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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Willmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Craig Bird, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 77 1/2 Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-5331

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Baptist Leaders Join
Plea For Famine Response

PLEASE RETURN

WASHINGTON (BP)--Six Southern Baptist Convention officials have signed a statement urging the mobilization of an emergency U.S. airlift of food and transportation equipment to Ethiopia and other beleaguered African nations where millions face severe food shortages and starvation.

The airlift is one of several actions proposed in a statement to President Reagan and Congress signed by leaders of more than 55 national religious bodies and agencies. The statement was released Nov. 29 in a series of new conferences around the country.

Southern Baptists signees were James Dunn, executive director-treasurer, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; Foy Valentine, executive director, and David Lockard, director of organization, Christian Life Commission; and Keith Parks, president, Bill O'Brien, executive vice-president, and John Cheyne, human needs ministries consultant, Foreign Mission Board.

The FMB's O'Brien, one of the spokespersons at a Capitol Hill news conference, called upon the president and Congress "to bring to bear the most intensely ordered and innovative approaches possible to enter into a global partnership to defuse the moral dilemma of the wasting of human life, thereby securing its future and honoring its sanctity."

The world mission leader told reporters "greed and self-serving priorities have made a mockery" of what he described as the primary assignment of humanity--"to co-manage the universe and its resources in partnership with each other and the Creator."

O'Brien said, "One way to describe the current crisis is lifestyle--not just personal, but collectively--a political lifestyle reflected in two extremes: mismanagement of resources on the one hand and mismanagement of priorities and opportunities on the other." That political lifestyle, he said, is "coupled with personal, affluent, anesthetizing lifestyle."

At a second new conference in Nashville, the CLC's Lockard sounded a similar theme. Pointing to the "stark contrast" between U.S. military aid and appropriations for hunger relief and economic development, Lockard said the Africa crisis "calls attention to our government to get our national priorities in order.

"In comparison to money devoted to military giveaways of weapons designed to take human lives, the funds needed for a project like 'Operation Africa'--designed to save human lives--are extremely modest."

The statement of concern originated in an October meeting of representatives of national church bodies, private Christian voluntary organizations and hunger relief and mission agencies. The meeting was convened by Bread for the World, a national Christian citizen's movement which lobbies for anti-hunger legislation and policies. Dunn of the Baptist Joint Committee serves as BFW president.

Despite highly-publicized American response in recent weeks, the statement expressed concern "that three years after the onset of the drought, assistance still has not reached the majority of the seven million facing starvation in Ethiopia or many of the 150 million people suffering in all of sub-Saharan Africa."

Many hunger experts believe an airlift is crucial because food already approved by the U.S. government for Ethiopia and other African nations will not arrive until the end of the year. By that time, they argue, millions of additional lives will be lost.

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The statement also suggested food now designated for other areas with less critical hunger needs be redirected immediately to Africa and replaced later.

Southern Baptists, through gifts to the Foreign Mission Board's hunger relief fund, have sent \$50,000 to Ethiopia for famine relief. Cheyne visited that country in late November to discuss with missionaries additional ways to help with famine relief despite a small mission staff and other limitations.

The FMB has spent more than \$3 million for African relief and development during 1984 and anticipates spending another \$3 million in 1985, according to Cheyne.

Anyone wanting to help relieve hunger in Ethiopia, and other nations hit by famine and drought, can channel gifts through the Foreign Mission Board. Contributions can be sent through local churches or mailed directly to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230. They should be clearly designated for "Ethiopia hunger relief" or "Africa hunger relief." Gifts marked for "world hunger" will be used worldwide.

More than \$1.7 million from Southern Baptists—about a fourth of total FMB relief allocations this year—has been spent for food distribution in Africa. More than \$3 million has gone for general relief and development on the continent. In November the Foreign Mission Board sent \$50,000 to Ethiopia to help feed about 15,000 people daily. A team also was sent to explore other ways the board and Southern Baptist missionaries in Ethiopia can help.

In addition to the proposed airlift, the statement of concern called for "bold and sacrificial legislation to provide not only funds to feed affected people but policies which allow the African nations to develop, through aid and trade, to their fullest potential."

The first step, the statement suggested, would be early passage in January of a comprehensive Africa relief and recovery funding package for 1985. H.R. 6203, a bill supported by Bread for the World and other anti-hunger groups, died in the last session of Congress. It would have provided \$450 million in food and non-food assistance to 28 African nations.

The statement urged President Reagan to form immediately a task force of Congressional, administration, religious and relief leaders to observe the African crisis firsthand and then to develop a comprehensive plan of action that would address chronic and structural problems as well as immediate food needs.

