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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 13, 1986

86-71

Ethiopians 'Look Healthier';  
Baptists Continue Food Lift

By Art Toalston

GUNDO MESKEL, Ethiopia (BP)—A grandmother watches over her grandson, Allabacho, near a Southern Baptist feeding station's clinic in Ethiopia. The baby's mother is dead and he was "a corpse, he was a skeleton" when they arrived at the station.

The grandmother nods that Allabacho, after three months of care, is better. But famine still looms. Her son-in-law planted sorghum seed last fall, but "it turned into ash."

At five plateau villages above vast canyons north of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Southern Baptists are airlifting monthly rations of grain, milk powder and cooking oil to 100,000 famine victims. The number is expected to reach 155,000 by June. Medical care also is given to several hundred people each day.

Without such aid, "many of them, perhaps thousands, would have died," says Lynn Groce, administrator and agriculturalist of the Southern Baptist mission in Ethiopia. "Before we got here," adds Jerry Bedsole, missionary veterinarian, "many thousands did die."

"Hungry people cannot hear the gospel until they've had some food," Bedsole says. "And dead people cannot be saved."

R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, visited the feeding operation in mid-April and notes "tremendous progress in the past year." The first Southern Baptist feeding station, at Rabel, opened in March 1985. Four other stations opened last September.

No longer are flies swarming around listless people with bodies withered to their bones.

"The children look so much healthier and happier," says Mary Saunders, a five-month volunteer nurse at Rabel last year who returned in mid-April. The Richmond, Va., resident is the wife of Davis Saunders, Foreign Mission Board director for Eastern and Southern Africa.

Southern Baptist relief efforts in Gundo Meskel are led by three missionary couples; 23 volunteers from Baptist churches in the United States, many of whom staff the clinics; and about 50 Ethiopian Christians coordinating food distribution. At least a dozen more volunteers, particularly nurses, are needed this year.

The volunteers are "a real example of willingness to follow the will of God whatever the cost," says Parks, who visited Ethiopia while viewing Southern Baptist work in four countries in the area. And the Ethiopians, because they know the language (Amharic) and their own culture, are able to minister in ways the volunteers can't, Groce adds.

Southern Baptists "are getting results from the dollars they have invested," notes Ed Mason, a volunteer administrator from Tallahassee, Fla., and a former president of the Florida Baptist Convention. Nearly \$4 million from world hunger offerings has been allocated in the largest human needs ministry sponsored to date by Southern Baptists.

"We're winning victories every day, but the war still hasn't been won," says Mason, a former public service commissioner. Starving children and sickly adults arrive at the clinics every day. A mother and 4-year-old son, two of about 80 people housed in Gundo Meskel's shelter, were told by neighbors, "You who are very sick, if you go there, they will be able to help you."

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

"You can't help but regret there were so many other people neither we nor anybody else could help," Parks says. The famine has claimed more than 1 million lives.

Rains last summer and this spring were the best in five years, yet the threat of starvation remains. The late fall harvest amounted to only two to four months of grain, even less for some farmers. One woman at Gundo Meskel, describing her family's luck with sorghum seed, says, "We sowed two bowlfuls and got back four bowlfuls." The spring harvest traditionally is small and primarily in the highlands.

Critical to overcoming the drought will be good "big rains" from June through September and an abundant harvest in November and December. Otherwise, feeding may be necessary into 1987. Rural subsistence farmers, who "live from crop to crop," in Bedsole's words, will feel the drought's aftermath for years. Countless oxen used in plowing died or were sold to pay for food.

One mother of five whose husband died last September says, "I have become a beggar. I have nothing to plow with. I don't even have any chickens. All I have is two feet."

Mason worries people in the United States no longer care about Ethiopia's plight. When he returned to Florida in February for several weeks, "I saw nothing on TV about Ethiopia. I read nothing in the newspaper. Nothing."

Bedsole wasn't surprised. Nevertheless, "the Lord requires of us more than emotional response. He requires a commitment of will to see the thing through. If we quit now, we'd lose everything we worked for in the past year," because the number of people without food again would spiral.

