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El Salvador Missionaries
Seek To Aid Quake Victims

By Art Toalston and Erich Bridges

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (BP)—First Baptist Church in the downtown area of San Salvador, El Salvador, hardest hit by two midday earthquakes Oct. 10 was spared becoming a scene of death, unlike other nearby buildings.

In his early surveys of damage, Southern Baptist missionary Bill Stennett said he had no reports of loss of life or serious injury among members of five Baptist churches in the nation's capital.

Numerous families, however, were staying outside their damaged dwellings, fearing they might collapse. Stennett said many downtown buildings not destroyed were leaning to one side because of damage to the lower floors. Many others which look all right from the outside have sustained unseen structural damage.

Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte warned people not to re-enter their homes or buildings in the hardest-hit areas until the structures have been declared safe.

"The problem is not so much food," Stennett said in a telephone interview Oct. 13. "Food will be a problem for another day or two. Medicine will be a problem for another week or so. The major problem is people who are on the streets, especially if they've completely lost their houses or their houses are so damaged that they're afraid to go back into them. There are literally thousands ... there's no way to tell how many thousands are out on the streets, under sheets and under blankets."

Duarte said Oct. 12 that as many as 150,000 people are homeless. At least 890 people died and 10,000 were injured during the quake and its aftermath, he reported. He set a rough estimate of damage at \$2 billion and predicted much of the downtown area eventually will have to be rebuilt.

As for Baptist relief efforts, Stennett said he wants to obtain 75 rolls of 100-pound heavy plastic to shelter several hundred families. He also is ordering kerosene lanterns, and he plans to distribute New Testaments to earthquake victims helped by Baptists.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has authorized up to \$20,000 for initial relief efforts.

Two churches in San Salvador, Miramonte Baptist and Emmanuel Baptist, already are providing medicine and food to quake victims, the missionary said. The Baptist Association of El Salvador was evaluating needs and possible responses Oct. 13. The El Salvador-based evangelical relief agency Paravida, supported in part by Southern Baptist relief funds, aided victims through its medical clinic until medicines ran out.

Stennett planned to check with Paravida to see what additional needs Baptists could fill, perhaps in medicines. Several doctors contacted by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board were on standby, but Stennett had not yet learned whether they would be needed.

First Baptist Church's third floor is "pretty well shaken up," Stennett said. An engineer will need "to check out the building to see how safe it is" before the 600-member congregation can resume activities there.

The Baptist Bookstore also was damaged, particularly items stored in the basement book deposit. Shelves fell to the floor, and the books sustained some water damage.

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The bookstore did not seem to suffer structural damage, although Stennett, who was in the second-floor office during the tremors, thought it was going to collapse. He said the shaking was far worse than the major earthquake he experienced in Guatemala during the mid-1970s.

Each of the six Southern Baptist missionaries in El Salvador escaped serious injury, although several books and boxes hit Stennett's wife, Libby, when a heavy bookshelf fell. A table where she was sitting deflected the bookshelf. "She's still sore, but nothing broken, just bruised," Stennett reported. Stennett is from Richmond, Va., and his wife is from Washington, D.C.

Missionary Rusty Alums of Mobile, Ala., was in his office in the bookstore basement, while his wife, Peggy, was in a dentist's chair. The dentist prevented equipment from toppling onto her. She is from Birmingham, Ala.

Missionary Ernie McAninch of Gadsden, Ala., was in the second-floor bookstore office. His wife, Lee Ann, also of Gadsden, escaped injury in a doctor's office in a building which sustained heavy damage. No Salvadoran bookstore employees were injured.

Stennett said the missionary homes were shaken and glass items were broken, but they sustained no structural damage. Bathroom fixtures at the bookstore were broken, and the building will not reopen until an engineer examines the structure.

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Baptist Educator Says Schools
Not Responsible For Values

By Kathy Palen

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WASHINGTON (BP)—Schools should not be held responsible for the moral and ethical values of America's youth, a college president told participants at the 20th National Religious Liberty Conference.

During the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs' three-day exploration of "Intersecting Values," Olin Robison, president of Middlebury College in Vermont, focused on education's confrontation with those values.

"If we are to see the teaching of values in our society, then we must do it ourselves," he said. "Not the schools. Not the colleges. Not the universities.

