would do," she added.

The grain distribution has broken down barriers which normally exist between evangelical Christians and the Moslems who predominate in the country, she said. The Gospel Union church in Kolokani, one of the first distribution points, is running over with people and four people accepted Christ as savior on a recent Sunday.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

HMB Report Offers New
View Of Typical SBC Church

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
8/16/84

ATLANTA (BP)—The typical 1983 Southern Baptist church had 237 total members, an enrollment of 116 people in Sunday school (average weekly attendance of 65), and six baptisms according to a recently published report by researchers at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Phillip B. Jones, director of the HMB's planning and services research department, and Julie McKelvie, research assistant/programer analyst, painted the picture of the typical SBC church from statistics from the denomination's Uniform Church Letter.

Jones used median or the midpoint statistics instead of averages in computing the typical SBC church, and said using a median statistic is more representative than using an average.

"The 'average' size church has a total of 388 members," explained Jones. "The problem with using the average or mean as a descriptive statistic is a few extremely large churches can force the average to be abnormally high and not really representative of the majority of Southern Baptist churches.

"The median represents the middle point of a group of numbers," he added. "For example, when considering church size, the median is the mid-point where half the churches have a larger membership and half have a smaller membership."

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HMB-N
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"The median represents the middle point of a group of numbers," he added. "For example, when considering church size, the median is the mid-point where half the churches have a larger membership and half have a smaller membership."

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The median size SBC church has 237 total members, which means "half of the churches have a membership larger than 237 and half a smaller membership," he said. He added his research revealed 70 percent of SBC churches fall below the average total of 388 members, further emphasizing average statistics can be misleading.

Based on data from 35,422 SBC churches reporting on the 1983 Uniform Church Letter, Jones noted the following characteristics of the "typical" SBC church:

(1) Total Members--237; (2) Resident Members--171; (3) Baptisms--6; (4) Age of Church--62 years; (5) Sunday School Enrollment--116; (6) Average Weekly Sunday School Attendance--65; (7) Church Training Enrollment--31.

(8) WMU Enrollment--19; (9) Brotherhood Enrollment--4; (10) Total Receipts--\$39,515; (11) Tithes and Offerings--\$39,445; (12) Undesignated Gifts--\$33,005; (13) Designated Gifts--\$3,864; (14) Total Local Expenditures--\$31,395; (15) Total Mission Expenditures--\$5,000.

(16) Cooperative Program--\$2,198; (17) Percent of Undesignated Gifts to the Cooperative Program--7.5 percent; (18) Associational Missions Gifts--\$720; (19) Percent of Undesignated Gifts to the Association--2.1 percent, and (20) Annie Armstrong Easter Offering--\$213.

The typical SBC church had 2.9 baptisms per 100 resident members and pastoral tenure for the typical church runs between two and three years.

Jones added 9,246 churches did not contribute to the Annie Armstrong offering for home missions support and 5,318 churches reported no baptisms during 1983.

"We're holding up super churches as models for our Convention. However, they are not representative of the typical Southern Baptist church," said Jones, who noted 90 percent of Southern Baptist churches have less than 620 resident members.

"When we program for churches with a staff of six persons and a \$1 million budget, we're not being realistic of what a true SBC church is like," said Jones. "We need to take into consideration the typical church may be limited in its resources, both in terms of people and finances. The typical church may not be capable of implementing all the programs available to Southern Baptist churches.

"Furthermore," he added, "when denominational personnel design programs, they should keep in mind the true picture of a Southern Baptist church. They have to be realistic in their expectations as to what programs can be implemented and what issues can be addressed."

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*OKla paper
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Government,
Religion Entwined

By Norman Jameson

Baptist Press
8/16/84

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)--Religion and government are so entwined, "we don't talk about right and wrong, we talk about right and left," said retired Baptist Sunday School Board President Grady C. Cothen.

Cothen, who long has fought government intrusion into religion affairs, especially IRS attempts to define church "intergrated auxiliaries," lectured on Baptist heritage during a meeting of in-service guidance directors at Oklahoma Baptist University.

He said the success of pressure politics in the civil rights movement demonstrated a way to accomplish things in democratic society and prompted religious leaders to embrace the tactic. "The result is an increasing confusion over the function of religion in reinforcing social values and the role of government in reinforcing religious values," he said.

Cothen maintained there are some "overriding concerns of society in general" which require government action on behalf of the people. Among them are abortion, justice, crime, drugs, civil rights, hunger and nuclear weapons.

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Issues he considered beyond government purview include prayer, support of any religious activities with tax funds and any religious observances.

Convictions cannot be legislated because "religious convictions subject to what the majority wants are not religious convictions at all," Cothen said.

Cothen said the church should be the conscience of the nation, but should have no legal control. "The church's weapon is not power, but truth," he said. "Its only power is the power of moral persuasion. When the end of that power comes, we need to back off, pray, and do nothing."

