



-- FEATURES

produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Craig Bird, Feature Editor

July 10, 1985

85-82

Baptist Hijacked
On TWA 847

By Bob Stanley

LOS ANGELES (BP)--A 33-year-old Ethiopian Baptist physician sat quietly behind the speaker's platform at the 15th Baptist World Congress July 5 and told how trust in God had seen him through 33 hours as a passenger aboard hijacked TWA Flight 847 before his release in Algiers Saturday, June 15.

Berhanu Habte, a layman and chairman of the Baptist Evangelical Association of Ethiopia, was on his way to the congress in Los Angeles when he boarded the TWA plane in Athens, Greece.

A week before, during a daily prayer time, the thought of a possible hijacking crossed his mind. "I dismissed it from my mind because I normally have positive thoughts. It was so strange."

But the next day, again in his prayer time, "it (the thought of hijacking) came again, very clearly, and came at a time when I was not bothered with details about the trip. I took it seriously and prayed about it. I said, 'I will commit my way into his hand.' And he takes control."

From the time he realized the TWA plane was actually being hijacked--about 10 minutes after leaving Athens--"the first thing that came into my mind was this prayer. To think that I had committed this to God was very consoling. From the outset, I trusted."

Later, on the final leg of the flight, Habte lost his wedding ring and "a few dollars" to the terrorists.

"I had a good time of meditation. I lost my wedding ring. I can lose my belongings, can be separated from family and friends, but nobody can take my salvation in Christ," he said.

"I did not have bad feelings toward the hijackers. In fact, at that point, I got very excited. A change came over my life...a joy, boldness, assurance. I told the people around me 'Have faith in God, he will deliver us.'"

The man sitting next to him, whose wife had been taken off the plane with most of the other women, asked him if he were a Christian then called out to another passenger, "Have faith in God--me and this man here are Christians. Everything will be all right."

Until he agreed to an interview July 5, he had not talked with anyone from the press. Not until the hostages had been released, he said, did he feel he could talk about his experiences on the flight.

Habte was one of five persons who gave brief testimonies during a Baptist World Aid report. In his account of the needs in his country, he made no mention of the hijacking. But Archie R. Goldie referred to it in closing remarks.

Habte said the young American killed by the hijackers was seated two rows behind him (in row 13). Robert Dean Stéthem, a U.S. Navy petty officer and diver, was beaten during the plane's first stop in Beirut.

"They took him off in Beirut. He was beaten and the stewardess helped him back to his seat. Her shirt was stained with his blood. The hostess offered him some aspirin."

--more--

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

But Habte heard the young man for the last time when he was moved up into the first class section of the plane. "I heard a feeble groaning from the first class coach, but I couldn't make out anything else." He said he did not hear when Stethem was shot.

As the doctor recounted his experience, a congress participant standing by asked if he had any idea why Stethem was singled out to be killed. "They knew he was a military person," Habte replied. "They wanted to demonstrate they were serious--he was a threat in their mind."

Habte's trip began on an Ethiopian Airlines plane at 1 p.m. June 13 in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital where he works.

He said he noticed nothing abnormal when he boarded the TWA flight in Athens and took off. He recalled he was seated by a window looking at the islands below when, about 10 minutes into the flight, he heard a "clatter of noise."

"I looked up and saw two young people both with hand grenades and one with a pistol in his hand. They were shouting. I saw the situation and realized we were being hijacked."

It was almost dark as the plane arrived in Algiers. The passengers were told to put their heads down. "It was a good time and position for prayer, to really see God was in control. In my mind I turned over God's promises. I was also praying for the hijackers, so young but in a very deadly business. I prayed for everybody there."

After some hours--"it was hard to keep time exactly"--he noticed the plane moving again; the sign said to fasten their seat belts. Once airborne, they were not told where they were heading, but Habte said he felt it was Beirut. Nothing much happened during the night flight, and they arrived in Beirut about 2 a.m.

This time, the hijacked plane was refused permission to land. The passengers were told on the public address system to prepare for a crash landing. There was tension, Habte admits. But he thought another time: even this God can handle.

