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**63 Missionaries Appointed;
Parks Says Danger A Reality**

By Art Toalston

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—Danger may lie ahead, 63 new foreign missionaries were warned during an Aug. 11 appointment service at the Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

But that prospect apparently didn't deter Foreign Missions Week conference attendees who felt led to make commitments. Among 109 decisions were 90 commitments to missions. These included nine pastors and their wives, two medical doctors, eight children of missionaries and 18 returning journeymen. Almost 2,000 attended the missions sessions.

R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, said turmoil in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America causes some people to wonder, "Are the missionaries safe?...Why do you let them serve in dangerous places?"

"No, they're not necessarily safe," Parks said. To him, there's a larger question: "Would you have us try to preach the gospel only in the places where there's no risk ...no danger...no suffering?" To avoid ministry in the midst of human crises is to "pretend" to represent Jesus Christ, Parks pointed out.

The Foreign Mission Board also met during the week, devoting most of its time to dialogue and special reports on various phases of its work.

The board did consider a resolution expressing support for the special committee seeking ways to restore harmony among factions in the Southern Baptist Convention. But it chose not to act on it after one board member said such action would only heighten visibility of differences and that the board could best offer its support by taking no action now.

Appointees included the first natives of mainland China and Romania sent as foreign missionaries by the FMB. Another appointee is an ophthalmologist who, as a medical volunteer, has worked in 10 countries.

Reminding the appointees of the sufferings of Jesus, Parks said, "...if he suffered persecution, physical pain, even death...when they persecute you, don't be surprised." It may be that "when you suffer the most will be when you've done right."

The mother of appointee Nina Ellison is a witness to a different kind of suffering—among famine victims in Ethiopia. Just days before the appointment service, Mary Saunders returned from five months of work at Rabel, a remote village in Ethiopia's highlands, where Southern Baptists operate a feeding station for about 30,000 people a month.

Mrs. Saunders is the wife of Davis Saunders, FMB director for eastern and southern Africa. The Saunderses are former missionaries in Africa, and their daughter and son-in-law, Craig, will be youth workers in Uganda. Both mother and daughter also are nurses.

Should her daughter encounter large-scale human crises in the years ahead, Mrs. Saunders believes she will respond well. "God is so good and he does give you the strength, both emotional and physical, that you need." Mrs. Saunders confessed to "a bit of jealousy that I'm not starting over again with her...(to) relive some of the exciting times I've had ministering to people through their physical needs and reaching them for the Lord Jesus Christ."

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In praying about overseas service, Mrs. Ellison recounted, "My biggest question was, 'Is this a call to missions or a call back to something familiar (in Africa)?'" Peace came as she realized that, "It wasn't so much a commitment to a place as a commitment to go anywhere."

Roland and Angie Cheng, natives of mainland China, were appointed to minister among the 6,000 Chinese in San Jose, Costa Rica, while Titus and Fulga Dan, natives of Romania, will be working among several thousand Romanians in Sydney, Australia.

Cheng's father, a Baptist pastor, was separated from his wife, infant son and young daughter when Chinese communists came to power, as he took refuge in the Philippines. The family was reunited in Taiwan in the mid-1950s, after Cheng's mother obtained a permit to leave China with her children.

Mrs. Cheng's parents fled China in 1949 when she was just a few months old. Cheng has been leading the Chinese mission of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

Dan received a permit to leave Romania to marry his wife in 1970, after she intervened with Romanian officials visiting Washington.

Mrs. Dan's parents left Romania during World War II when she was four years old and resettled in Cleveland. Her father is a retired Baptist pastor. Dan is the pastor of Romanian Baptist churches in Cleveland and Akron, Ohio, and a mission in Canton, Ohio.

Ophthalmologist Robert Barbe and his wife, Carolyn, of Tarboro, N.C., will work in Sierra Leone, Africa. Since 1971, he has been a volunteer in 10 countries, on mission trips of one week to one month.

Among other new missionaries are:

--Steve Baker of Silver Spring, Md., the son of veteran missionaries Dwight and Emma Baker, who were in Israel 1950-1976 and now work in India. He will do student work in Macao.

--Karl and Kathryn Malthaner of Oklahoma City. His mother, the late Jessie Crouse, worked briefly as a Southern Baptist missionary in Argentina during the early 1920s. The Malthaners will be dorm parents in Ghana for children of missionaries.

--J.C. and Kathy Harville of Heath, Ohio. Harville made a decision to enter missions after preaching a sermon on the subject. The Harvilles will work in Bolivia, where he will be a religious education consultant.