The Southern Baptist feeding operation is one of the most remote in Ethiopia, says United Nations rehabilitation coordinator Dag Hareide from Norway.

To cross the canyons, a "Twin Otter" cargo plane and a Bell 212 helicopter move 1,000 metric tons of food each month donated by the U.S. government and the Canadian Food Bank. Southern Baptists rent the twin-engine airplane from World Vision, and the helicopter is supplied by 100 Huntley Street, a Canadian religious TV program.

Four-wheel-drive 7.5- and 12-ton trucks move the food from Addis Ababa 100 to 200 miles to the north to two warehouses, where the airlift begins. The 14 trucks were purchased with Southern Baptist hunger funds. Transportation alone will require \$1 million this year.

The missionaries are sensitive to critics who believe they should not be working in a Marxist country. The Soviet hammer and sickle and posters of Marx, Lenin and Engels are common sights in Addis Ababa and numerous villages. But the missionaries point out the Foreign Mission Board has a policy of noninvolvement both in global politics and in the governments of host countries. And, they remind, help has been given to starving subsistence farmers and their families as well as the elderly.

"It's our duty to show love toward everyone," Groce notes. "Did God say, 'I sent my son to love only Americans?' God's love is for the world."

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(Toalston and photographer Warren Johnson recently returned from a news trip to Ethiopia.)  
(BP) Photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Ethiopia Volunteer Sees  
Night-and-Day Results

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
5/13/86

RABEL, Ethiopia (BP)—Mary Saunders went to sleep to the cries of hungry babies for five months last year.

Now, the volunteer nurse says, "It's very quiet at night" in Rabel, Ethiopia.

Southern Baptists and Ethiopian Christians have fed the hungry and treated their illnesses. Rains have come in answer to prayer. Rural subsistence farmers have hope. The famine may be ending. Their small fields may yield a harvest of wheat and other grains.

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Saunders, of Richmond, Va., returned to Rabel in mid-April, eight months after her five-month commitment last year.

Each morning last year Saunders walked beyond the gates of the feeding center among hundreds of bone-thin, blank-faced Ethiopians. Daily she found at least one adult or child who had died a few hours or minutes before.

Now the crowds have gone home, returning only once each month for food to keep them alive until their crops ripen later this year.

"When I left, the shelters were full," she says. As many as 300 malnourished children and their parents were receiving high-protein food and medical care.

"Now there are six (children) in the shelters. That's the difference."

During her clinic hours she's seen a number of children she cared for during her last volunteer stint. But now they look healthier and have only minor ailments and no eye and ear infections.

"Life seems to be sweeter. I'm so grateful I got to come back and see this," says Saunders, wife of Davis Saunders, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board director for Eastern and Southern Africa. After several weeks at Rabel, she will work in the other four Southern Baptist feeding centers, giving other volunteer nurses a time for rest.

Saunders is grateful for another chance to care. In the shelter she sees two healthy children and speaks in a tongue foreign to them, English, "All of us need lovin', don't we?" But, in a gesture they understand, she wraps her arms around them.

"You really could not talk about God's love to a mother whose baby is dying," she says. "You have to minister in love to the baby. And that gives you a wide open heart" from the mother.

The rural Ethiopians, in the midst of crisis, "received in a very beautiful spirit." They had no "poor us" kind of attitude, she says.

They waited patiently in long lines for food or medical care, she remembers. "Even the mothers with the sickest babies did not push ahead," she says. Sometimes they were too patient. Their children died.

Saunders does not count herself a hero for returning to Rabel and her dirt-floor quarters, where water is carried in by jugs and candles must substitute for light bulbs. "We are holy only as Christ is in us working," she comments. "You want the Father to have all the praise.

"When you follow the leading of God's Spirit, there's always an extra for you. And the extra he gave me was an incredible love for the people here. I felt so alive. There was an inner communion with God that was so real. In possessing nothing, I possessed everything."

Still, she hasn't forgotten the suffering. "I find myself praying day by day that God will increase my faith in light of so much physical need.