After five minutes or so, the captain came on the P.A. system, said the problem had been solved. The landing was normal. The passengers were given bread, an orange and an apple. Then the plane took off again, about 5:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 15.

This time, the terrorists took money, jewelry and watches, including Habte's wedding ring and a few dollars. That was when the doctor experienced the strong sense of God's assurance and began sharing this with those around him.

When the plane landed in Algiers that afternoon, they told us the Greek government had promised to free one of their friends who had been detained in Athens.

When the Lebanese who had been held in Athens arrived about 6 p.m. Habte and those with him were released.

Asked his sensations on being allowed to leave the plane, he said, "I really just felt as secure as ever." TWA people, the press and U.S. embassy representatives were waiting for him in the airport terminal. He was taken to a hotel in Algiers.

The next day, Habte and the others were taken on a chartered plane to Paris. He said everyone was "really very helpful." They got new passports from the American embassy, but were told to avoid press interviews for fear it would jeopardize the remaining hostages.

As Habte prepared to leave the Los Angeles Convention Center, delegates wished him well, including one minister who asked to give him \$2,000 for Ethiopian relief.

--30--

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Baptist Press

SBC Church Constituted
In 50th State Capital

AUGUSTA, Maine (BP)--The "capitalization" of the Southern Baptist Convention is complete.

Augusta, Maine, became the 50th state capital in the United States to be home to a Southern Baptist Church June 23 when Cushnoc Baptist Chapel became Cushnoc Baptist Church. Significantly, the church is located on 5.6 acres which overlooks the capitol building.

"The establishment of any church is significant, but Cushnoc Baptist Church has some additional psychological significance in that it says Southern Baptists are involved at the center of each state," said James H. Currin, executive director of the Baptist Convention of New England, who spoke at the service.

Mr. and Mrs. Allan Sweet of Augusta wrote the Home Mission Board in April 1982, requesting a Southern Baptist church. Robert Brindle, director of missions for the Upper New England Baptist Association, and Dolores Thomas, church planter for Maine, responded.

In June 1982 a home Bible study was begun followed by Backyard Bible Clubs.

In December of that year Thomas Memorial Baptist Church in Lewiston, Maine, sponsor of the work in Augusta, licensed Mike Allen to the ministry and charged him with the pastorate of the Cushnoc Baptist Chapel. Two couples from the church were commissioned to work in the mission.

Allen was "called" as the first fulltime pastor of the church. There were more than 30 charter members present for the constituting service along with more than 70 visitors.

F.J. "Jack" Redford, director of the Home Mission Board's church extension division, challenged those present to think of why Southern Baptists begin churches and why they began Cushnoc Baptist Church.

He said theology--including the belief every person should have the opportunity to hear the message of salvation through Jesus Christ and every person should have the privilege of attending a fellowship of Christians guided by New Testament standards--is the basic motivation for starting churches.

--30--

Carter, Graham Address
Baptist World Alliance

By Roy Jennings

Baptist Press
7/10/85

LOS ANGELES (BP)--Amid challenges from former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and evangelist Billy Graham and reports from more than a dozen Baptist bodies, almost 8,000 delegates to the 15th Baptist World Congress spoke out on issues ranging from religious liberty to terrorism and chose an Australian educator to lead the Baptist World Alliance the next five years.

During the six-day congress at the Los Angeles Convention Center, the delegates, greeted by President Ronald Reagan by video tape and Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley in person, were treated to a program which drew upon flag ceremonies, drama, exhibits, native costumes, festivals and music to develop the theme, "Out of Darkness into the Light of Christ."

Godfrey Noel Vose, principle of Baptist Theological College of Western Australia, Bentley, won the BWA presidency without opposition, succeeding Duke McCall of Louisville, Ky.

Besides religious liberty and terrorism, the delegates took positions on racism, conflict in Nicaragua, peace and disarmament, world aid, Christian life styles and the United Nations.

