



- - 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
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
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

September 29, 1986

86-142

Southern Baptists Do Things
'The Right Way' In Ireland

By Mark Wingfield

N-SWBTS

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Unlike independent Baptists, Southern Baptists have made a good impression on Irish Baptists, the general secretary of the Baptist Union of Ireland said at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Rea Grant spoke to students in C.W. Brister's Christian ministry class. Grant and his wife, Ruth, are on a three-week vacation in the United States.

Grant met Brister this summer while Brister, his wife and four Southwestern Seminary students helped with a Partnership Missions effort in Ireland. They ministered in the church at Newry with worship assistance, door-to-door visitation and youth work.

Southern Baptists currently have no missions personnel assigned to Ireland. Three more Southern Baptist volunteer teams were scheduled to work in Ireland the first week in October.

Brister and his group were "good ambassadors for the kind of relationship that could develop between Irish Baptists and Southern Baptists," Grant said. "They did it the right way."

Grant said Irish Baptists are concerned about outsiders doing things "the right way" because many Christians who have come to Ireland have brought only trouble.

"It's the independent crowd that is causing us trouble," he said. "You just don't dash into town in the south of Ireland, have a campaign, plant a church and dash out again."

Grant said this has been the pattern of independent Baptists from America. These individuals work outside of the Irish Christian community and leave bad impressions that reflect on Irish Baptists, he said.

One American independent told Grant God had told him to go to a certain town in Ireland. The man arrived at this conclusion, Grant said, because Ireland is mentioned in the preface to the King James Bible and this particular town looked like the man's hometown.

Perhaps these experiences with independents caused Grant to be skeptical of Southern Baptists at first, Brister said. The Brister team's visit followed only a few months behind a visit to Ireland by Isam Ballenger, area director for Europe and the Middle East with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Ballenger had been in Newcastle, Ireland, for an annual pastors' conference and met with Grant. So when Brister's team arrived, Grant was curious to see more of what Southern Baptists are like, Brister said.

Brister noted Southern Baptists' primary connection with Irish Baptists has come through Clive Johnston, pastor of a Baptist church in Sion Mills, Ireland. Johnston was pastor of First Baptist Church in El Dorado, Texas, for two years.

Ballenger said he is pleased with intensified relationships between Irish and Southern Baptists. Southern Baptists "extend assistance and especially personnel only upon invitation from the national bodies," he said.

Southern Baptists must overcome some "negative feelings" left with Irish Baptists by independents, Ballenger said, noting, "I think that will take time."

--more--

Any work in Ireland will be done not to establish Southern Baptist churches, but Irish Baptist churches, he said. If Southern Baptist missionaries were appointed to Ireland, "they would actually work under the direction of the officials of the Baptist Union."

The Baptist Union of Ireland consists of 95 churches and 8,300 members. If that number sounds small to Americans, it is because Irish Baptists count only "real, live members," Grant pointed out.

Baptist work in the country of 5 million people began about 1630, Grant said. Although Ireland is partitioned into two bodies, north and south, the Baptist union serves all of Ireland. Baptist work has a stronger hold in Northern Ireland. Southern Ireland is predominantly Roman Catholic.

Ireland's civil strife deeply affects its churches, Grant said. Some have used the church as a platform for militant activism. But the Baptist Union "steers clear of political involvement," he said.

"Only the intervention of God can help Ireland," he said.

Through prison ministries, men from both sides of the war are finding Christ, Grant said. "When revival comes to Ireland, it may not come the old fashioned way" with big meetings and mass decisions. "It may come through the establishment of strong Christian families."

—30—

First ACTS—Good News
Dinner Termed Success

N-RTVC

Baptist Press
9/29/86

SAN JOSE, Calif. (BP)—More than \$280,000 was pledged by about 1,100 persons in the first "ACTS—Good News America" telemissions dinner in San Jose, Calif., Sept. 19.

Jimmy R. Allen, president of ACTS and its parent organization, the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, said the "event is by far the largest dinner we have had in a single community, both in terms of attendance and financial support."

Funds derived from the pledges will go to pay the costs of the dinner—estimated to be about \$40,000—and the remainder will be divided evenly between the local ACTS board and the ACTS satellite network.

The telemissions dinner was the first of about 20 to be held across the nation as ACTS attempts to raise \$10 million to fund operational costs above and beyond the \$5 million per year the commission receives from the SBC Cooperative Program.

