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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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85-156

Food, Fun Helps Church  
Raise \$2,000 For Missions

By Sherri Anthony Brown

GRANITE FALLS, N.C. (BP)—Corn shucking, all-you-can-eat chicken and dumplings, square dancing, cake walks and good fun has helped a Southern Baptist church raise \$2,000 for missions in one evening.

Dudley Shoals Baptist Church in Granite Falls, N.C., for several years has used similar creative, down-home methods which have allowed members to build 12 churches in four years.

It all started in 1980 when North Carolina Baptists and West Virginia Baptists formed Partnership 200. Their objective was to add 100 new churches in West Virginia to the existing 100 churches, by 1985.

At the time, Keith Sims' Sunday school class at the Dudley Shoals church was trying to find a mission project. "We were looking for a project more than just something local," explained Sims. They chose to help in the structural building of the new churches.

In 1982 they bought brick, mortar mix and sand, traveled to West Virginia and, in a week, bricked their first church building.

However, they returned with a debt for the materials. "We chose not to pull this mission project money out of our general budget," said Don Ingle, pastor of the Dudley Shoals church for the past 14 years. So, the Sunday school class opted for another method of gathering funds—one which proved to be fun as well as lucrative.

Sims and his family own and operate a barbecue restaurant, which is opened only on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. He offered to use his restaurant—a popular eating place in the area, feeding up to 1,000 people a night—for an evening, with the profits going to missions.

The class readily agreed and chose to serve all-you-can-eat chicken and dumplings as the main course—for \$5 a person.

This fall the fifth chicken and dumpling dinner to finance their twelfth mission trip to West Virginia cleared more than \$2,000 for missions in one evening. During those 12 trips, Dudley Shoals church members bricked the 200th and 201st churches in the Partnership 200 project.

They fashioned their evening after an area tradition of "corn shuckin.'" Years ago area corn farmers would call their neighbors together at harvest time. They would s huck the season's corn, then eat a meal together and celebrate further with music and square dancing.

A month before the dinner, women in the church made batches of dumplings and froze them. "Freezing gives the final product more moisture," explained Irene Starnes, the "Dumpling Queen." Then, the day of the dinner, they gathered ahead of time to cook 16 huge pots of chicken and dumplings. Others brought cakes and pies for desert and the cake walk.

The corn shuckin' began with everyone anxiously looking for the red ear which allowed the privilege to kiss the prettiest girl/boy. More than 400 people showed up to eat their fill of food and join in the square dancing and clogging to music of local bands and callers who donated their talents.

"Coming together to make this money helps the churches in West Virginia. But it's also fun which makes it easy to do," said Sims.

Edgemon, Rose Address  
State Family Directors

By Terri Lackey

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Family ministry programs in the church must be updated continually to keep up with a changing society, a Home Mission Board representative told state family ministry consultants meeting at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.

Larry Rose, HMB associate director of metro missions in Atlanta, said, "Technology is outrunning theology. Technology has had a deep social impact on people."

"We are changing and churches need to be aware of it," Rose told the 45 state convention family ministry leaders attending the 1985-86 annual program planning meeting. "We need to be realistic about what family life is like in this country."

Rose said couples are marrying at a more mature age, and therefore having children later. He said modern technology causes couples to face new choices such as using sperm banks or having an abortion. "Soon doctors will be able to tell if a child is going to be born with defects, and will be able to give parents the option of aborting," he said. "This has serious implications."

Rose said family ministry leaders must deal with modern and future technology through church literature and counseling. He said family ministry periodicals must continually reflect a changing society.

Roy Edgemon, Sunday School Board church training department director, said families are responsible for "helping children better understand Jesus," asking "If families don't do it, then who is going to bring children to Jesus?"

He said children must know their parents are "committed to Christ" if they are to believe in Jesus themselves. Edgemon said parents can show their children they believe by demonstrating their faith, teaching them the word of God and praying.

"To hear their parents pray is so inspirational for a child," he said.

During the planning sessions, state leaders discussed the 1986-87 emphasis on "Coming of Age," highlighting senior adults. The department hopes to assist local churches as they enhance and expand their ministry with older persons, said Douglas Anderson, director of the Sunday School Board's family ministry department.

"Every person regardless of age or family status is involved in the aging process and should have an interest in older persons," he noted. Every church program organization and emphasis has a role in ministering with, to and through older persons.