In reaffirming "the cherished principle of religious liberty," the delegates urged all Baptists "to become more informed about the circumstances of other believers and to pray, speak and act in every way possible for the support and encouragement of the many thousands of Christians called upon to suffer for their faith in these days."

--more--

Efforts to amend the resolution to single out persecuted Baptists in Russia as an example failed. The resolutions committee chose not to single out any one nation because it could have named a number of countries, a spokesman explained.

In condemning racism in general and apartheid in particular, the delegates declared "We urge Baptists everywhere to call upon their government to stand firmly against all forms of support for South Africa as long as apartheid remains on their statute book."

The practice of terrorism was labeled "a violation of international law and as assault on the conscience of humanity."

The resolution on Nicaragua called on all the powers concerned to "draw back from this dangerous confrontation by discontinuing the arms build-up and the economic blockade."

Another urged "Baptists everywhere to examine their ways of life in the light of scriptural injunctions to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless, heal the sick, care for the disadvantaged and visit the prisoners," the resolution said.

Another resolution commended the work of the United Nations on its 40th anniversary for improving world health, curtailing drug traffic, improving the standard of living in developing countries, providing disaster relief and refugee aid, improving food production for the hungry and poor and reducing racial discrimination.

The delegates also used the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II to call on nations to end the conventional and nuclear arms race and to welcome current and November talks between leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States.

Delegates accepted an amendment urging all nuclear powers to enact immediately a verifiable moratorium on the manufacture of all nuclear weapons and to seek mutually the abolition by negotiation of all nuclear arms.

Gerhard Claas, general secretary of the alliance, exhorted Baptists worldwide to strive for reconciliation among peoples and for peace on earth in his "state of the alliance" address. "We are living under the steady threat of nuclear catastrophe. Baptist people therefore must give their very best possible support to any peacemaking efforts. We must try to stop the arms race," Claas said.

Claas reported the alliance now consists of 131 member unions/conventions with a total membership of more than 34 million baptized believers.

Carter, a Southern Baptist, drew repeated applause with his plea for fellow Baptists and other Christians to validate their Christianity by meeting human need and leading the fight against any form of human oppression.

He urged Baptists to be certain they were following Christ's example in exhibiting qualities of peace, humility, concern for others, forgiveness, mercy, generosity and even a willingness to be persecuted in God's name.

Carter underscored the need to speak out for oppressed people wherever they are--in the Soviet Union, the migrants in this country or in any other nation.

He said the superpowers in particular tend to believe the exertion of our enormous military strength is preferable to diplomacy and negotiation in the resolution of international differences and the sale of military weapons is one of the best ways to expand our influence in the developing world, but, "This is a tragic mistake and should never be condoned."

The delegates were buoyed by reports from its departments, commissions and committees, particularly the account of how BWA member bodies administered more than \$21 million in hunger relief around the globe in 1984.

Testimonies from lesser known Baptists like Aubrey Huskey of San Diego and Berhanu Habte, an Ethiopian physician, also stirred the delegates.

Huskey, a 41-year-old carpenter, organized an airlift of food supplies, blankets and medicine to Ethiopia. Habte described a chilling 33 hours as a hostage of Arab terrorists while enroute to the world congress from Ethiopia and of the opportunity for Christian witness on TWA Flight 847.

In the presidential address, McCall told the delegates white Christians are a minority for the first time in 1,000 years and urged black, brown, yellow and red Christians to move out ahead and lead in the name of Jesus Christ.

Besides electing the 63-year-old Vose, first Australian to head BWA, the delegates also chose 12 vice-presidents, including Christine Gregory of Danville, Va., former president of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, as first vice-president.

Other new vice-presidents are: Atinuke Bamijoko, former president of the Baptist Woman's Union of Africa; Samson H. Chowdbury, president of the Bangladesh Baptist Fellowship; Rufese S. Escoe, pastor of First Baptist Church of Paso Ancho, San Jose, Costa Rica; Peter Fehr, a physician and past president of the North American Baptist Conference, U.S.A., of Minneapolis, Minn.; Roger Fredrikson, pastor, First Baptist Church, Wichita, Kan.; Josip Horak, president, Baptist Union of Yugoslavia, Zagreb, Yugoslavia; Theodore J. Jemison, president, National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., Baton Rouge, La.; Birgit Karlsson, general secretary, Baptist Union of Sweden, Stockholm, Sweden; Billy Kim, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Suwon, Korea; Lorenzo Klink, pastor, First Baptist Church, Neuguen, Argentina, and Joao Makondekwa, president, All Africa Baptist Fellowship, Luanda, Angola.

