



# BAPTIST PRESS

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. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

August 20, 1985

85-100

Black Church Captures  
Mission Texas Spirit

By Orville Scott and Carol Shelton

CLUTE, Texas (BP)--A small congregation of black Southern Baptists in Southeast Texas has returned a favor and captured the Mission Texas spirit in building new churches.

New Hope Baptist Church, Clute, has about 80 members, but cooperation with other Southern Baptists has enabled the young church south of Houston to not only have a new building of its own, but to help two Anglo churches to have new facilities also.

The three-year-old New Hope congregation is striving to "break down the barriers between the different races" through its brotherhood church-building work, Pastor George Abram said.

Last fall in a matter of hours, ten volunteers and two Texas Baptist church builders erected a building for New Hope. Then last winter, New Hope volunteers, discovered that Trinity Baptist Church, Silsbee, needed a new building. As part of their brotherhood plan, they helped the Silsbee church construct a facility that was made possible through a building loan through the Baptist Church Loan Corporation of the BGCT.

Also volunteers from New Hope helped erect a building at Southway Baptist Church near Houston last June.

"We have seen the Lord build this church," said Robert Graham, pastor of Southway. "It has grown from two families to about 100 members and that is without a building. With this new building we are going to see more growth."

New Hope, one of about 130 black congregations affiliated with the BGCT, studied the missions programs of various denominations and prayed long and hard before deciding to join.

The Cooperative Program, said Pastor Abram, is one of the reasons New Hope chose to become Southern Baptist. "The Cooperative Program is the best institution I've seen for doing missions," Abram said. "Our whole membership is excited about it."

The Cooperative Program and the Mary Hill Davis Offering for State Missions were both vital factors in helping the young church get off to a strong start.

New Hope received a \$500 start up gift through the BGCT Church Extension Section. The BGCT Church Loan Corporation provided a loan to purchase a building site. Now the church will receive a \$2,000 furniture gift and monthly program support for six months.

The project was supported and coordinated by the Gulf Coast Association under direction of Missions Director O. Jack Chastain. It was underwritten by several churches, including First and Second Baptist Churches of Lake Jackson, First Church, Richwood, and Temple Church, Clute.

Volunteers, under direction of BGCT missionary/church builder Sanford Jones Jr., were able to construct new facilities for \$145,000 that would normally cost at least \$200,000.

Bill Walters, coordinator of the BGCT Church Building and Support Section said the new construction technique used to erect New Hope's 4,700-square-foot building uses metal studs with expanded polystyrene planks which reportedly give better insulation and stronger walls than most systems. It is easier for volunteers to erect.

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"Considering the size of the work force, this is probably the shortest time I've seen for drying in a building," said Walters. "It may help us in building the 2,000 new churches that Texas Baptists plan to start by 1990," he added.

Abram said, "Helping to build churches has been the highlight of our experience with the Cooperative Program. We feel we must show love through action."

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Palm Beach Atlantic  
Names Development Head

Baptist Press  
8/20/85

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP)-- Hugh R. Mathis has been named director of development at Palm Beach Atlantic College according to Claude Rhea, president.

Prior to joining Palm Beach Atlantic College, an independent Southern Baptist college, Mathis was director of public information and publications for Spartanburg Methodist College where he coordinated media relations and publications.

Mathis, in public relations for eleven years, previously worked at Alabama Baptist Children's Home and North Greenville (S.C.) College, a Baptist two-year school. He is a graduate of Wofford College, Spartanburg, S.C., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

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Taiwan Missionary  
Richard Morris Dies

Baptist Press  
8/20/85

TUCSON, Ariz. (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary Richard Morris, 57, died Aug. 19 at his home in Tucson, Ariz.

Morris and his wife, Christena, took medical leave in February from their work in Taiwan after he was diagnosed as having amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, an incurable, degenerative disease of the nerves that control muscle movement. Morris had hoped to write several books about his missionary experiences while at home, but his condition declined rapidly in recent months.

Mrs. Morris related a statement her husband made before he lost the use of his voice: "Honey, I talked to the Lord this morning and I told him if he'd make me well we'd go back to Taiwan. But (the Lord) said 'No, your work is through there. You're where I want you.' And I said, 'What about my books?' He said, 'Don't worry about that, just rest.'"

"From that time on he did a lot of sleeping," Mrs. Morris said. "He just seemed to have a peace about that."

The Morrises were the first Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to work with Taiwanese people, who have a language and culture distinct from the Mandarin-speaking mainland Chinese who came to Taiwan more recently. Appointed by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1958, they worked in evangelism and church development in Kaohsiung, Taichung and Chiaya.

Since 1980 they had been stationed in Taipei, Taiwan's capital, where Morris continued church development work and directed Theological Education by Extension at the Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary.

