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86-96

Missionaries To Get Advice
On Guarding Against Terrorism

By Bob Stanley

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--A new document being prepared by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board suggests precautions missionaries can take as safeguards against terrorism.

The "Awareness Document on Field Dangers," presented in draft form to the board's trustees at their June meeting, points out the likelihood of a missionary becoming a terrorist victim is far less than the danger from automobile accidents or common crime.

But it identifies steps missionaries can take if they do find themselves in dangerous situations and also outlines ways the board will seek to ensure their safety.

Among other advice, the document urges missionaries to be alert to local situations and potential danger, maintain simple lifestyles, vary their daily schedules and travel patterns, avoid provocative political statements and be such dedicated, contributing members of their communities that this would discourage attack from any terrorist seeking popular support.

The statement reaffirms that the board would not pay ransom in a hostage situation because doing so would expose all missionaries as possible targets for such crimes.

Despite all precautions, the document says, missionaries should be aware risks and dangers may be a part of their service. It points out cases in which missionaries have been targets of guerrilla or terrorist activity have been "remarkably few." But it also acknowledges God's servants "are not always spared difficulty and suffering."

"Since a missionary goes to the field in obedience to God's call, the Foreign Mission Board should be seen as enabling the fulfilling of the missionary's call rather than being seen as sending the missionary into dangerous situations," it says. But it emphasizes the board will do all it can to seek "the well-being and personal and family security of its missionaries."

As part of its study, the board has consulted experts in this field and U.S. officials responsible for all Americans abroad.

"Awareness of the realities we face is helpful," the report concludes. "It enables us to live by informed faith. Giving in to the paralysis of fear is not helpful. Accepting God's call involves being willing to accept the risks inherent in that call and being willing to give a consistent witness in face of difficulty and danger."

The document, when completed in September, will go to all active missionaries, candidates for missionary service before their appointment and volunteers. More discussion on ways to work safely overseas will occur during orientation before missionaries leave for field assignments.

Of more than 8,800 Southern Baptist missionaries who have served in the 141-year history of the Foreign Mission Board, nine have been murdered. Four of these killings were directly related to political turmoil. One of the earliest victims was J. Landrum Holmes, a missionary to China murdered in 1861 while he attempted to dissuade invaders from attacking a village during the Taiping Rebellion. The most recent victim of political change was missionary Archie G. Dunaway Jr., killed by guerrillas in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1978.

These figures compare to 12 missionaries who drowned or were on ships lost at sea, nine who were killed in car accidents, five who died in plane crashes, one who was killed by a wounded buffalo on a hunting trip, one who died as a prisoner of war held by the Japanese and one who was crushed during a typhoon.

Texas' Mexican Baptists
Pledge To Pray, Sow, Reap

By Ken Camp

WICHITA FALLS, Texas (BP)--Committed to the theme of "Praying, Sowing and Reaping Together," more than 1,300 Hispanic Texas Baptists gathered at First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls June 23-25 for the 76th annual meeting of the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas.

About 500 Texans attended and elected Manuel Rodriguez, pastor of Harlandale Baptist Mission in San Antonio, as convention president.

Rodriguez, who has been pastor of the San Antonio congregation for five years, was elected by 52 percent over Sam Medina of Lubbock and Willie Garza of San Antonio. He succeeds Richard Vera of Dallas, who was named associate for ethnic evangelism in the Texas Baptist evangelism division.

Asking for the prayers of the convention, Rodriguez pledged his service to them, saying, "I want to be the president not of one group but of all Spanish-speaking Baptists in Texas."

Other officers elected were first vice president, Roberto Cuellar, pastor of Iglesia Bautista El Calvario, Dallas; second vice president, Daniel Banda, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Betel, Dallas; third vice president, Rugiero Izaguirre, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Beaumont, McAllen.

In his presidential address, Vera challenged the Hispanic Baptists to deepen their dedication to evangelism and discipleship as the causes that unite them, saying, "I pray we will be one people--a spiritual, humble people of integrity."

During a special installation service, Vera was commissioned to service as Hispanic consultant in the division of the evangelism, Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Reading from 2 Timothy, Paul Powell, president of the state convention and pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, issued a charge to faithfulness in service. William M. Pinson Jr., executive director of the state convention, said, "I am convinced that God has called Richard Vera to this task, has equipped him for it and has given him a vision of reaching a lost state."

As Vera knelt on the platform with his wife and children standing beside him, Carlos McLeod, director of the evangelism division, led in a prayer commissioning him to his new ministry.