In other action, the delegates voted to hold their next world congress the first full week of July 1990 in Seoul, Korea.

A big disappointment to BWA leaders at the congress was the small crowd of less than 8,000. They expected 20,000. BWA leaders blamed other Baptist meetings scheduled immediately before and after the congress and the impact of the strong American dollar on other economies for the delegate shortfall.

In the closing address Saturday, Graham, the international evangelist, challenged the delegates to become "hard men" for Jesus Christ.

Hard men, Graham explained, are those who deny self and follow Christ even unto death.

"That's the kind of Baptists it's going to take to spread the gospel around the world in these closing years of this 20th century."

Still in pain from three broken ribs suffered in a bathroom fall earlier in the week, Graham spoke in support of the Congress theme, using 1 Peter 2:9 as his text. Graham urged the delegates to return to their first spiritual love, look for open doors of opportunity and go with Christ's presence and power.

"God will open doors of opportunity for you," Graham declared. "The technology is at our disposal to touch the whole world with the gospel. There are open doors to do something about the famine in Africa and there are open doors to do something about social justice in other parts of the world."

--30--

Pastor And Deacon Killed
In California Church Shooting

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
7/10/85

LOS ANGELES (BP)--The pastor and senior deacon of Los Angeles' First Chinese Baptist Church were shot to death June 30 by a former member of the church, who later was slain himself by an off-duty sheriff's deputy.

--more--

Los Angeles County sheriff's homicide investigators said Assistant Pastor Gregory R. Owyang, 36, and Senior Deacon Li Fook King, 58, were gunned down by Dan Bong Jow, described by church officials as emotionally disturbed. Sheriff's investigators said Jow apparently was bent on also shooting his former wife and members of her family who attended the church but hadn't arrived at the time of the shooting.

Witnesses said Jow was killed by Donald Leverage, an off-duty sheriff's deputy, who was visiting the 8 a.m. service. The 350 worshippers at the early morning service scrambled for safety as Leverage and Jow exchanged fire. No other injuries were reported.

First Chinese Baptist Church with 1,000 members is one of the largest churches affiliated with The Southern Baptist General Convention of California.

The bizarre shooting happened on the eve of the 15th Baptist World Congress which opened a six-day run July 2 in the Los Angeles Convention Center. The Chinese church had been helping for the congress.

Church officials and members, visibly shaken by the shooting, were asked to break into small groups and pray, by another assistant pastor, Herman Tang.

Li was declared dead about one hour after the shooting and Owyang died of a gunshot wound to the head about ten hours later at County-USC Medical Center.

Tang said Jow had not attended services for about five years and had been "emotionally sick" in recent years, had lost his job and been divorced after leaving the church.

California Southern Baptist leaders were shocked over the news of the shooting.

Owyang, although officially listed as assistant pastor, actually was acting as the church's senior pastor since the retirement several years ago of longtime pastor Richard Lin.

Owyang was well known throughout California Southern Baptist circles for his preaching, officials said. Li had been a member of the church for 30 years, and was an acknowledged lay leader in Chinese Baptist circles.

Owyang is survived by his wife, Annie, and three children. Li is survived by his wife, Irene, and three children.

--30--

Howard Named Executive Director,
National Fellowship Of Baptist Men

Baptist Press
7/10/85

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--M.B. Howard, a 62-year-old retired postal employee from Covington, Tenn., has been named the first executive director of the National Fellowship of Baptist Men.

He will work without salary as a Missions Service Corps volunteer. The Brotherhood Commission will provide him with office space, secretarial assistance and travel expenses.