Allen told RTVC trustees at their September meeting the commission was seeking more effective ways to do fund raising, since previous efforts at capital campaigns have proven to be of limited success, coupled with "unacceptably high" costs.

The San Jose dinner was directed by Bill Nichols, senior vice president of affiliate services at the commission. He also will coordinate the other dinners across the nation.

In the San Jose area, ACTS has been assigned Channel 23 on the Gill Gable system. Negotiations for the cable channel were carried on by Jim Silvers, pastor of Foxworthy Baptist Church in San Jose and president of the Santa Clara Valley ACTS board, and Ben Reichmuth, marketing vice president of the Gill Cable Company.

Gill Cable ranks 28th in the nation in subscriber count and is the largest independently owned cable system in the nation.

Richard Murray, spokesman for Gill Cable said the company "was attracted to ACTS because the network encourages locally produced programming from a variety of denominations."

Santa Clara Valley ACTS currently is not producing programming for the cable system, but spokesmen said funds from the pledges are expected to allow them to purchase their own equipment and to begin programming by early 1987.

—30—

Terrorist Attack In Togo
Delays Volunteers' Return

N-FMB

LOME, Togo (BP)--Three Southern Baptist volunteers were delayed in returning to North Carolina after gunmen attacked sections of Lome, Togo, the night of Sept. 23, killing six civilians, a Foreign Mission Board official reported.

None of the volunteers or the 11 Southern Baptist missionaries was endangered, said John Mills, Foreign Mission Board director for West Africa.

One couple and a woman volunteer had been working in community development projects in Moretan, Togo. Roadblocks and disrupted airport service delayed by several days their return to North Carolina. The volunteers, Bill and Evelyn Reece of Thomasville and Liz Doles of Burlington, were expected to leave for North Carolina Sept. 29.

Five gunmen were reported killed and 19 captured during the fighting in Lome, the nation's capital city. The Togo government claims the gunmen are international terrorists; others have looked upon the attack as an apparent coup attempt.

About 150 to 200 French troops were flown in to search the city after the gunmen attacked. "Everything's back to normal," Mills said.

Missionary Larry Bailey said the border between Ghana and Togo was closed. After the incident, Lome residents stayed in their homes as the Togo government had advised. Togo air force jets flew over the area.

The Baileys did not hear any of the fighting, which did not involve any bombings. Attacks of this nature are infrequent in Togo, which is one of the more stable countries in West Africa.

Four missionary couples, a journeyman and a long-term volunteer couple are stationed in Lome.

--30--

N-BJC

Congress Gives Final Approval
To Sweeping Tax Code Revision

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press
9/29/86

WASHINGTON (BP)--Despite last-minute threats of blockage, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have given final approval to a wide-sweeping revision of the federal tax code.

The Tax Reform Act of 1986, which is expected to be signed into law by President Reagan within days, contains several provisions that will affect churches, church-related institutions and ministers.

Senate and House conferees--headed by Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., and Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, D-Ill.--worked throughout the summer to hammer out a compromise between the House bill approved last December and the Senate version passed in June.

Both bodies voted by wide margins to approve the compromise version of H.R. 3838. The House approved the bill 292-136, with the Senate following suit by a vote of 74-23.

The legislation will retain the tax-exempt status of church pension and welfare groups, including the Southern Baptist Convention's Annuity Board. The House version would have stripped such boards of their federal tax exemption.

The compromise bill also will restore clergy housing benefits. Under a current Internal Revenue Service ruling--Revenue Ruling 83-3--only ministers who occupied their residence or had a contract to purchase one by Jan. 1, 1983, are eligible to declare mortgage interest and property tax deductions in addition to tax-exempt housing allowances. Even that limited eligibility is scheduled to extend only through tax year 1986.

Revocation of that IRS ruling will enable ministers receiving housing allowances who failed to claim deductions for interest and real estate taxes paid since 1983 to file amended tax returns seeking refunds.

--more--

The new law package will end the eligibility of non-itemizing taxpayers to claim deductions for charitable contributions. That benefit, which has been available to non-itemizers for the past three years, will end Dec. 31, 1986.

Other provisions of H.R. 3838 that will affect church-related institutions and employees include:

--denying a participant in a pension plan--such as offered by the Annuity Board--from deducting contributions to individual retirement accounts.