Morris, born in Memphis, Tenn., spent most of his early years in Somerville, Tenn., which he considered his hometown. He married the former Christena Simmons of Somerville in 1950.

Morris attended Duke University, Durham, N.C., and William R. Moore School of Technology in Memphis. He received a bachelor's degree from Union University, Jackson, Tenn., and the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

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He served in the U.S. Navy, worked as an architectural draftsman and designer and was pastor of churches in Tennessee, Texas and Arizona before missionary appointment.

Morris is survived by his wife, five daughters, mother, brother, sister and six grandchildren. Baptists in Taiwan reportedly are planning a memorial service.

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

Rains Ease African Drought,  
But Food Shortages Continue

By Mary Jane Welch

Baptist Press  
8/20/85

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The best rains in years have fallen across much of Africa, but Southern Baptists are continuing efforts to help those who don't yet have adequate food.

Good rains this year will ease the crisis, but not end it immediately and Southern Baptists should continue praying for Africa, said John Cheyne, the Foreign Mission Board's human needs consultant. He also announced the board has released \$1.4 million for four new feeding stations being built in the Merhabete district of Ethiopia.

Rains already have produced good crops in countries such as Zimbabwe, Kenya and Tanzania and are the best in five years in some of the Sahel countries bordering the Sahara where famine has been greatest. But the Sahel still needs rain, said John Mills, the Foreign Mission Board's director for west Africa.

Continued steady rains are needed to break the drought and prevent the crop failures that happened last year even in countries which appeared to have adequate rain. Such rains, for which Southern Baptists have joined in concerted prayer, will do "more to feed people than all the relief efforts we can mount," said Mills.

In Senegal, for instance, rains came last year, farmers planted and the rains stopped. Adequate rains came again, but after crops had died.

In Mali this year, rains started, stopped, then started again. Missionaries Norman and Beverly Coad said the country had three weeks of good soaking rains--enough to give hope, but not yet enough to assure crops. Rains were enough, however, to cause the Niger River, which had ceased flowing for the first time in recorded history, to flow again.

The Coads have almost finished distributing 6,000 tons of grain, partly because a Norwegian relief group which was provided trucks by their government supplemented the two trucks purchased with Southern Baptist funds.

Bill Dean, grain distribution coordinator in Burkina Faso, says rains have enabled most farmers to plant their crops, but have complicated distribution of 7,000 tons of corn and cornmeal. Most distribution sites are reached by dirt roads which quickly turned to mud in the rain. But people who are eating only every two or three days have been glad to walk up to nine miles to get food when trucks have been unable to reach them, he said.

In the town of Banfora, Burkina Faso, more than eight inches of rain in one night left more than 500 people homeless. The Baptist Mission, which was just starting grain distribution, responded immediately with more than 15 metric tons of corn and 12 bales of clothing which they distributed with local authorities.

Reports from Ethiopia indicate rains have encouraged many at feeding stations to return home, but continue to complicate grain distribution to those who still need food. Food is still being flown into the Southern Baptist feeding station at Rabel because rains washed out the crude road to the remote center.

Volunteer nurses Diana McKinnis and Linda Barnett and Barnett's husband, Clyde, all of Owensboro, Ky., were expected to arrive in Ethiopia in mid-August to work at the Rabel center and possibly help open the other centers.

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Six other nurses are prepared to go to Ethiopia and are awaiting government permission. The Foreign Mission Board also plans to send a volunteer field administrator and use Ethiopian Christians to finish staffing the centers.

In spite of rains, Ethiopia is still in desperate condition and will need aid for a long time, said Davis Saunders, the Foreign Mission Board's director for eastern and southern Africa. The board's recent release of \$1.4 million for four feeding stations in the Merhabete district will help sustain people who may not recover from the drought for some time.

Ethiopia is not alone. "The problem in Africa right now is so deep and it's caused by so many different factors that merely growing some good crops for a couple of years is not going to solve the problem," said Cheyne. "Every report I've seen from the United Nations or U.S.A.I.D (U.S. Agency for International Development) indicates that the critical condition will continue at least through 1986--and that's the most favorable scenario."

Good rain doesn't guarantee a good growing season, especially on a continent where per capita food production has been declining for years, he said. In Ethiopia, for instance, people have eaten their seed grain, sold their tools and lost the animals they once used to plow. Weakened by hunger and stripped of resources, they will find it difficult to raise a good crop this year regardless of how much rain they get.

Many also have been displaced by drought or war. They may find that crops that grew well in their homelands will not grow at all where they're now living. Few African governments have the economic resources to retrain farmers in new agricultural methods. Cheyne says missionaries, along with governments and relief agencies, will play an important part in helping Africans restore agricultural production and increase it to cope with an exploding population.