In the annual convention message, Elias Benitez, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Hispana in El Paso, offered a call to sow the seed of the gospel where that message is needed most: "It is high time for us to go where the people are. You need to get off your seat, onto your feet and out into the street to take the gospel to the people wherever they are."

Speaking at the fifth annual Christian educators banquet on the second day of the convention, D.L. Lowrie, pastor of First Baptist Church of Lubbock and chairman of the state missions commission, encouraged the Mexican Baptist Convention to examine the possibilities, responsibilities and accountabilities of Christian education.

Lowrie said Christian education opens up the possibilities of personal growth, greater usefulness and better self-image. It also makes Christians responsible for the task they have to do and for the name of Christ that they bear, and it makes them accountable for opportunities that arise.

At a church extension breakfast, Fermin Whittaker, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's ethnic church growth department, urged mission pastors to stay with their congregations until they are sure God has called them elsewhere.

"To grow churches, we must be willing to take the time to stay where God has called us," said Whittaker. "Your job is not only to start but to develop new congregations."

Conference Urges Emphasis
On Multi-Family Housing

By Leisa A. Hammett

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—Churches must grasp the urgent need to minister in multi-family housing areas and be willing to alter traditional church and evangelism methods to reach apartment, trailer park and condo dwellers, Southern Baptist leaders were told during a multi-family housing conference.

Delos Miles, professor of evangelism at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., where the conference met, said in order to evangelize large urban centers, Southern Baptists must take the gospel message to people in multi-family housing.

David Beal, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board national consultant for multi-family housing, added builders and real estate brokers predict phenomenal growth in multi-family dwellings by the year 2000.

"We are sitting on an explosive situation.... Southern Baptists have a mission field at their doorstep," said Beal. "Yet some churches tend to write-off these people."

Explained Miles, "America is becoming more urban.... We've got a new cultural milieu, and Southern Baptists don't know what to do about it."

Traditional Southern Baptist methods of evangelism—Sunday schools and revivals—are not working like they once did, said Miles. And Southern Baptists will have to change their methods to reach multi-family housing residents, both Miles and Beal emphasized.

Miles prescribed "point-of-need-evangelism"—reaching multi-family housing residents through their needs versus confrontational evangelism approaches. "Our methods of evangelism have become too methodical and mechanistic," said Miles. "There's a great need for more spontaneity and creativity."

Beal advocated relational evangelism that provides creative opportunities. When Christians form relationships with non-Christians, he said, they might be rejected the first time they present the gospel message, but they will have second and third opportunities.

The barrier to traditional Baptist approaches may be sociological, he added, explaining, "We are a rural people seeking to minister to an urban citizenship." Only 40 percent of America's churches are located among 70 percent of the population, he noted.

Despite Baptists' heritage and location of churches, Southern Baptists can minister successfully to multi-family housing residents, Beal continued. But successful ministry may not mean bringing them into church: "We do not have to destroy what we have, but build something different to reach people. If we are willing to change, we can reach some people."

"Multi-family housing residents might not be interested in the traditional church, but they might be interested in a Bible study."

"Experiencing worship outside the church," he continued, "is the wave of the future.... Taking the church to multi-family housing communities is a risk, but it reaches people we could not otherwise."

Beal explained indigenous satellites—groups of a congregation that meet outside of the church—should not be clones of the sponsoring church. "If multi-family housing residents will not go to the big church, they will not go to its little brother. We have to gear a new church to those people," he insisted.

Churches must reflect the lifestyles, races, social and economic levels of their communities, he added, noting, "If they do not, they are on their way down...and a lot our churches do not reflect their communities."

He stressed the importance of churches being prepared for ministry. A home missionary for more than 20 years, he has seen "humanity" creep in when churches were not prepared to accept the product of their ministry—people who may dress, live and worship differently.

Claudia Hill, a former US-2 missionary in Kansas City, Mo., said few residents will slam the door in a Christian's face when they are handed a box of cookies. Hill, who now works as a minister to apartments, recommends Christians interested in forming relationships with apartment dwellers use a "welcome wagon" approach.

Hill learns the names of new residents from apartment managers she has befriended. She also offers residents babysitting services, aerobics classes and Bible studies.

Beal emphasized Christians must emulate the servanthood model to be effective in multi-family housing by offering similar services for residents and managers.

The three-day conference was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, North Carolina Baptist Convention and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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Baptist Relief Teams
Aids Bonnie's Victims

By Ken Camp

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DALLAS (BP)—The Texas Baptist Disaster Relief Mobile Unit and a team of eight volunteers fed victims of Hurricane Bonnie in Port Arthur, Texas, on June 26.