In October 1986, state family ministry leaders will launch "Parenting by Grace," a course to aid parents in teaching their children to mature responsibly in Christian living. The course will be part of the new church training Lay Institute for Equipping.

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Home Mission Board Elects  
Three Staffers, Cuts Interest

Baptist Press  
12/12/85

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's executive committee elected three new staff members including a liaison with Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, and voted to reduce the interest on HMB church loans.

Jimmye S. Winter, Baptist Women's consultant for Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, in Birmingham, Ala., was elected as WMU field worker for the Home Mission Board, succeeding Helen Fling of Birmingham, who has retired.

Winter has been on the staff of Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, since 1977 when she became GA/Mission Friends consultant. Previously, she had been director of preschool and childrens' work for churches in Arlington, San Antonio, Plainview and Vernon, Texas. She is a graduate of Dallas Baptist University.

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Executive committee members also elected Ray Dalton, a mission pastor in Chicago, as associate director of the program research department, and named Joan O. Redford of Atlanta as administrative assistant to the president.

Dalton, a native of Oak Ridge, Tenn., has been pastor/minister of Near North Church in Chicago since 1979. Previously he was associate pastor of Walnut Ridge Baptist Church, Jeffersonville, Ind. He is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn.

Redford, currently executive secretary to the vice-president, missions, for the Home Mission Board, will succeed Leonoar Adams who is retiring as administrative assistant to the president after 40 years with the board.

The Georgia native was secretary to the pastor of First Baptist Church, Avondale, in suburban Atlanta before joining the HMB staff in 1982. She is married to David Redford, son of the late Courts Redford, executive secretary of the Home Mission Board from 1954-64.

In other major action, the executive committee reduced the interest rate charged on HMB church loans from 13.75 percent to 13.0 percent, in keeping with previous board action which would charge the same rate of interest on church loans that the board pays for borrowed funds.

Board members also approved appropriations totaling \$200,000 for the purchase of property in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, for the relocation of the Hispanic Baptist Seminary in Puerto Rico. The seminary has outgrown its current facilities at the Baptist Building in San Juan and is moving to a larger suburban location.

The executive committee appointed a national consultant to work with Continuing Witness Training and a national missionary to lead a national training effort for church and associational missions development programs.

Ronald G. Barker, associate pastor and minister of education for Prairie Creek Baptist Church, Plano, Texas, was appointed a new national consultant in evangelism for Continuing Witness Training.

John Budlong, pastor of Mullins Station Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., was named a national missionary to promote church and associational missions development.

In other personnel matters, the executive committee appointed eight new missionaries, five missionary associates, four church planter apprentices, and approved 10 persons to receive church pastoral aid, eight to receive field pastoral assistance, and approved seven as mission pastors and four as mission pastor interns.

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Georgia Baptist Get  
New Employees, Facilities

Baptist Press  
12/12/85

ATLANTA (BP)—The Georgia Baptist Convention soon will have a new Royal Ambassador camp, two major new facilities at their hospital and three new administrative employees. The actions were approved by the convention's executive committee at its annual organizational meeting at Baptist center in Atlanta.

The committee voted to buy a 118-acre tract of land south of Forsyth, Ga., 70 miles north of Atlanta, to develop a Royal Ambassador camp. The tract includes a 25-acre lake.

The Georgia convention has operated an RA camp at Camp Glenn near Brunswick for more than 30 years but it sold the camp earlier in 1985 because it was far from population centers of the state and not widely used.

The Camp Glenn site was sold for \$500,000. The new site near Forsyth cost \$250,000.

The Georgia committee also authorized Georgia Baptist Medical Center in Atlanta to borrow \$9.5 million to erect a multi-story parking garage plus another \$1.5 million to build a preventive medicine center. Both loans will be self amortized over 15 years.

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Warren C. Fields, minister of music at First Baptist Church in Statesboro, was elected director of Georgia Baptist church music department. Fields will succeed Paul C. McCommon Jr., who retired Dec. 31 after 34 years as the only director of Georgia's church music department.

Jack P. Lowndes, pastor of Bull Street Baptist Church in Savannah, Ga., will become director of church minister relations for the Georgia convention about Feb. 1. He was executive director-treasurer of Baptist Convention of New York from 1975-1982 and was president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board from 1972-1973. Lowndes succeeds W. Howard Ethington who retires Dec. 31 after 11 years as director of church minister relations.