"I don't know where we got the idea that we have to understand the mysteries of God," she adds. Rather than wondering, she prefers to be sharing "the hope I have in my heart."

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

Baptist Leaders Tell Students  
About Denominational Heritage

Baptist Press  
5/13/86

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Current trends within the Southern Baptist Convention are "strange, considering the purpose for which the...convention was founded," Grady Cothen said during Denominational Heritage Week at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

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Cothen, retired president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, identified the SBC purpose as the propagation of the Christian gospel.

In terminology which parallels the SBC Constitution, Cothen characterized current trends among the most conservative members of the convention as those "to elicit, combine and direct the energies of the whole denomination to suit the desires of a relatively small group of leaders who are trying to 'save the denomination from liberalism.'"

He decried efforts to legislate conformity, erect doctrinal requirements for denominational participation and politicize the convention. Insisting the foundation of the SBC is "not conformity, but cooperation," he asserted the convention's purpose is "corporate responsibility for missions." He warned the "modern cry for conformity violates the basis for Southern Baptist cooperation."

Maintaining "ours has been a biblical faith," Cothen stressed Southern Baptist churches and institutions consistently have "confirmed the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture." He suggested Baptists' "theological unity, not uniformity" has centered on the authority of Scripture.

He also pointed to a continuing "Baptist aversion for all creeds except the Bible" and denounced the current "overt agitation for the adoption of a statement amounting to a creed."

Cothen further expressed concern over "the modeling of the assumption of ecclesiastical authority by strong pastors." Referring to quotations by three former SBC presidents regarding pastoral authority, he said, "If you're seeking heresy...there you have its essence."

He concluded by urging Baptists to receive and confess their heritage of togetherness, diversity and synthesis. "Above all," he said of the convention's heritage, "we must know it, or there will be no hope for the denomination's future."

Cothen was one of four speakers during Southern Seminary's emphasis on denominational heritage. He was joined by Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, of Birmingham, Ala.; Norman Cavender, layman from Claxton, Ga.; and William Lumpkin, retired pastor of Freemason Street Baptist Church in Norfolk, Va.

Weatherford traced the history of women's heritage in the SBC, noting from the earliest days women "responded to the missions advance of Southern Baptists." Although they were "invisible" in the SBC during the 19th century, women made a variety of contributions—a systematic plan of giving, aggressive teaching of tithing, missions curriculum, support for missionaries' children and theological education for women.

Yet debate about the role of women in missions still rages, she said, asking: "Why should it be questioned today? Should the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board be reprimanded for allowing women to plant churches or the Foreign Mission Board for daring to appoint women who are ordained?"

Southern Baptists stand at a crossroads, she insisted, calling for Christian women to "come down off of the pedestal and into the real world" where they can become servants.

Cavender maintained "the spirit of the pharisee is alive and well and dwelling among us. We're still stoning Stephen."

Maintaining the Christian martyr Stephen was "standing on the principle of priesthood of believers" and "that principle destroys the authority of the pharisees," Cavender contended Jewish religious leaders stoned Stephen because he had "dared to see God and the risen Christ for himself" and because the pharisees "would not even tolerate Stephen's perspective of God to be heard."

Cavender drew a comparison to the current SBC power struggle when he noted, "When you and I close our ears to other voices and attempt to banish others, we ourselves are stoning Stephen again."

Everyone is wrong at some point, he noted, because God "is always more than any one of us can see." Challenging all Baptists to share their vision, he warned, "If we have no room for all of our views, we have no room for God."

Lumpkin examined Baptist confessions of faith and said they provide a sense of history, serve to identify "real Baptists" and inspire confidence in Southern Baptist unity in the midst of diversity.

Many contemporaries who claim the name of 'Baptist' "dishonor it by their attempts to impose watchwords, symbols and creedal formulations as a means of determining what makes a true Baptist," he said. Noting diversity is not new within the SBC, he added, "What is new is a militant party spirit in our midst."