The Fellowship of Baptist Men, a part of the Brotherhood Commission, encourages Baptist men to organize on the basis of vocation, interest, and/or skills and to meet to share ways of using their skills in witnessing their Christian faith.

Howard is a member of Oak Grove Baptist Church in Covington where he is director of the senior adult Sunday school. He is in his eighth year as associational director of Baptist Men for the Big Hatchie Baptist Association and is in his third year as president of Tennessee Baptist Men.

--30--

Three Grow To Forty In Prison Bible Study

QUEZALTENANGO, Guatemala (BP)--In a 6- by 4-foot prison cell in Granja Penal, a prison farm near Quezaltenango, Charles Collins sat on a concrete slab covered with rough handwoven blankets.

For three prisoners clustered around Collins, such slabs serve as their beds each night. Dingy blankets decorated the moldy concrete walls around them. One man told Collins prison officials allow him to sew soccer balls together to earn a small sum to send to his family. The prisoners then listened as the Southern Baptist missionary began to read from his Bible.

The next week, Collins' Bible study mushroomed to 12 prisoner participants; within a month, as attendance passed 40, the gathering was moved to a church building on the prison grounds and a worship service was added.

In two months, 25 inmates had completed a course, "Lessons for New Believers," and received their certificates from Jose Angel Samol, Baptist seminary extension director from Guatemala City.

More importantly, the first convert from the Bible study was baptized.

Today, Collins reports, someone accepts Christ as personal savior in almost every service. Professions of faith number 15, baptisms, three.

Family heartbreak first led Collins to the prison. A concerned father, a student in Collins' "Baptist Beliefs and Practices" seminary extension class, asked the missionary to help minister at the prison farm. The man's son was serving time there for a drug conviction. Now the son is part of Collins' Bible study.

--30--

Baptist Disaster Relief Teams 'Answer' Call From Red Cross

Baptist Press
7/10/85

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Between 6,000-10,000 Californians dead, 40,000-50,000 needing medical attention, and another one million seeking help. The national Red Cross office in Washington wanted to know how Southern Baptists could respond.

That was the situation when Cameron Byler, the new coordinator of Baptist Men's disaster relief efforts, answered his telephone at the Brotherhood Commission.

"It was a nationwide simulated exercise--FEMA Response '85," explains Byler. FEMA is the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"It was a table-top exercise where everything was done by phone. We do this type of exercise occasionally to increase readiness." The scenario June 18 was an earthquake measuring 8.3 on the Richter scale had pummeled southern California.

"The Red Cross called us, and I called four state Brotherhood directors who are responsible for disaster relief work in their states. Those states responded immediately, saying they could move vans and crews in 24 to 48 hours."

State men in Oklahoma, Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana were the only ones Byler called for the drill, but quickly added other states would be asked for assistance in a real disaster. "I simply called four states at random," explained the director of Baptist Men and Senior Baptist Men.

For a crisis as large as this simulated one, Byler says, relief efforts would come from all parts of the country.

--30--

Life In A 'Glass House'
Stresses Pastor's Family

By Jim Lowry

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Nearly all ministers' families face extra stress because of life in a glass home and unrealistic expectations.

Although the extra stress may be inevitable because of the role of the minister, church members can contribute to the lessening of stress in the lives of ministers' families, according to Bill Rogers.

Rogers, director of minister-church support division of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and his wife, Martha, led a conference dealing with the quality of family life during the Bible Preaching-Administration Conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

Some of the problems facing many ministers' families include inadequate financing, time pressure, the stigma of failure and the desire of a congregation to have a specialist when most pastors are generalists.

Many of the problems of ministers, and, consequently, their families are self-induced, both Martha and Bill Rogers agree. The problem, they say, is that ministers don't know their strengths and weaknesses, or they hide or disguise them.

Ministers live under the burden of needing to be the ideal, or perfect family, they said. "It is a load we bring to the ministry because we consider ourselves to be super Christians, knowing we are not, but believing the myth."

Rogers, who was a pastor for 24 years, said church members can help ministers and their families by accepting the minister's family as a normal, average, everyday family.