By the following day, emergency relief services no longer were required, and the unit left the disaster site. The disaster team was on standby status in Huntsville, Texas, when the call came from Port Arthur American Red Cross Director James Broussard, requesting the mobile unit and field kitchen.

"We are glad to report that existing funds, food supplies and available work crews will be adequate so that no statewide appeals need to be made," said Charles McLaughlin, chairman of the Texas Baptist Disaster Relief Committee. "Prayers for people in the stricken areas will be appreciated."

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Reorganization Strengthens
Volunteer, Student, Resort Work

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ATLANTA (BP)—In an effort to strengthen recruitment of volunteers in home missions, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's special mission ministries department has realigned several staff and national consultant assignments.

The department is responsible for recruiting student missionaries and short-term volunteers and also directs creative ministries—puppetry, clowning—and mission work in resort areas.

Board staff members Jack Merritt and Mike Bailey, who had been enlisting short-term and construction volunteers, respectively, will become field consultants. Don Hammonds, department director, said consultant status will alleviate administrative responsibilities and allow more recruitment and training time.

The number of volunteers had leveled off at about 40,000, Hammonds said, explaining, "We needed a stronger emphasis to move off that plateau."

Bill Lee, who formerly recruited student missionaries, will direct resort and leisure ministries and supervise the departments' consultant for creative ministries and national missionaries for experimental ministries. Lee's new responsibilities will enable the board to work more closely with the resort ministries of state Baptist conventions, Hammonds said.

Mike Robertson, who formerly supervised resort ministries, will be responsible for establishing student work in new convention areas.

Hammonds explained three vacancies prompted the reorganization. Esther Burroughs, who directed youth work, recently was appointed HMB's national evangelism consultant for women. Chuck Clayton, former national consultant for resort and leisure ministries resigned to become pastor of Baptist Temple in San Jose, Calif. And Eddie Olds, former national student work consultant, died earlier this year.

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The reorganization also will allow Hammonds, who had been establishing student work in new conventions, to work more closely with state leaders on all special mission ministry endeavors.

Hammonds expects to fill the three staff positions by the beginning of August, the effective date of the reorganization.

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Old Tunes Make Folks
Shape Up And Sing Out

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Shaped notes produced smooth melodies this spring at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's second annual Sacred Harp Singing.

The marble rotunda of Cowden Hall resounded with boisterous singing of 19th century hymn tunes sung by old-timers and others comparatively wet behind the ears.

William J. Reynolds, associate professor of church music, coordinated the singing, which drew 125 people to the Fort Worth, Texas, campus.

Sacred Harp Singing, an old Baptist tradition associated mainly with rural, primitive Baptist churches, takes its name from an 1844 hymnal. The Sacred Harp put sacred texts to folk tunes read by "shaped" notes. Four shapes of notes designate tones called fa, sol, la and mi.

Singers face each other in four sections, forming a square. One of the singers gives the beginning pitch "in the key of convenience," Reynolds said. When everyone has found the right pitch, the group sings through the melody on the four syllables. Then they add the words.

Old-timers wave one hand up and down with the steady beat of the song while holding the hymnal with the other hand. Even by the end of a long day of singing, hands still strike the beat firmly and voices still belt out the tunes.

After each song, a new leader arises from the group, announces the next number and establishes the pitch. Reynolds said the singings are designed to allow everyone who wants to lead to have the opportunity.

Modern hymns drawn from the Sacred Harp include "Amazing Grace," "How Firm a Foundation" and "On Jordan's Stormy Banks."

Curtis Owen of Lockhart, Texas, came on the Southwestern campus for the first time to attend the singing. "There are some top-notch singers here today," he said.

And he ought to know. Owen said he was raised on Sacred Harp singings and led his first song at age 6. His own church holds a singing the first Sunday of March.

Reynolds said about 500 singings are held every year across the United States. "A lot of little churches with quarter-time preaching will have singings on the Sundays they don't have a preacher," he said.

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CORRECTION: In story dated 6/27/86 entitled, "Pilots Killed In Crash Members Of Resort Church," please make the following corrections:

First graf should begin, "ATLANTA (BP)— About one hundred people..." instead of "ATLANTA (BP)— Nearly a thousand people..."

Sixth graf should read, "Ingraham was survived by his wife, Judy, whom he had met when she was a summer missionary at the canyon."

Thanks,
Baptist Press