James O. Dorriety was named associate in the Georgia Baptist stewardship and annuity department. His primary duty will be to raise monies for endowment. Dorriety is pastor of First Baptist Church in Blakely and a member of Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission.

Georgia Baptist Convention executive committee also approved a 1986 state missions budget of \$5,587,579 an increase of 11.54 percent over the 1985 budget.

Floyd F. Roebuck of Rome, Ga., state convention president, said March 16 had been set aside as a day of prayer for Georgia farmers and their families. This followed a motion at the annual convention session in November calling for prayer support for "the farm crisis."

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Congress Reconsiders Postal  
Subsidies For Non-Profit Mailers

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press  
12/12/85

WASHINGTON (BP)—Following President Reagan's veto of a bill authorizing appropriations for the U.S. Postal Service, Congress has passed differing versions of a continuing resolution to provide funds for the postal service, as well as a number of other federal departments and agencies. A conference committee must now reconcile differences in the Senate and House versions of the measure, needed to fund the agencies beyond Dec. 12.

Each house's version of H.J. Res. 465 includes a federal subsidy to provide reduced mailing rates for non-profit publications, including state Baptist newspapers and church newsletters. The levels of that subsidy, however, differ and will have to be reconciled--along with a number of other issues--by House and Senate conferees, who are to meet immediately.

The House version of the resolution, passed by a record vote of 212-208, calls for \$820 million in federal subsidy to assist non-profit mailers. That figure, which is the same as was contained in the original postal appropriations billed vetoed by Reagan, still would necessitate an approximate 30 percent rate increase.

"The veto message gave the committee little guidance in structuring a bill the President could find acceptable," explained Rep. Jamie L. Whitten, D-Miss., chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, which was responsible for drafting the continuing resolution. "The only funding objection specifically mentioned is the \$820 million postal subsidy, accounting for 86 percent of the increase over the President's budget."

In its consideration of the resolution, the Senate, by voice vote, approved a reduced postal subsidy of \$748 million. That figure falls \$233 million short of what the Postal Service says it needs to maintain the present level of subsidy.

Despite the Reagan administration's proposal to terminate the postal subsidy program altogether except for benefits to organizations that send materials to the blind, members of both houses argued for the need to retain the subsidy.

Rep. Ronald Coleman, D-Texas, recounted Congress' disagreement, during work on the original appropriations bill, with the president's request to cut all postal subsidy funding for non-profit organizations and rural and small newspapers.

"It was the intention of the conferees that sacrifices would have to be made at the expense of these as with all concerns, but not at a faster rate than the others, particularly with respect to the blind and handicapped and other non-profit organizations," Coleman declared.

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Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, charged that "those with veto fever down at the other end of the avenue (the White House) want to continue to mislead the public and the members of this body with distorted statements about the budget-busting Congress and threaten to veto this and other bills on the basis of spending levels for non-defense programs so they can continue to pour more money down the rathole of the Pentagon."

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Oregon Church Loses  
School Zoning Appeal

Baptist Press  
12/12/85

WASHINGTON (BP)—The U.S. Supreme Court refused Dec. 9 to review an appeal by an Oregon Assembly of God congregation challenging its city's requirement that parochial schools be zoned apart from church premises.

At issue in the dispute between the southwest Oregon city of Medford and the Medford Assembly of God was the church's refusal to comply with the zoning regulation on grounds it violated the free exercise of religion.

The congregation, which maintains a day care center, preschool, kindergarten and elementary school with grades 1-3, has argued during court proceedings it should not have to obtain a separate zoning permit for operating its elementary school.

After losing in a state court of appeals, the church's attorney, Michael Farris, filed an appeal with the nation's high court, arguing the elementary school is "an integral and inseparable religious ministry of the church." Farris, lead attorney for Beverly LaHaye's Concerned Women for America, wrote further: "For practical, financial and philosophical reasons, the school could not survive off the church premises."

The city's zoning regulation, he concluded, violated the congregation's ability to exercise freely its religion and ignored earlier Supreme Court rulings that church-related schools are integral to the churches that sponsor them.

But the city countered in a brief urging the high court to reject the appeal that the ordinance meets all three parts of a 1971 Supreme Court test for determining the constitutionality of laws relating to religion: that they have a secular purpose, neither advance nor inhibit religion, and not excessively entangle government with religion.

Rejecting the church's argument the ordinance violated the free exercise of religion, the city's attorney wrote: "The city is not trying to tell the church what to teach or what kind of ministries it should have....(It) is merely trying to allow schools and churches in residential neighborhoods while at the same time retaining some control to allow it to protect the neighborhood from a use that may be incompatible." (85-538, Medford Assembly of God v. Medford)

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Music Volunteers Sought  
To Fill Missions Requests

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
12/12/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Church music secretaries from across the Southern Baptist Convention were urged to find qualified volunteers for mission service in new work areas during the annual state workers meeting at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

David Bunch, Mission Service Corps director at the SBC Home Mission Board, said for the 81 requests on file for music leadership, there are "no church musicians to recommend."

Currently, 35 music missionaries are on assignment in 22 locations, working for state conventions, associations, churches and groups of churches. Bunch said most volunteers accept two-year assignments, but persons who can give one year also are needed.

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Since the MSC program's beginning in 1977, some 50 persons have performed music missions tasks. Many, he said, have returned to complete formal training, including seminary studies, to further their careers in church music leadership.

Calling music missions "a valid church growth technique," Bunch said the Home Mission Board stresses placing volunteers in new work areas.

"One of the things we have found is the readily accepted church growth dynamic that comes with music missions," he said. "These volunteers build programs that involve a lot of people. They build attendance through music involvement with persons who have not been active in church. This brings more persons, better finances and more enthusiasm.

"Baptists being a singing people, it's a synergistic kind of thing in the congregation," he observed. "That's why we're investing time in a church music effort in new work areas."

Bunch said Mission Service Corps is a personnel vehicle through which persons give full-time service for a year or more, providing their own support in a mission and evangelism ministry on assignment through either the Home or Foreign Mission Board.

Bunch said the need is for enough church musicians to be placed in new work areas to develop models for ministry to show what can be done.

One challenge of "Musicians on Mission," the five-year emphasis of the Sunday School Board's church music department, is to employ "skills untapped among people who have the resources to give," he said.

Bunch urged music leaders to seek qualified persons in behalf of the Foreign Mission Board's volunteer department and the Home Mission Board's Mission Service Corps office. Musicians desiring to explore mission service opportunities may also contact the state music secretary in their state Baptist convention offices.

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FMB Names Record 429 To Force;  
Relief Giving Nears \$10 Million

By Bob Stanley

Baptist Press  
12/12/85

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptists added a record 429 new overseas missionary personnel in 1985 and also moved close to the \$10 million mark in world hunger and relief giving.

These reports, made at the December meeting of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, came amid reports of new ways the board is exploring to reach areas of the world where missionaries cannot go.

At the same time, the board warned financial support is lagging behind missionary growth and urged Southern Baptists to give sacrificially both through the Cooperative Program and the 1985 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. The goal this year is \$70 million.

Board trustees approved 46 new missionaries in December and reappointed five to reach the record figure. Previous high was 406 named in 1982.

Relief giving to meet human need around the world surged to \$9.8 million through the end of November, the latest figures available. The total for all of 1984 was \$7.2 million.

The emotional high point of the Dec. 9-11 meeting came as President R. Keith Parks and Executive Vice-President William R. O'Brien told of their recent visit to the Soviet Union.

O'Brien, who has led in seeking new ways to cooperate better with Baptists in both the U.S.S.R. and China, said the spiritual health of Christians in these two countries is evident in the depth of their worship and growth that has occurred even during years of oppression.

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"Marxism, Leninism and Maoism has been a 20th Century Darius in the hands of God creating a climate in which the church could get well," he said. "And in China and the Soviet Union it is getting well." (Darius the Great, king of ancient Persia, helped restore Israel after the Babylonian exile and made it possible to complete rebuilding the Temple.)

"I don't know what it's going to take for us to get where they are (in the purity of the church)," O'Brien said. "I don't want to go through what they've gone through to get there. But it probably will take either a revolution or a revival." He said he hoped for the latter.

O'Brien noted that in 1917 when the Russian revolution broke out, the church there was arguing over the width of the hem of the bishop's robe.

"Having experienced what I've experienced," he said, "I've decided the things we argue about are directly proportional to the distance we are from the real issues. God help us. God revive us. God help us learn from our brothers and sisters in these (other) parts."

Parks said Southern Baptists must resist the human and cultural pressures to remain local and respond instead to the Christian mandate to be global.

"The exploding opportunities for interchange between Baptist people, as well as other Christians, and the Christians in China is literally overwhelming," Parks said. He noted the recent visit of a Foreign Mission Board film crew to portray the Christian church in China can be a "window through which we can catch a glimpse of God's moving among a great people."

A letter from Bishop Ding Guangxun (K.H. Ting), head of the Three-Self Patriotic (Protestant) Movement and the China Christian Council, expressed hope this film would create "waves upon waves" of prayer from the Christians of America for the Christians of China, Parks reported.

Last April a new entity, Cooperative Services International, was created to help channel Southern Baptists who want to respond to requests from China and other countries which do not admit missionaries, but do want teachers and others with technical expertise.

Underscoring its readiness to offer whatever assistance non-Christian nations will accept, the board gave approval for projects in Kampuchea (Cambodia), Laos and Vietnam. It was the first such action since Southern Baptists left Vietnam and Laos in 1975.

Parks also noted the growing desire by Baptists in other countries where Southern Baptists work to be full partners in worldwide evangelization, both in developing strategy and sending missionaries.

While the board met in Richmond, Baptist leaders from seven Asian nations met in Hong Kong to talk about their involvement in "sharing the gospel with the multitudes of Asia," Parks pointed out. Similar conferences, stemming from the worldwide consultation held last June in Ridgecrest, N.C., will take place soon in Latin America.

"These and many other elements have caused me to realize that those of us here must carefully and prayerfully search for the next step in world evangelization," Parks said. But in seeking new ways to witness, he emphasized, the board will not abandon its present approach. "In no way," he said, "do I envision any diminishing of the emphasis upon geographic administration, on the career missionary, on comprehensive methodology, on the biblical basis of evangelism that results in churches, and on seeking to communicate all this to Southern Baptists."

All these are essential, he said, in order to take the next step. "I have an increasing awareness the Lord has brought us to this stage in order that we can become a more significant factor in the evangelization of the world beyond the locales where missionaries can live and perhaps beyond the circle of Baptist kinds of people."

To take advantage of opportunities in countries where the board does have work, the board appropriated \$6 million to purchase strategic properties. The money, available this year because of the greater buying power of a strong American dollar, will provide \$750,000 for each of the eight geographic areas of work to buy land in fast-growing population areas as future sites for churches or other mission needs.

Charles Bryan, senior vice-president for overseas operations, said this is a "one-time opportunity" to acquire property which will be financially out of reach in the years ahead.

Even as this action was taken, Carl Johnson, the board's treasurer, noted the board had to raise cost-of-living allowances for missionaries in 88 of the 106 countries or territories where Southern Baptists have work. These increases will use \$1.3 million of the \$2 million which had been set up as a hedge against such possible increases when the 1986 budget was approved in October.

Johnson said he could not help being uneasy about the impact that declining value of the U.S. dollar could have in 1986.

He urged Southern Baptists to give sacrificially to meet their churches' Lottie Moon offering goals and then to increase their regular giving through the Cooperative Program. This is the plan through which members of the denomination's 36,000 churches give to support their state, national and global programs.

In other actions the board paid tribute to George H. Hays, retiring Dec. 31 as director of work in East Asia, and named William L.C. Richardson to succeed Raymond Kolb as field associate to Thurmon Bryant, director of work in eastern South America.

Richardson, 51, of Tulsa, Okla., will work in Brazil as a liaison between the board and the 329 missionaries and journeymen assigned to Brazil. He is president of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Kolb, who is 66 and nearing retirement, will continue in the assignment until Richardson returns from an upcoming furlough to the U.S.

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Baptists Urged Not To Tire  
Of Assistance To Ethiopia

Baptist Press  
12/12/85

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (BP)--Transportation problems and lean crops will add at least another year to Southern Baptist short-term relief efforts in Ethiopia, according to missionaries.

Missionaries urge Southern Baptists to continue prayer and financial support for efforts to shore up the transportation and supply system necessary to keep feeding programs operating.

Feeding and health care centers operated by missionaries and volunteers in the Ethiopian highlands need reliable sources of grain and continued access to a helicopter or airplanes to stabilize the difficult transportation system.

Rains, which partially broke Ethiopia's drought, produced only enough harvest to feed the people for two to four months. Thus, the feeding and health care centers will need to remain open through at least 1986. Southern Baptists operate five such centers in Ethiopia's Menz-Gishe and Merhabete districts and may be asked by the government to open two more.

That, along with plans for long-range development, will call for at least a dozen more volunteer nurses and perhaps a career missionary physician, as well as another career veterinarian and another career agriculturist.

Aware that one harvest can't cure 11 years of famine, Ethiopian officials project nearly six million Ethiopians will need relief throughout 1986. That calls for mobilization and distribution of nearly 1.2 million metric tons of grain, supplementary food and oil.

Southern Baptist missionaries need 19,000 metric tons of grain, plus supplementary food and oil, in 1986 to supply their centers and feed about 170,000 of those people per month.

"We can reasonably expect from current sources only about one-half of our total annual requirement," said Ed Mason, volunteer from Florida, who coordinates relief efforts for the Baptist Mission of Ethiopia. Mennonites donated 1,720 metric tons of grain to keep the centers supplied through December and have promised 5,000 to 8,000 metric tons in 1986 if Southern Baptists can handle inland shipping costs.

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The Foreign Mission Board is exploring ways to get access to additional grain and improve transportation for grain already in the country but log jammed by lack of trucks, according to John Cheyne, the Foreign Mission Board's senior human needs consultant.

Missionaries report they could put a helicopter or airplane to work right away, since funding apparently is running out on a helicopter on loan from the "100 Huntley Street" religious program in Canada and only part-time airplane transportation service is available from another religious organization.

Aware continued needs in Ethiopia may create "donor fatigue" in the United States, Mason pointed out, "The Ethiopian famine is far from over. To stop now would be to retrogress to one year ago when we first started. The caring and giving must continue to protect the investment already made in these people.

"Because Christians cared and prayed we have made a dramatic impact in the lives of children and adults here. The investment has been worthwhile. We've won victories and saved lives. We must not stop the short-term efforts now."

Meanwhile, missionaries continue to negotiate with the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture to design a long-range developmental plan. They also have cooperated with an Italian immunization team, and received drug shipments from the Foreign Mission Board to battle a typhus outbreak.

Career missionary physician David Sorley of Uganda will visit Ethiopia to recommend ways to maintain the health of missionary and volunteer staff who have encountered health problems while involved in relief efforts in remote areas.

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\$50,000 Hunger Funds Sent  
To Aid Missouri Farmers

Baptist Press  
12/12/85

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board sent \$50,000 of their hunger funds to the Missouri Baptist Convention for distribution to Missouri Baptist farm families.

Home Mission Board President William G. Tanner said the funds were given in response to a request from John Dowdy, state missions director in Missouri.

"Not only are farm families losing their homes and their way of making a living, some do not have enough income to put food on their tables," said Tanner. "We want to reach out in the spirit of the one whose birth we are celebrating. We only wish it could be more."

This is the first request to the Home Mission Board for hunger funds of this size, said Paul Adkins, associate director of missions ministries, who coordinates distribution of hunger funds for the board, noting, "The farmer's plight is no longer just a concern for a few people, it is a crisis for all Americans. We're delighted we can help with even this drop in the bucket."

With 79,369 acres of farm land, Missouri is the hardest hit state, by acreage, according to an article in Word and Way, the Baptist paper for Missouri. Colorado, Kansas, Georgia and Mississippi follow in farm acreage.

Missouri Baptists have 1,500 rural and village churches, an estimated 400 of these in the depressed Cornbelt region of northern Missouri. Because many of the church congregations are small, they lack resources to minister to the material needs of the church members.

"Recent events, such as the mass murder-suicide of four people in rural Iowa are indicative of the anger, frustration and depression that has settled on the Cornbelt," explained Gary Farley, associate director of rural-urban missions at the Home Mission Board.

"I am hopeful this gift (\$50,000) will be perceived as a glimmer of hope, an act of Christian love and brotherhood," he added. "I know that at the Home Mission Board--and across our land--they are being remembered daily in prayer."

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Adkins expects future requests from other Midwest conventions, even though hunger funds are near depletion.

Home Mission Board hunger funds are received from churches and individuals concerned for homeless and hungry Americans. None of the money comes from the Cooperative Program or Annie Armstrong Easter offerings.

All hunger funds are used to purchase food.

In response to the nation-wide farm crisis, Don Evans, rural-urban missions associate at the Missouri Baptist Convention, produced a video-tape on the farm crisis, "Come Before Winter." The program has been aired on 12 television stations in Missouri.

In addition, associational directors of missions and pastors in Missouri have been trained to minister to farm families in crisis.

Requests for the hunger funds from Missouri Baptist farmers will be channeled from pastors through their associational directors of missions, to the missions department of the Missouri Baptist Convention.