Real and perceived expectations for ministers contribute to the strain, he said. "For instance, some churches have a 'god syndrome' which places God at one level, the pastor at one level and the members one step below the pastor."

The pressures of time are critical for many ministers until the church becomes a "mistress" which consumes all time and interest, leaving little time for the family.

Another pressure for ministers is church members' comparing the pastor to television evangelists. "The whole environment puts stress on ministers," he said.

"Lay persons have a responsibility to be fair and speak the truth--in love--to the minister and his family," he continued. "There must be a willingness by laymen to risk being honest with the minister."

Steps which can be taken by ministers include periodic retreats, such as a trip to Ridgecrest Conference Center for a rest time with the family, and activities where the family interacts. Adequate rest also is important, according to Rogers.

He also recommends having some good friends inside and outside the church, but not allowing friendships to become cliquish.

"Pastors can teach church members to help them and their families," he said. "But the pastor has to tell the church people when he needs help. Church members are not good guessers."

--30--

Protesters Disrupt
BWA Flag Ceremony

Baptist Press
7/10/85

LOS ANGELES (BP)--The pastor of the Fundamentalist Baptist Tabernacle of Los Angeles took credit July 6 for the disruption of the roll call of nations which ended the 15th Baptist World Congress.

--more--

R.L. Hymers Jr., pastor of the church, said it was his associate pastor, J. Richard Olivas, who leaped onto the stage and attempted to rip the Soviet flag off the pole. He was immediately wrestled to the floor and escorted from the area.

Hymers said the action was taken to protest the presence of Soviet ministers attending the Baptist World Alliance.

The flag, Hymers said, was of an athiest nation that persecutes Christians. "The real Baptists in the Soviet Union are ruthlessly persecuted, jailed and killed by the Christian Soviet regime," he charged.

He accused Billy Graham, who gave the closing address to the congress, of "false prophecy."

When asked if it were a Christian act to pull down the falg, Hymers replied, "It is Christian to pull down the flag of murderers."

---30---

Congress Considers
National Lottery

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
7/10/85

WASHINGTON (BP)--While lottery fever has cooled at the state level, the push for a national lottery may be gaining momentum in Congress.

As lawmakers head toward their August recess, five pieces of legislation to establish a national lottery are pending in the House.

Sponsors of the legislation, following the strategy employed by supporters of state-sponsored lotteries, are making a sales pitch which emphasizes designations of lottery revenue for causes such as Social Security, deficit reduction and Medicare.

Rep. Cardiss Collins (D-Ill.), sponsor of one of the lottery bills, said many members of Congress have indicated to her the economic stress being experienced by the nation and the federal government has enhanced chances for passage. Collins said her bill is receiving a more favorable response than a lottery bill she introduced last term.

Nevertheless, the legislation faces formidable opposition.

In 1983, a national lottery bill was opposed by Margaret Heckler, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. Speaking for the administration, Heckler said lottery proceeds appeared to be an unreliable and fluctuating source of income which already was being tapped by a number of states.

This year, opposition has surfaced even from within the gambling industry. Some lottery industry leaders have indicated the federal government should not compete for revenues the states are now getting from legalized lotteries. A few industry spokesmen also have expressed their belief states without lotteries should not have one imposed by the federal government.

Opposition also is being mounted by organizations and religious groups which have been active in opposing legalized gambling at the state level.

Messengers to the 1985 Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas passed a resolution expressing strong opposition to a national lottery. The resolution urged Southern Baptists to "work for the defeat of any proposed national lottery legislation" and specifically called upon the denomination's Christian Life Commission "to continue to oppose vigorously any efforts to establish a national lottery."

Anti-gambling strategist Larry Braidoot of the Christian Life Commission said such opposition is crucial because of the "enormous impact" of a national lottery.

A national lottery, he said, would "swamp the states and put the federal stamp of approval on those very practices which we have been fighting so hard at the state level."

---30---



BAPTIST PRESS

901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

LYNN MAY HO
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
901 COMMERCE
NASHVILLE, TN. 37203

NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION