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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer 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, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201-3355, Telephone (214) 720-0550
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth 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) 544-4226

July 1, 1985

85-78

Lebanese Leader Pleads
For More Missionaries

By Irma Duke

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Ghassan Khalaf, president of the Lebanese Baptist Convention, came from "the valley of terror" to Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center to plead with Southern Baptists not to give up on Lebanon.

Noting that as he left Beirut he saw the plane which had been hijacked June 14 by terrorists, he said he felt God could use the American hostage crisis to spotlight the needs in his country. Khalaf was at Ridgecrest to participate in a consultation on strategy for global evangelization, but asked for time on the Foreign Missions Week program occurring simultaneously.

To the 1,800 gathered June 27 for Foreign Missions Week, the 39-year-old pastor said he was coming from the "valley of terror but I'm holding a rose in my hand to testify the Lord is faithful."

Despite the turmoil in his country for the last 10 years, he stood on the speaker's platform with his wife and eight-year-old daughter and said, "Our decision is to stay there, to live there, and to die there."

He said he'd rather die there than see "Christianity abolished from the land where our Savior was born." His wife's brother was killed in the conflict last year.

"Sometimes we feel we cannot continue like this but everyday the Lord gives us new grace to remain." According to Khalaf, every home on the Christian side is welcoming another family from among the thousands "kicked out" of their homes by Muslims. "We are living together, helping each other," he said, and then thanked Southern Baptists for all the help they have sent. Twenty-six Southern Baptist missionaries are assigned to Lebanon and more than \$308,000 has been given for relief during the last 10 years.

In an earlier interview, Khalaf said Lebanon is the only free country in the Middle East where Christians can openly say they are Christians and express their doctrines, their way of life without any pressure. "Pray with us that the Lord may keep this country free."

Thirteen or 14 million nominal Christians live in the Arab world, he said, and "they look to Lebanon as Muslims look to Mecca. When Christianity in Lebanon is safe and free, the morale of all Christians in the area is high."

"Dear friends," he pleaded with the foreign missions group, "you are the only hope for Christianity in the Middle East because you are real Christians." The Christian label in the Middle East many times means non-Muslim and does not reflect a belief in Jesus Christ.

Recently Khalaf spent an hour with Charles Malik, the former president of the General Council of the United Nations. Malik spent half the time telling of his admiration for Southern Baptists, who he said "preach prophetically" and "carry their Bibles to church."

Khalaf believes revival is coming to the Muslim world. He said he's studied the history of great revivals and the Middle East has never had one. "It's our turn."

He said he has a vision the Lord will use Baptists in Lebanon to win millions to Christ, referring to the 170 million Arabs in the Middle East.

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"I urge you if you want to be in the midst of the greatest revival, come and minister in the Middle East, especially in our country.

"Don't forget our suffering country," he added. "Don't say it's difficult, unsafe. We will keep you in our hearts."

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Senate Panel Approves
Silent Prayer Amendment

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
7/1/85

WASHINGTON (BP)--Taking the first step in what supporters hope will result in nullifying a recent Supreme Court decision, a Senate subcommittee recommended June 26 a constitutional amendment approving periods of silent prayer in public schools.

Led by chairman Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, the Subcommittee on the Constitution voted 4-1 to send S.J. Res. 2 to the full Judiciary Committee for further consideration. If that panel approves the measure, it would then be put on the Senate calendar for full debate.

The subcommittee vote came one week after a one-day hearing on the measure was held, during which senators heard both proponents and opponents. Hatch said then he called the hearing in the aftermath of a June 4 Supreme Court ruling that struck down an Alabama law prescribing a minute of silent prayer or meditation at the beginning of the school day.

At its June 26 meeting, the panel took only 10 minutes to vote approval. Alone in objecting was Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill. Those besides Hatch voting to approve were Sens. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C.; Charles F. Grassley, R-Iowa; and Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz.

Most Senate observers believe the full Judiciary Committee is likely to approve the measure. But its chances for achieving the necessary two-thirds majority in the full Senate are seen as unsure.

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Baylor's McCall
Honored By Educators

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Abner V. McCall, president emeritus of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, was selected as the 1985 recipient of the Charles D Johnson Award.

The Baylor educator received the award during the annual meeting in Nashville of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

McCall, who first joined Baylor in 1938 as an instructor of law, later became dean of the law school. He was named president of the Texas Baptist school in 1961 and served until 1981 when he became chancellor. In June he was named president emeritus upon his retirement.

The Charles D Johnson Award was established by the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention to honor persons who have made a significant contribution to Southern Baptist higher education.

The award recognizes Johnson who authored Higher Education of Southern Baptists and was chairman of the Education Commission from 1932 to 1953.

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Walker Tells Educators
Perceptions Are Realities

By Lonnie Wilkey

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—In a time of controversy, perceptions are realities, Arthur L. Walker Jr. contends.

Walker, executive director/treasurer of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, was one of several speakers who delivered challenges to educators attending the annual meeting in Nashville of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

"To be perceived as insensitive, concerned only for power and unresponsive to the concern of others may have little relationship to actual attitudes and motivations.

"But if the perception is there, it makes the feeling that these are true a basis for broken relationships," Walker said.

Walker reminded presidents and academic deans of the association their institutions are in a most difficult position because they must be sensitive to and the perpetuators of the values and advances of previous generations.

Also, he continued, Baptist schools must understand the purposes and missions for which they were brought into existence.

Walker said few persons would be satisfied with educational institutions which only look to the past and which only teach positions generally understood.

"Southern Baptists have rooted their doctrine in the authority of the revelation of God. It is not whether it is written. It is because it came from God originally that it is authority. And we must emphasize that," he declared.

Walker told educators transmitting the heritage becomes the basis for challenging for the future. "To do less is a failure of responsibility," he charged.