"The time is now," the statement concludes, "for our nation, with all its rich blessing, to work with other nations to end the suffering of our brothers and sisters in Africa."

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Baptist Doctor Spearheads
Mexico Fire Relief Effort

By Judy Garrett

Baptist Press
11/30/84

MEXICO CITY (BP)—A Baptist doctor is helping Mexican churches and Southern Baptist representatives respond effectively to the disastrous natural gas explosions that destroyed a poor section of Mexico City Nov. 19.

Sergio Rodriguez Maldonado, a member of Good Shepherd Baptist Church in nearby Cuautitlan Izcalli, got involved almost immediately in relief efforts. When his pastor called for action on the night of the disaster, Rodriguez suggested the church join in work already begun by the Lions Club he belongs to.

Many members went straight from church to the Lions Club that night to help sort and deliver clothing, food and other donations. Rodriguez and his wife worked until 4 a.m.

Women in the church prepared food for some of the homeless, but access to the refugee area was blocked. Rodriguez gained permission for them to enter through contacts he developed several years ago as a medical service coordinator for the police. He took his pastor into the area to offer consolation and spiritual help for homeless families.

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Rodriguez also has channeled food, medicine and clothing from other Mexican Baptist churches and Southern Baptist representatives. Southern Baptist representatives David Daniell of Houston and Larry Gay of Birmingham, Ala., bought blankets and medical supplies with Foreign Mission Board relief funds. The medical supplies were given to two government hospitals treating burn victims. The blankets will be distributed along with gospels and tracts to needy families when the disaster area is opened.

Southern Baptist personnel requested \$3,500 in relief funds from the Foreign Mission Board Nov. 29 for more blankets, medicine and food. Additional requests are expected.

Rodriguez has traveled through the restricted areas of Zacatengo and Tlalnepantla, where he estimates 29,000 refugees from the disaster have been sheltered until they can be relocated in government housing.

He has seen many of the thousands of surviving burn victims. Most were only superficially burned, but Rodriguez says more than 600 severely burned people will need long-term treatment, including skin grafts. The death toll, meanwhile, has climbed past 400.

To date no Baptists are known dead or seriously injured, but a member of a mission church in Cuautpec had not been seen days after the explosions. Since the area is still sealed off and no one has been able to search for her, it is believed she could be alive but unable to contact family members or other Baptists. No major damage to Baptist churches or homes in the area has been reported.

Gloria Avina Ruiz, a student at the Mexican Baptist Theological Seminary in the city, was visiting her parents in La Laguna, a neighborhood near the disaster area, when the first explosion occurred early in the morning. They went to their roof and saw flames and people running down the streets dressed only in pajamas or wrapped in blankets.

Ruiz and her brother took their father's large truck to help evacuate residents. Arriving at the disaster scene, however, they were turned back by authorities because of the danger. They were on the street when a second explosion came. The sky was completely light from the fires. People ran randomly, shouting "No, it's not possible!"

The two drove home and opened the small Baptist church next to their home to refugees. They served tea and offered consolation, but many people were too dazed to understand what they said. Later their neighborhood was also briefly evacuated. It was "a nightmare become reality," she said. "Now is when people need us."

Baptist physician Rodriguez believes the largest long-term problem will be the thousands of people suffering psychological trauma from the experience. He expects many to seek counseling.

Baptist relief work must not be "a little here, a little there, but rather specific help where really needed," he said. Baptists will go house-to-house distributing aid as soon as the refugees are relocated and affected zones are reopened. "We will be there to meet not only their material needs, but their spiritual needs as well."

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(Garrett is the Southern Baptist press representative in Mexico.)

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

East Asia Director Hays
To Retire At End Of 1985

Baptist Press
11/30/84

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--George Hays, director for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's work in east Asia, will retire at the end of 1985.

Hays, who turns 65 next October, is liaison between the board and almost 500 Southern Baptist missionaries in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao.

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He came to the assignment nearly a decade ago with 25 years' experience as a missionary teacher and administrator in Japan. During his last three years in Japan, Hays was field representative for his predecessor, the late James Belote. In that role he related to Southern Baptist missionaries throughout the region.

The Foreign Mission Board's East Asia Committee has begun searching for Hays' successor. His replacement may be recommended for approval at the April meeting of the board, according to Charles Bryan, senior vice-president for overseas operations. Bryan hopes the new director can join the Richmond staff in time to work for several months alongside Hays.