--William and Marsha Lawson of Louisville, Ky. Lawson, an adjunct New Testament professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, told the Glorieta crowd, "I had no idea, even eight months ago, that God was leading us into foreign missions. I had always supported foreign missions through my teaching, through prayers and gifts, but I'd always assumed that God would send someone else." Lawson will be a biblical studies seminary teacher in Malaysia.

--Butch and Pamela Strickland of McMinnville, Ore. Since his conversion at age nine, "I've always wanted to be a missionary," Strickland, a pastor, said. But "every time I felt that desire, I began to dismiss it as some romantic idea of some impressionable kid." After hearing the late Baker James Cauthen, former head of the Foreign Mission Board, preach on missions, and after much prayer, he concluded God was telling him, "It's all right to want to be a missionary. I want you to be a missionary, too." He will be a church planter in Venezuela.

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Aetna Insurance Chosen
To Provide Coverage

Baptist Press
8/13/85

DALLAS (BP)--Aetna Life and Casualty Insurance Company has been chosen to continue as the carrier of Southern Baptist insurance programs, Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan told trustees during the summer board meeting.

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"Aetna submitted the best insurance package of the five companies that rendered bids for the Southern Baptist programs. However, The Prudential Insurance Company ran a close second," Morgan said. The other companies submitting bids were Equitable Life Assurance Society, John Hancock Mutual Life and Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

He noted benefit packages of Aetna and Prudential were almost the same, but there was not enough difference in the premium to merit a change. "We estimated that it would have cost us \$250,000 plus several months of administrative time to make the carrier change," Morgan said.

A benefit to be added Jan. 1, 1986 is the mail order prescription drug program. Morgan said the patient may continue to present his prescription to the local pharmacy for medications immediately needed and file for benefits under the traditional insurance plan.

The patient also has the choice of mailing prescriptions with a five dollar fee for each prescription for maintenance medications to a central dispensing organization and receive up to a 90-day supply. The dispensing organization will bill the Annuity Board for the balance of the medication costs.

In further business, the Annuity Board reported a \$55 million increase in earnings of retirement plan funds over the first half of 1984 totalling \$73,142,522.

Total assets invested by the board totalled a record \$1,562,021,356.

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From Here To Victory
May Assure Goals

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
8/13/85

WINONA LAKE, Ind. (BP)—Two churches in Michigan and Wisconsin believe "From Here to Victory" will be the key to reaching Sunday school enrollment goals by the end of September.

From Here to Victory is a three-month enrollment emphasis promoted by the Sunday school department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board for the final months of the five-year 8.5 by 85 enrollment effort to reach a Sunday school enrollment of 8.5 million persons by Sept. 29, 1985.

"We will reach our goal because of From Here to Victory," said Jim Hatfield, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Flint, Mich. The church began in July with the Find a Prospect segment of From Here to Victory and enrolled about 75 Sunday school members. In October the church had 322 enrolled in Sunday school and now has 364 enrolled.

The church's goal has been to enroll 33 new members each quarter. "We almost met our goal the first two quarters but then dropped off," Hatfield said. New gains have been made with From Here To Victory activities and a continued push through the end of September will put the Sunday school over its enrollment goal, he said.

Central Baptist has adapted the Reach Five aspect of the emphasis to encourage Sunday school members to contact five prospects each week. A Reach Five honor roll posted in the church has encouraged people to participate, said Gene Domerese, Sunday school director. "They feel proud to get their name on the roll," he explained.

Hatfield includes a time to fill out contact cards in the worship service. Members are asked to list the persons they have contacted during the week.

Emphasizing contacts from the pulpit helps underscore the importance of it, he pointed out. "We want to get people conscious of the need to make contacts," Hatfield said. "I don't see it as taking time from the worship service. I see it as part of worship. Sunday school is evangelism and that's what worship is about."

Northside Baptist Church, in the Racine, Wis., suburb of Caledonia, is only six months old but has set an enrollment goal and is using From Here to Victory to reach the goal, according to Ray Robinson, Sunday school director.

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Northside plans to use From Here to Victory to reach an enrollment goal, even though the church was constituted from a five-year-old mission this past January.

The church started on the first Sunday in January with 111 members but the next Sunday moved 39 Sunday school members to a new mission. Although the Caledonia church is five miles from Racine, the new mission was needed because there was no Southern Baptist work inside Racine, a city of about 75,000, explained Robinson.

During the first six months as a church, Northside grew from 72 to 79 enrolled in Sunday school. But, the goal for Sept. 29 is to have 108 enrolled.

The church leadership got excited about From Here To Victory during a weekend small Sunday school workshop, Robinson said. During July the Sunday school used From Here to Victory to find and enroll new prospects. By the first Sunday in August, the Sunday school enrollment had reached 91. "We're almost halfway to the goal and we can make it," Robinson said.