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WMU Headquarters Prepares  
For SBC-Going Visitors

Baptist Press  
5/13/86

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Special arrangements are being made to accommodate an increased number of visitors in June to the national headquarters of Woman's Missionary Union Missionary Union in Birmingham, Ala. The new facility will be open for tours for Southern Baptists who wish to make a detour on their way to or from the Southern Baptist Convention June 10-12 in Atlanta.

Although the building is always open to the public for tours, WMU officials expect an unusually large number of visitors in June and are making special arrangements to handle the crowds.

In addition to WMU staff members, volunteer tour guides will be available to show the facility to guests.

The WMU headquarters facility opened in May 1984. Sitting atop New Hope Mountain on the southeastern outskirts of Birmingham, the building features special rooms, lobbies or furnishings provided by various state WMU organizations.

For example, the main lobby was provided by the Georgia WMU. A marble fountain, which is the focal point of the main lobby, was provided by the Alabama WMU, and a parlor on the first floor was provided by the Texas WMU. A porch featuring Southern-style furnishings was given by the Mississippi WMU, and the office of WMU Executive Director Carolyn Weatherford was furnished by the Florida WMU.

In the past year alone, about 8,000 persons visited the WMU headquarters.

Tours are offered from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Although tour reservations are not required, WMU officials request individuals or groups who wish to see the building—particularly large groups—to call ahead to advise of their expected arrival time. Arrangements can be made by calling Diane Bice at (205) 991-8100.

The facility is located southeast of Birmingham just off Highway 280 East. For people traveling southeast on Highway 280 East, turn left onto Brook Highland Drive and then make another left onto Missionary Ridge Drive. For people traveling northeast on Highway 280 East, turn right onto Brook Highland Drive and then left onto Missionary Ridge. The building is located at the top of the mountain on Missionary Ridge.

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Portrait Of Louie Newton  
Hung In Georgia Capitol

Baptist Press  
5/13/86

ATLANTA (BP)—A portrait of Louie D. Newton, oldest living president of the Georgia and Southern Baptist conventions, was hung in the Georgia state capitol May 5. Newton was 94 years old on April 27.

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The Georgia General Assembly voted unanimously in March, to hang a portrait of Newton in the state capitol. He is only the third minister so honored. Others were civil rights hero Martin Luther King Jr. and Methodist bishop Arthur J. Moore.

Newton was editor of the Christian Index, newsjournal of the Baptist Convention of the state of Georgia, 1920-30, and pastor of Druid Hills Baptist Church in Atlanta from 1930 to 69. He was chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention finance committee for 25 years. He was vice president of the Baptist World Alliance and a co-founder of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

The resolution passed by the Georgia General Assembly said of Newton: "He has given unparalleled leadership to Baptists around the globe for over six decades. He has been the guiding light behind development of the finest religion agencies and institutions in the nation. He has counseled with presidents and shepherded the lowly, fearlessly crusading for political integrity and civil morality."

Griffin B. Bell, lifelong friend of Newton and former U.S. attorney general, was keynote speaker at the ceremony in which the Newton portrait was unveiled.

"He has preached the gospel the world over, both in the east and in the Soviet Union and throughout the western world," Bell said. "He is Mr. Baptist in Georgia and indeed throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

Gov. Joe Frank Harris joined in paying tribute to Newton. Congratulatory letters were read from Presidents Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter, as well as Baptist leaders Duke K. McCall and Charles F. Stanley.

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(BP) photo to be mailed by the Christian Index, newsjournal of the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia.

Inadequate Financial Support  
Can Make Mission Difficult

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
5/13/86

CORVALLIS, Ore. (BP)—The compelling call to music missions can involve a lot of struggle, Michael Vaughn can attest.

The Oklahoma native, who has had a lifelong love of music, experienced that call about two years ago.

A graduate in funeral service education from Central State University in Edmond, Okla., Vaughn had been exposed to music programs in some of the state's larger churches through his father's work as a lay music leader. High school band, piano lessons and a half-dozen years of singing in a barbershop quartet had inspired Vaughn to study music on his own.

He and his wife, Cheryl, later learned about Mission Service Corps—Southern Baptists' volunteer mission program—and of the need for music assistance in a new church in Corvallis, Ore.