Though Baptists have always been dissenters, in some places where they are the establishment "they want to use (political) power to force others to do their will," Cothen said. "The church must never use power or force to achieve its ends.

"Christians need to be involved in a plethora of human problems, not as a Christian coercing others, but as a witness to the nature of the love of God--in the spirit of Christ, not in the spirit of a ruling monarch."

Cothen said he cannot submit to the "coercive power" of the Moral Majority, though he "agrees with many of the ideals."

Regarding the special tax preference given religion by government, Cothen said, "In all honesty, I don't see any reason at all why I should have a tax-free housing allowance because I'm a Baptist preacher."

Cothen said changes in the income tax deduction for charitable contributions might affect gifts to churches, "because the fabric of society is built on monetary exemption of all religions as acceptable public practice, to retrieve it now would create untold chaos." Cothen defended the exemption saying no other institution can claim a contribution to society equal to that of the church.

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FMB-N

Richmond Baptists Advertise
Their Affirmation Of Women

Baptist Press
8/16/84

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--More than 130 Baptist lay people and ministers in the Richmond area sponsored a full-page newspaper ad opposing the resolution on women's ordination adopted at the Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City, June 12-14.

The ad, which appeared in the Aug. 10 issue of the Richmond Times-Dispatch, expressed concern the community did not understand convention resolutions have no authority over local Baptist churches.

In a five-part statement, the ad's sponsors affirmed the autonomy of the local church, affirmed Southern Baptist churches which ordain both men and women to serve as deacons or deaconesses, affirmed women involved in Woman's Missionary Union and in mission service both overseas and in the United States, affirmed women who serve as ministers and are studying in seminaries, and acknowledged that "there is plenty of blame to share for the present condition of our world."

The statement also quoted Romans 5:12 and II Corinthians 5:19, which speak of sin coming into the world through one man and Christ's reconciling the world to himself.

Among those who sponsored the ad were Richard Stephenson, executive secretary of the Virginia Baptist General Board, and Charles B. Nunn Jr., executive director of the Richmond Baptist Association. Pastors who signed the ad included Peter James Flamming, First Baptist Church; Keith H. Harris, Tabernacle Baptist Church; James H. Slatton, River Road Church; and Aubrey and Anne Rosser, co-pastors of Bainbridge-Southampton Baptist Church.

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Denominational Leaders
Emphasize Home Missions

By Leisa A. Hammett

HMB-N

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Love is the strongest and most necessary foundation for the mission thrust of the Southern Baptist Convention, denominational leaders told home missions week attendees at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Dean of Theology William B. Tolar told participants talking about missions was not sufficient. Love is absent from mission intentions unless it translates into zealous evangelism, he said.

"We are (so) wrapped up in doing our own things that we fail to see those who need love," said Bailey H. Stone, pastor of First Baptist Church, Odessa, Texas. "Sometimes our little group takes precedence rather than Jesus taking precedence. True love for Jesus takes precedence over everything. If we truly love Jesus as we ought, then we can love one another, see others' needs.

Southern Baptists need to differ on issues but not on their purpose of missions, noted Stone, adding Southern Baptists needed to return to that purpose and remember the total spectrum of their responsibility. "Missions is coming to us today and we have the privilege of sharing the light," he said.

Both Tolar and Stone condemned racial prejudice.

"If we don't see people as Jesus sees people, there is no hope for the world," said Tolar. "He (God) rules out Godless prejudice. It ought to be that way in our churches," he said.

Stone insisted, "We cannot divide the world into Hispanics and blacks. It frightens me that in our convention we've become so divisive, so caught up in our debates that we lose the world, lose our purpose and our place among other denominations."

Woman's Missionary Union President Dorothy Sample told directors of missions' wives that until Southern Baptists know who they are, the focus will continue to be on themselves instead of their call to missions.

"We're going to disagree," said Sample, pointing out that even controversial issues could be discussed as long as Christ's principles of "judge not, lest ye be judged," the priesthood of the believer and every person's accountability to love as Christ loved are remembered.

Speaking to Southern Baptist chaplains, Russell Dilday, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary president, asserted that unless the current debate within the denomination is solved, the SBC is headed for a confrontation.

"All the fussing and fighting about the Bible and our beliefs just seem so ridiculous and inappropriate in light of the fact that around the world people are so hungry just to have the opportunity to be together with believers and worship the Lord and have a relationship with him. We lose sight of that. Maybe something can call us back to what the real important issues are," Dilday said.

In his home missions week's sermon, Home Mission Board President William G. Tanner warned that if Southern Baptists are content with being selfish, self-centered, complacent, thoughtless, indifferent and unconcerned, they may be remembered as a peculiar group of people, who, despite their honors and recognition, failed to care.

During the week, Broadman Press presented HMB Vice-President of Services Bob Bingham and his wife, Opha, an official copy of their recently published book, "1 Step More." The book deals with Mrs. Bingham's 20-year struggle with multiple sclerosis and suggests how other Christians can deal with life's frustrations and struggles.

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