The agency head challenged educators to recognize "our task in education means we must constantly hold to the two parts of our responsibility."

"And when we are stretched in opposite directions, it will feel at times as though we are crucified."

He reminded the educators, however, the Lord said those who follow him would have to take up his or her cross. "So crucifixion should not be surprising when we follow Christ," he said.

College educators also heard Lloyd Elder, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, urge them to take a strong leadership role in helping to bring about denomination renewal.

Educators, he said, should take a stand because they have much at stake. "Although the lightning rod has been mounted on the rooftop of the Southern Baptist Convention, the lightning bolt is often aimed at Baptist colleges of the state conventions," he warned.

Other speakers included: Paul W. Brand, chief of the rehabilitation branch at the National Hansen's Disease Center in Carville, La., who delivered the H.I. Hester Lectures; John W. Harris Jr., a professor at David Lipscomb College in Nashville, and J. Thomas Greer, a religion professor at Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark.

During the association's business session John E. Johns, president of Furman University, Greenville, S.C., was elected president of the group for 1985-86. Other officers include: N.H. McCrummen, president, Judson College, Marion, Ala., vice-president; James C. Stamper, academic vice-president, Belmont College, Nashville, Tenn., secretary and Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive secretary.

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Educators adopted a resolution against the Civil Rights Act of 1985 saying the act "has its purpose to impose Federal jurisdiction over Baptist colleges and universities where such jurisdiction is based solely upon the enrollment of students who are recipients of Federal funds for the purpose of education."

College presidents and deans also voiced displeasure with "tax simplification plans which have a chilling effect on charitable giving and urged Congress to take steps to continue to encourage individuals, corporations and foundations to support charitable causes through tax incentives."

Educators also resolved to "urge Congress to assure the freedom and independence of church-related colleges and universities by encouraging educational diversity and assuring freedom of choice by the student without involving the government unduly in regulating the life and work of religious institutions."

The 1986 meeting of the association will be June 4-7 in Gatlinburg, Tenn., during the National Congress on Leadership, co-sponsored by the association and the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Missionaries Still At Work
In World's Trouble Spots

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
7/1/85

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Terrorists, wreaking havoc in the Middle East, Latin America and elsewhere last month, shoved their way onto network newscasts and the front pages of the world's newspapers.

Southern Baptist missionaries, continuing to share the gospel in many of the world's trouble spots, got no such attention. They don't want it or need it, unless it comes in the form of prayer.

Bill O'Brien, executive vice-president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, said the recent escalation in global turmoil is "a reminder that missionaries continue to live in a real world marked by this kind of terrorism.

"As Baptists see the datelines from (news) stories around the world, it should be a call to prayer for missionaries and nationals who are faithfully working to reconcile people to Christ," O'Brien said.

In most of the 106 countries where 3,500-plus Southern Baptist missionaries work, terrorism is no more of an immediate problem than it is for most Baptists back home. Missionaries face the same general considerations as American tourists and government or business employees working abroad.

In countries where terrorists have struck, missionaries take appropriate precautions, such as limiting or varying their travels, or not lingering too long at home in front of large windows. Still, they continue to evangelize and undergird local churches.

"We are all being careful as we go about our activities and ministries," wrote a missionary in El Salvador, adding, "Please keep us in your prayers." She noted the cafe where leftist gunmen shot and killed four Marines, two U.S. businessmen and seven Salvadorans June 19 in San Salvador is about two miles from where missionaries live.

Bill Stennett, literature missionary to the Central American country since 1977, addressed the memorial service for the Marines in the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador. A fellow missionary reported "security was tight and everyone was solemn, as could be expected."

But Stennett wants Baptists to see a more important dimension of his work. In 1983, for example, "I must have baptized over 100 people," he said. "But that didn't get out. What got out was the one day we almost got our car stolen" by a band of urban guerrillas.

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Beirut, Lebanon, a city of about two million people, is "just one of a great many places in the world where people are trying to go on with their lives" in the midst of strife, said Nancie Wingo, missionary educator on furlough from there.

Countless Lebanese "want to get on with their lives...want to do something good with their lives," she said. "There are more people who relate to each other in very kind and loving ways than those who are perpetuating all the meanness."

Foreign Mission Board policy gives each missionary family full latitude to decide whether to continue working in a trouble spot or move to a safer location.

Yet even when tension isn't at a peak, missionaries still face understandable concerns. One missionary in strife-torn Zimbabwe, realizing she had to come to grips with her fear, prayed, "Lord, I can't live this way here. Take it from me, or I can't stay here." The prayer was answered, she says. The fear left.

Living with fear can be a day-to-day prayer concern, noted Betty Law, FMB administrator who worked in Cuba prior to and following Fidel Castro's rise to power. She said a missionary tends to be more concerned for family members than for himself.

Fear is lessened by "a conviction you're doing what the Lord wants you to do, that you're where he wants you to be," said Bob Polk, a missionary on furlough from Colombia, where drug traffickers threatened the lives of American diplomats earlier this year.

Especially encouraging to missionaries in trouble spots are letters from family, friends and church members in the United States. "A lot of times, a whole Sunday school class would sign" a card or letter, recalled Polk.

But, he added, "What they (folks in the States) pick up from the news media and what we feel actually living in the situation are, sometimes, two different things. I guess you kind of program yourself to expect a certain amount of violence. Of course, you learn to avoid the places where it's going on."

Missionary prayer concerns reflect a love for the countries where they serve. "This place needs prayer like no other I've ever seen," wrote Katie Warren, another missionary to Colombia. "God has placed some wonderful families here and working together we hope to see more results each day."

LYNN MAY
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
901 COMMERCE
NASHVILLE, TN, 37203

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