"We decided to pursue the option of Mission Service Corps, convinced that this is where the Lord wanted us to come," he recalls. "I felt we had the energy, skill and potential to work with a young church. I found the difficulty to be the most intriguing factor."

Knowing he had to develop his own financial support, Vaughn contacted 60 churches. "I was distraught that they wouldn't even let us share our testimony, he says. "The response from many was 'you can't take our money away.'"

The Vaughns spent a weekend visiting in Corvallis, and the experience had a profound effect on them, he notes.

"I'm not a very emotional person, but I became emotional," he says. "I saw people looking at me with a countenance I'd never seen before. They were taking in every word. I saw people through Jesus' eyes."

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Consequently, the Vaughns moved to Corvallis without all of the needed financial support. Vaughn recalls now that "people didn't understand the Mission Service Corps. I wasn't bold enough. It's hard for me to ask for money."

Today Cheryl teaches preschoolers to supplement their small income, and with an infant son, the financial road has been rough. "We had to reorganize our finances and ask some of our creditors to wait for payment," he explains.

South Corvallis Baptist Church, where the Vaughns spend much of their time, averages 28 people in Sunday school. Currently, there is no pastor, and the congregation meets in a rented duplex. The town of 40,000 people has the second-highest property values in Oregon.

But Vaughn has pushed ahead, working to provide music education and meet other needs.

As the only church staff member, he is trying to hold the church together until a new pastor is found. He teaches Sunday school, is church training director and serves on numerous committees. If that were not enough, he is the associational music minister.

Cheryl plays the piano, teaches Sunday school and leads Woman's Missionary Union.

"If we left," he reflects, "I don't know if people would fill those positions."

Vaughn would like to leave a music library behind when the time comes to move on. "One way stronger churches can help is to send us music they are no longer using," he says. "We get the previous quarter's literature free from the (Southern Baptist) Sunday School Board, and we use 'Gospel Choir' and 'Glory Songs' (publications of the board's church music department) a lot."

Vaughn also is working toward the master of divinity degree at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary's satellite campus in Portland.

"Music that sounds good doesn't necessarily have correct theology," he says. "I feel I should be a minister in as many ways as I can. We need more musicians with theological training serving churches."

The Vaughns' Mission Service Corps appointment will end this summer, and they are not sure whether they should contract for two more years with the church.

"I don't know where the Lord wants us to go," he says thoughtfully. "I really want to do what the Lord wants me to do. I want to go where he wants me to go."

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

Missionary's Music Speaks  
Africans' 'Heart Language'

By Mary E. Speidel

Baptist Press  
5/13/86

KUMASI, Ghana (BP)—During her first year on the mission field, Carolyn Houts spent Saturday mornings beating drums.

Every week Houts joined local young people for West African music lessons. Kimo No, a professor at the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana, taught classes in his front yard.

Houts was learning a language missionaries don't study in language school. She was learning the heart language of West Africa—music.

John Mills, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board area director of West Africa, explains the significance of music in that part of the world: "Everything they do is expressed in song and dance. None of their deepest feelings are expressed apart from music. The way to communicate the gospel to West Africans isn't through the repeating of facts about Christianity. It's through the contagious joy of music that is so much a part of the culture there."

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Mills knows what it takes to win West Africans to Christ. He spent 29 years as a missionary there before going to the board's offices in Richmond, Va. During those years, he prayed for a music missionary to serve in West Africa. Houts was God's answer.

While on furlough in the early 1970s, Mills met Houts at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. Mills was visiting professor of missions at Midwestern; Houts was a religious education student.

Mills learned Houts had taught music seven years in public schools before seminary. She had master's and bachelor's degrees in music education, and she was intrigued by music from other cultures.

Mills told Houts about his dream of a music missionary in West Africa, and she began sensing God wanted her in on that dream. During a seminary chapel services led by Mills, she committed her life to foreign missions. For the past decade, she has been a music missionary in Ghana.