He believes Southern Baptist missionaries are in a particularly good position to help. While Southern Baptist development efforts involve small amounts of money compared to governments and major relief agencies, he said, "I don't know of any group that is giving the quality of response that our missionaries are able to give."

Because Southern Baptists have limited resources for development, they've had to choose the projects carefully, he said, coming down in favor of relatively small projects targeted at the peasant farmer which can be copied by neighboring areas and eventually by other countries.

The project carried out in the Sanwabo area of Burkina Faso with help from Tennessee Baptists is already serving as a model for another just starting in the Kenieba region of neighboring Mali. Cheyne believes the Mali government was receptive to Southern Baptists entering their country primarily because they liked what they saw happening in Burkina Faso.

Recently more than \$1 million was allocated for the first phase of the Kenieba project, digging 75 wells with hand pumps and four with solar pumps. The Mali government hopes the Kenieba region, where water is adequate for farming, will someday replace the agricultural output of areas being lost to the desert.

Cheyne also cited the "People Who Care Project" carried out in partnership with Louisiana Baptists in the Gokwe region of Zimbabwe. When the project started, drought had reduced people to eating weeds and grass seeds to survive. Baptists distributed grain, opened a number of wells in critical areas and provided health care and nutritional training. The mortality rate from nutritional causes dropped to almost zero.

This year rains came and the Gokwe region reported an outstanding crop. "I think we can say that in this area, because we were there in the most critical period, the people were sustained," Cheyne said.

Southern Baptist missionaries now have greater opportunities for evangelism and development, he says. "It's still going to be an ongoing effort, but both in the eyes of the government and in the eyes of the local people Baptists are so highly respected and authentic for what they've done in sustaining these people that we now have a solid base to do the kinds of things for long-range development we might not have had the opportunity to do otherwise."

## Africa Crisis Shows Few Signs Of Abating

By David Wilkinson

WASHINGTON, D.C.—While money pours in to American and international hunger relief organizations and tons of emergency food aid reach African ports, the plague of hunger continues to spread across sub-Saharan Africa.

Anti-hunger experts now estimate that the emergency situation in most of the 20 drought-stricken countries will continue into 1987, even if current levels of food aid are sustained.

First-hand reports from a variety of sources, including officials of hunger relief agencies, government observers and journalists, indicate that relief aid has simply been unable to keep pace with the steadily advancing famine.

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization estimated that total requirements in cereal food aid for Africa's beleaguered countries stood at more than 5.2 million metric tons as of July 1. International pledges for food aid fell far below that amount, and actual deliveries by July 1 had met less than half the total requirement, the FAO reported.

Meanwhile, the number of people facing starvation continues to rise. In Sudan, for example, the estimate of persons seriously affected by the drought was 4.5 million in February. By June the number had risen to 8.4 million. Relief officials now estimate that during the second half of this year 11.5 million—more than half of the country's total population—may be affected. Along with its own crisis, the country is also trying to cope with 1.2 million refugees from Ethiopia and Chad.

In Chad, officials report 2.2 million displaced persons out of a population of 4.5 million. Thirty percent of the children under age five are suffering from acute malnutrition and require therapeutic feeding in order to survive.

In Angola, one out of three children dies before age five.

While desperately-needed rains have brought relief to a few areas in Africa, they have compounded the problems in some of the most critical areas, hampering transportation of emergency food supplies and contributing to disease.

In Sudan heavy rains damaged a vital rail link, making transportation of grain even more difficult. Rains in Ethiopia have jeopardized internal transportation of food aid and contributed to a outbreak of waterborne diseases. Cholera, which can kill within eight hours if untreated, is spreading in many areas, including the capital city of Addis Ababa.

Rains also have brought outbreaks of cholera in many of the famine relief camps and isolated villages in Burkina Faso, Mali, Somalia and Tanzania. The disease has reportedly reached "epidemic proportions" in areas of Sudan.

Even in favorable weather, transportation poses major difficulties for relief efforts. Chad, a landlocked nation, faces severe problems in both internal and external transportation of emergency food supplies. Although the country is almost twice the size of Texas, it has a total of only 100 miles of paved roads.

Similar transportation obstacles exist in Ethiopia and Mali.

Southern Baptist leaders at the Foreign Mission Board, which has distributed more than \$3.2 million this year in hunger and general relief funds to a dozen African countries, and the Christian Life Commission, which coordinates Southern Baptist hunger education and action, have emphasized the need for a long-term commitment to hunger relief and development ministries in Africa.

From January through July, the biggest recipients of hunger and general relief funds through the Foreign Mission Board have been Ethiopia (\$640,000), Mali (\$1,280,183) and Burkina Faso (\$420,000). The board will release another \$1.4 million in relief funds to Ethiopia before the end of August.



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Nashville, Tennessee 37203

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901 COMMERCE  
NASHVILLE, TN. 37203