--adding non-discrimination rules that will require employers to equalize benefits for employees at all compensation levels, set more restrictive limits on the amounts that can be credited to an employee's retirement program, and revise the system under which ministers and churches can participate in the Social Security system.

--imposing new penalty taxes on most early withdrawals from pension plans.

--restricting the amount of "catch-up" contributions a participant may make to a retirement income account to make up for years in which he was able to contribute little or nothing.

--30--

China Christians Meet
At National Conference

N-FMB

Baptist Press
9/29/86

BEIJING (BP)--Chinese Protestants elected leaders for their two main organizations and heard assurances of continued religious freedom at the Fourth National Christian Conference, held in Beijing in late August.

The 280 conference delegates re-elected Bishop Ding Guangxun (K.H. Ting), 71, as president of both the China Christian Council and the Three Self Patriotic Movement. Also elected were 18 vice chairmen and vice presidents for the two organizations.

The China Christian Council, formed in 1980, works to increase the quality of ministry in local churches through theological education, the printing of Bibles, hymnals and Christian literature, and other efforts. The Three Self Patriotic Movement represents Chinese Protestants in relations with the government and the general public. Chinese Catholics have their own national organization.

Communist Party official Jiang Ping told conference delegates that freedom of religious belief is a basic right, according to news reports of the conference.

"We must...respect and protect the democratic right of the people," Jiang was quoted as saying. "Any practice which runs against this policy must be corrected."

Another party official praised the two Christian organizations for helping implement the government's policy on religion and for involving Christians in China's modernization efforts.

Bishop Wang Shenyn, a Three Self vice chairman, reported Chinese Protestants now have about 6,000 ministers nationwide. Wang said 300 have been ordained since 1981. He estimated the number of open churches at "more than 4,000." The last national conference was in 1980.

--30--

'Picking For People' Unites
Youth And Hungry Families

By Erich Bridges

F-FMB

Baptist Press
9/29/86

HANOVER COUNTY, Va. (BP)--Thirteen-year-old Kim Hero, a child of the suburbs, had never visited a farm before, much less harvested food.

She's never experienced the hunger of poverty, either. But Kim and other members of the youth group at Parham Road Baptist Church in Richmond, Va., have been sweating in the fields of Ray Lloyd's 10-acre farm in nearby Hanover County. Their goal: fresh vegetables for hungry people and needy families in central Virginia.

--more--

Kim's friend, 11-year-old Carolyn LeFon, calls the project "picking for people." Kevin Moen, minister of youth and education at Parham Road Baptist Church, calls it "Parham Road Farm Aid."

"I think it's fun," says Paul Papineau, 13, another youth group member. "And it's gonna help some people. I'm glad about that. I think the Lord is pleased with me. I was glad to help Mr. Lloyd out, too."

Lloyd, 69, is a retired farmer and state government worker. He wanted to use his retirement free time to do volunteer work in Richmond, but poor health has kept him at home. Along with members of another Richmond congregation, River Road Baptist Church, Lloyd started the harvesting project last year.

River Road Church folks purchased \$150 worth of seed and fertilizer and planted one acre of Lloyd's land in 1985. This year they planted two acres and invited the Parham Road congregation to join the project.

"I raise it and they pick it and deliver it," explains Lloyd, who also helps with harvesting until his back gets sore. "I've gotten a lot of pleasure out of it."

Chester Phelps, minister of education at River Road Church, estimates volunteers from the two churches have harvested eight tons of food so far. They could have produced even more, Phelps and Lloyd agree, if not for this year's drought.

"We've taken people from kindergarten through senior adults" to help out, Phelps reports.

Between cornstalk ambushes and overripe vegetable battles, the young people from Parham Road Church have harvested more than 3,000 pounds of corn, cucumbers, squash, eggplant, green peppers, tomatoes and pumpkins.

All the fresh food goes to the Central Virginia Food Bank in Richmond. It's one of four state branches of Second Harvest, a national, nonprofit food distribution network. The Richmond food bank distributes everything from canned goods to bagels to needy people in 37 central Virginia counties. The bank aids more than 100,000 people each month through charitable organizations, emergency shelters, church food pantries and various feeding programs.

Most of the donations come from food wholesalers and retailers, but during the summer farm gleaners are "real big," according to volunteer coordinator Otis Mallory.

"It's a pretty good feeling to do something locally," says Phelps. "We know there's great need in Ethiopia and other places, but there's need right here, too."

—30—

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