During Houts' early years in Ghana, a fellow Southern Baptist missionary noticed her work. Anne Neil, missionary emeritus to Ghana and Nigeria, remembers the energy Houts spent learning the heart language: "The thing that was so amazing about Carolyn was her patience and persistence. She studied the language thoroughly by going into the homes of the people. She even learned to play some of their instruments."

Houts has learned to play a leather squeeze drum, shaped like an hour-glass. She has mastered a bamboo flute and a callabash rattle, made from a plant similar to squash.

While she is learning indigenous music, Houts teaches the Ghanians music skills she brought to the mission field. She has taped choruses in Twi, a Ghanaian dialect. She writes down musical notations for the songs and uses the scores in her teaching.

While furloughing last year, Houts took music theory and composition classes at Midwestern Seminary and William Jewell College in nearby Liberty, Mo. She hopes to teach music theory to the Ghanians so they can learn to write their own Christian music.

"There are so many young people here with songs in their heads," she says. "I'm hoping to help them get the music down on paper."

In addition to working with West African music, Houts teaches some Western music to Ghanians. She has taught piano, organ, guitar and trumpet. "It's difficult to know how much Western music to expose them to," she admits.

But the most difficult part of her ministry is determining priorities, Houts notes. Some years she has handled the workload of furloughing missionaries in addition to her own ministry. Although she's a trained musician, she has been business manager and has done publications work on the mission field.

"People are so musical here, but there's not enough time and energy to meet all the requests," she says.

Ministering through indigenous music takes patience and time, Mills points out. "It's a slow process," he says. "But Carolyn's on the way. She's the kind of person who just keeps on working."

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(Mary E. Speidel is newswriter for the office of communications at Midwestern Seminary.)

SBC Church Recognized  
For Prison Ministry

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press  
5/13/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—A Southern Baptist congregation is one of three churches that recently received national awards for involvement in prison ministry.

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Prison Fellowship Ministries, a national organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., recognized First Baptist Church of Fort Walton Beach, Fla., for its involvement in Bible studies, correspondence, ex-prisoner ministry, prison family Sunday school and support of community service and other special projects.

Through one phase of its prison ministry, the congregation conducts a Sunday school program for the children of families visiting relatives in the Eglin Federal Prison Camp in Fort Walton Beach. The church also sponsors two weekly Bible classes and an annual revival at the prison.

Members of the church also participate in the nationwide Angel Tree project that ministers to the children of prison inmates. Through the project, members donate Christmas gifts that are then given to the children with the understanding the gifts are from the parent in prison.

The congregation was the first in Fort Walton Beach to host a Prison Fellowship Community Service project. That ministry involves hosting prisoners for one to two weeks while they refurbish inner-city homes.

First church became involved in prison ministry in 1970 when an Air Force chaplain who also was assigned to the prison asked for the congregation's help, recalled pastor James L. Monroe.

"This ministry has helped our church have a better understanding of the problems of families when one member is in prison," Monroe said. "We've come to see that the people in prison are not necessarily what we would call 'bad people,' but rather people who have had unfortunate experiences and are hurting.

"The prison ministry has helped our church to develop a caring attitude toward people in unfortunate experiences, whether they brought those experiences upon themselves or not."

Monroe and church volunteer Billy Gray accepted the Prison Fellowship Ministries award during the organization's annual National Volunteer Recognition and Training Conference. The award was presented by Charles W. Colson, founder of the organization.

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Editors, Writers Hear Views  
On U.S. Policy In Nicaragua

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press  
5/13/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—Two dozen Southern Baptist editors and writers heard conflicting views on U.S. policy in Nicaragua in a 2-day briefing on international and domestic issues in Washington.

Hosted by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the briefing featured U.S. senators, administration officials, a renowned television reporter and an evangelical social activist.

During a session at the White House, participants heard a highly-placed military officer assigned to President Reagan's National Security Council defend the U.S. position of aiding Nicaraguan "contras" seeking to overthrow the Sandinista government headed by Daniel Ortega.

The official, speaking on the condition he not be identified by name because he is a target of international terrorists, said U.S. policy in Nicaragua is based on national security objectives. "Any nation that acts out of anything other than its own national interest is crazy," he said.

He claimed Americans are being lulled into a "series of forgetting exercises" about Soviet intentions in Central America, a reference to the Cuban revolution of 1959 which effectively placed the Caribbean island in the Soviet orb. Nicaragua, he elaborated, has become a "massive military structure" that threatens its Central American neighbors and Mexico.

He particularly was critical of the U.S. news media, repeatedly stating they have not told the true story of the Communist threat to the region.

But evangelical social activist Jim Wallis, editor of Sojourners magazine, disagreed sharply, telling the Baptist editors and writers providing assistance to the contras amounts to "U.S. aid to terrorism."

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He accused Reagan and other administration officials of "lying" to the American people about conditions inside Nicaragua under Sandinista rule. One such falsehood, he said, is the administration's insistence Sandinista officials are involved in drug-smuggling when it is the contras who are running drugs.

Wallis said U.S. policy is turning the prophet Isaiah's vision of peace "on its head," adding, "We are beating our plowshares into swords."

He also reviewed what he called the "shameful history" of U.S. involvement in Nicaragua. U.S. Marines invaded the Central American country in 1909 and with one brief interruption ruled it until 1935, when they withdrew, leaving former dictator Anastasio Somoza in power.

Also underscoring the history of U.S. military involvement in Nicaragua was U.S. Sen. Dale Bumpers, D-Ark. Noting American Marines "dominated" the country for a quarter of a century, Bumpers said the U.S. bears responsibility for leaving Somoza in power. The former dictator "raped and pillaged the people" for 42 years, he said.

Yet the Sandinista forces that overthrew Somoza nearly a decade ago have turned out to be "avowed Marxists," Bumpers acknowledged. The crux of the U.S. problem in Nicaragua, he said, is that the tiny country's people "hate the Somozistas more than the Sandinistas."

The Arkansas Democrat said he opposes more U.S. aid to the contras, in part because U.S. officials cannot account for more than half the assistance approved two years ago, when Congress voted \$27 million in "humanitarian" funds. He cited a recent report of the General Accounting Office that \$15 million of that sum cannot be tracked, adding he fears U.S. money is lining the pockets of corrupt contra leaders.

Another speaker, retired NBC radio and television correspondent Edwin Newman, also emphasized the importance of understanding the current situation in Nicaragua in light of previous U.S. policies. He said Reagan is in danger of becoming "obsessed" with Nicaragua in the same sense former President Lyndon B. Johnson became "obsessed" with Vietnam.

Another speaker at the White House session, Douglas Holladay, defended U.S. policy in South Africa but predicted the end of Apartheid, the system of government-imposed racial segregation that has resulted in bloody confrontations between blacks and police. Reagan is genuinely opposed to apartheid, the State Department official insisted, adding, "Apartheid is going to be gone."

Frederick R. Colgan, a senior White House official in the Drug Abuse Policy Office, told participants the administration is waging war on drug pushers. Even more important, he said, is the need for American parents to realize the extent of the drug problem in their communities.

Another White House official, Bob Sweet of the Domestic Policy Council, explained the process used by Reagan in arriving at decisions on domestic issues. He said while Reagan routinely delegates authority to his staff, the president is well-informed and makes final choices decisively.

Besides Bumpers, two other U.S. senators addressed the editors and writers. Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said Reagan's nominees to federal judgeships will come in for closer scrutiny during the remainder of his term. Simon, designated by fellow Democrats on the panel to investigate such nominees, said he is concentrating on assessing the qualifications of appointees to the 13 federal courts of appeals.

Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., answered a wide range of questions on domestic and international issues posed by participants. He related his struggle during a bitterly-contested re-election campaign two years ago to maintain a Christian attitude toward an opponent who made unsubstantiated charges of financial improprieties by Hatfield and his wife. Despite its sometimes rough-and-tumble nature, the Oregon Republican and Southern Baptist said, politics is a worthy Christian vocation.

Also addressing participants were Baptist Joint Committee Executive Director James M. Dunn and General Counsel Oliver S. Thomas, who gave an assessment of current church-state issues in the United States.

**(BP)**

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