"It's imperative that (Hays' successor) have maximum understanding of the cultures and the field, and Foreign Mission Board operations, at the beginning," Bryan said. He predicted the new director would likely be an active or former missionary with extensive field experience.

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Former Radio Exec Joins ACTS
As Mission Service Volunteer

Baptist Press
11/30/84

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--After 37 years in broadcasting, Wayne Hudson has at least one challenge left--to use the knowledge and skills he has accumulated over the years to get the gospel message on the air.

That's why Hudson, former president of Plough Broadcasting Company, signed up as a Mission Service Corp volunteer to donate his time and talents to the American Christian Television System, Southern Baptists' new television network.

Hudson has distinguished himself in broadcasting as a leader in the National Association of Broadcasters while operating 12 radio stations from his company's base in Memphis, Tenn. But when Plough sold its radio holdings in October, Hudson wasn't tempted to retire.

"I'm not that type of person," he said. "I've got to stay busy. I saw this (ACTS) as an opportunity to pay back a little of what the Lord has done for me over the years."

Hudson said he was attracted to ACTS because of its emphasis on local churches and de-emphasis on pleas for money over the air. "ACTS is, for the first time, going to present the church on television as it should be presented," he said.

Hudson will serve as management and operations consultant for low-power television, developing procedures for operating the low-power stations that are licensed to ACTS. He has already written an operations manual for the networks' stations, drawing on his years of management experience in radio.

ACTS has been licensed by the Federal Communications Commission for six low-power television stations, which will carry the family and Christian entertainment programming of the six-month-old network. Two stations are already operating, in addition to the 136 cable systems carrying ACTS. The network has almost 100 other low-power applications awaiting further FCC action.

As new low-power stations are built for ACTS, Hudson will see each one gets off to a smooth start. He will work on call for ACTS while continuing to live in Memphis. Hudson and his wife, Betty, are members of First Baptist Church, Memphis. He is chairman of the church's television committee.

John Summers, executive vice-president and general manager of the National Association of Broadcasters, described as "top-notch" Hudson's involvement with the National Association of Broadcasters, which included chairing the NAB Code Board and serving on the Cuban Interference Task Force. He also was a director of the Radio Advertising Bureau.

Hudson becomes the fourth Mission Service Corp volunteer currently working with ACTS, which is operated by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Radio-Television Commission.

Cauthen Receiving
Therapy At Home

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)—Baker James Cauthen is receiving outpatient therapy at his apartment near Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., after being released from a rehabilitation hospital Nov. 23.

The executive director-emeritus of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board is making good progress following a mild stroke he suffered Oct. 22, according to Mrs. Cauthen. He is walking outside some with a cane and exercising to help regain strength in his left hand and arm, she said.

The Cauthens plan to fly to their son's home in Greensboro, N.C., Dec. 16 and then drive to their home in Richmond, Va., a few days later.

Cauthen has cancelled his speaking engagements for the rest of the year. He had been teaching two classes as visiting professor of missions at the seminary.

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Indiana Baptists
Raise CP Percentage

Baptist Press
11/30/84

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (BP)—The State Convention of Baptists in Indiana have raised the budget percentage they send to national Southern Baptist Convention national programs for the first time since 1978.

The 1985 budget, calls for \$1,567,000 to be shared through the state convention. Of that amount, 32 percent or \$501,440 will be forwarded to the SBC Cooperative Program. The percentage has been at 31.5 percent.

For the first time in memory convention officers were elected without challenge. Robert Latham, pastor of Northside Baptist, Indianapolis, was reelected president. Bob Golden, pastor of East Tipp Baptist, Lafayette, was elected first vice-president, and James Harris, pastor of Southside Baptist Church, South Bend, was elected second vice-president.

The messengers adopted a missions program entitled, "Upward, Onward 86 By 86" which calls for strengthening 86 existing works financially, organizationally and spiritually. It also anticipates the development of 86 new work starts by the end of 1986.

The messengers adopted five resolutions concerning controversy in the SBC, pornography, child abuse and neglect, gambling and abortion.

The resolution regarding "controversy" provoked minor discussion and an amendment. The committee called for "persons charged with editorial responsibilities be requested to refrain from statements that fuel the controversy." The amendment deleted that line.

Executive Director-Treasurer R.V. Haygood and his wife, Gwen, were honored with a reception following the Wednesday evening session. Haygood completed 15 years of service with the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana on Oct. 31.

The 27th annual meeting of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana will convene on Nov. 5-7 at East Lake Baptist Church, Merrillville.

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BAPTIST PRESS

460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

LYNN MAY HO
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 9TH AVE NO
NASHVILLE TN 37234

NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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