From Here to Victory came at a good time because of Back Yard Bible Clubs and Vacation Bible School, he pointed out. Four Back Yard Bible Clubs the church conducted produced 198 prospects and three new members. Those prospects will be targets for helping reach the goal and as prospects for Vacation Bible School planned for the second week of August.

The church will have a praise Sunday on Sept. 29 to celebrate the victory of the enrollment emphasis. Praise Sunday will be a scaled-down version of Celebration Sunday suggested in the From Here To Victory plan. The church's activities must be limited because the community center where it meets is available only until 12:30 on Sunday afternoons.

"We're confident about meeting our goal because we feel the Spirit working with us," Robinson said.

Churches that have not started From Here to Victory activities can still conduct an emphasis, according to Harry Piland, director of the Sunday school department of the Sunday School Board. "We can meet our goal in the final month. It could all be done even on the last Sunday if people will get committed and work," Piland said.

Piland is urging churches to use September as Super September to emphasize enrollment in Sunday school. Churches are asked to report their Sunday school enrollment on Sept. 29 to their associational directors, who in turn will report to state convention Sunday school directors. Later that day on a live BTN telecast, Piland will receive enrollment totals from state Sunday school directors.

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Better Counseling Needed
At Church Decision Time

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
8/13/85

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—One reason Southern Baptist churches are losing so many converts to other religions or to inactivity is that they received inadequate counseling at the time they made public decisions, according to Roy Edgemon.

Edgemon, director of the Sunday School Board's church training department, said during the Church Training Leadership Conference, "We are not growing because we are losing so many people we baptize. I think we're losing most of them at the altar."

Edgemon believes people respond to the invitation at the end of the worship service in genuine awareness of their need for salvation. However, they don't receive adequate information to understand the implications of their decision or their need for further study in order to grow in their faith.

"Pastors do the best counseling they can in three or four verses of a hymn, but too often that's all a person gets unless the church clerk gives them a little more," said Edgemon. "We've got to get back to counseling."

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He advocates training laypersons to counsel persons making professions of faith, rededications, vocational decisions or others. After the pastor talks briefly with each person, a trained counselor takes the person to another room to talk about the decision.

In many instances, persons making decisions are then presented to the congregation at a later service, Edgemon said. He noted that this kind of process may necessitate changing the order of service.

"In churches where I have served as interim pastor, we have the offering and announcements at the close of the service to give the counselors more time," said Edgemon. "I've used this system in every size church. There is no reason why we can't train counselors."

In preparation for the 1986 Good News America revivals, resources have been prepared to implement a counseling process, said Edgemon. A "Commitment Counseling Manual" was produced by the church training department in cooperation with the Home and Foreign Mission Boards and the Radio and Television Commission. A companion piece for use with persons making decisions, "Personal Commitment Guide," was produced by the Home Mission Board.

After new converts have been counseled and presented to the church, Edgemon says he prefers they go through new member training before being baptized.

Edgemon cited a study showing that 87 percent of persons received for membership in Southern Baptist churches between 1969 and 1980 received no member training.

"We must come to a point where we're sure people are saved," said Edgemon. "Then we must do all we can to help them get started in becoming grounded in their faith."

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Merger Provides
Ethnic Base

By Jerilynn Armstrong

Baptist Press
8/13/85

HOUSTON (BP)—In 1984 First Baptist Church, Houston, committed to start two new churches each year for the next 10 years. Two already have been started.

Both churches, Westland and Willowbrook, are in suburban areas of Houston.

And now through a unique opportunity First Baptist Church, Houston, plans to begin six ethnic congregations within the next few months beginning with an ethnic mission center at Westview Baptist Church, about two miles from First Baptist Church in the Spring Branch area.

Westview Baptist Church voted to merge with First Baptist Church, leaving its facilities for the forming of an ethnic mission center, and First Baptist approved the merger on June 19.

Westview Baptist Church has been in a steady decline, dropping from an all-time high of 450 in Sunday school to 75.

Last February the deacons of Westview began discussing several alternatives for the church which was beginning to face some financial difficulties.

They had offers from other denominations to purchase the property as well as interest from commercial realtors, but "the congregation wanted this church and this location to remain as a Southern Baptist witness in this community," Bill Lipps, pastor, said.

Lipps contacted John Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church, Houston, about the possibility of an ethnic mission center, and discussions were held between the deacon bodies until final papers were signed and voted on by both congregations.

First Baptist Church assumes the assets and debts of Westview and is in the process of hiring a missions center director to start ethnic congregations immediately.

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