"It is wishful thinking in the extreme to assume that the educational system can play that role, assume the responsibility of passing to the next generation the central and binding values, the moral and ethical concepts that set us free to be who we can be."

Robison, a Baptist, said schools are able to teach civic responsibility, appreciation of the law and intellectual and social skills, but they should not be expected to fulfill any role beyond that.

Recalling Education Secretary William J. Bennett's announcement several years ago that students were being "ripped off" because colleges were not keeping their promise to make those students better culturally and morally, Robison said, "My position was that colleges may do many dumb things, but promising to improve people morally is not one of them."

Robison described an article he wrote in response to Bennett that said a college's goal is to provide a climate in which the most exemplary values can flourish and the least desirable ones have a more difficult time.

"Any educator knows that few people actually change their ethical and moral values in college," he wrote. "On the campus we work with what we get. In most things we reflect the values of our society.

"There is no prospect of graduating young adults who are morally strong, ethically concerned and generously dedicated to the public good unless you admit 18 year olds who already possess those qualities."

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Robison emphasized society's indecision about what it wants and its inability to articulate its messages. "Where are we to find the voice of sanity, clarity, conviction and vision in a society that reduces all messages to sound bytes and bumper stickers, billboards and lapel pins?" he asked.

He pointed to the country's "rich tradition" as the distinctive voice needed by society. He compared that voice—which warns against the evils of injustice, ignorance, bigotry, exploitation, hunger and war—with "the language of the day," which is filled with adversarial models of human relations and seductive definitions of success.

Robison urged the participants to speak "truth" to power, to privilege and to comfort.

"But how on earth can we speak truth to power when we spend our energies in fighting with each other—the same petty battles Baptists have fought for the last 400 years?" he asked. "How can we speak truth to power when we have abandoned the powerful language of our past and acquiesced in trivializing the powerful and revolutionary message of Christ?"

He urged members of a society marked by growing disparities between the rich and poor to speak Jesus' message that "privilege carries responsibility and wealth is the ultimate seduction."

Robison called for the message that comfort is an unworthy goal that dulls sensitivity to the need of others, takes the edge off the Puritan commitment to accomplishment and breaks down stamina while encouraging indifference.

He challenged the audience finally to speak truth to their children.

"We speak truth to our children when we allow them to be proud of their heritage," he said. "We speak truth to our children when we tell them that courage and the ability to make moral and ethical choices are not accidental.

"We are more honest with our children when we stop sugar-coating everything, when we forget about competing with MTV, when we set the appropriate example."

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Enos' Soaring Spirit
Overpowers Crippled Legs

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SUMBAWANGA, Tanzania (BP)—Enos isn't crawling to heaven. But because he crawls many others will go there with him.

Three years ago when a Baptist church was started in Sumbawanga, Tanzania, Enos was one of the first converts. And despite two withered, completely useless legs, he responded not only to God's offer of salvation but also to God's call to service.

Today, even without a missionary working in the area on a regular basis, 11 churches exist in and around Sumbawanga—and Enos has started six of them. Sometimes he travels by bus, but often he crawls, pulling himself with his arms, to cover the miles to minister and preach to his congregations.

"How does one preach dedication of life to someone like Enos?" asks Jim Houser, a Southern Baptist missionary working as a general evangelist in Tanzania. He preached in Sumbawanga this summer and met Enos after the African church planter crawled into the church, sat on the front row and "sang, clapped and participated with enthusiasm and joy."

"We Baptists from America have so much to learn," Houser says.

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Security Police Investigation
Provides Unexpected Translator

TSUMEB, Namibia/Southwest Africa (BP)—Security police caused anxiety when they invited themselves to a Baptist worship service, 60 miles outside the northern Namibia mining town of Tsumeb.

But if police had not come to see if the gathering was a political meeting under the guise of a religious service, there would not have been a sermon.

The couple who were acting as hosts for the service were new Christians and two of the newest members of Tsumeb Baptist Church, an English-language congregation. Soon after their conversion, they felt the need for the bushmen they employ on their large farm to hear the gospel.

To counter the language barrier, Augustu Kamau, the multi-lingual pastor of the mostly black Nontsoub Baptist Church in Tsumeb, was invited to preach. Neighboring farmers, fearful the meeting was political, contacted security police Namibia is experiencing civil war.

After deciding not to cancel the meeting, the Baptists were frustrated when they discovered the bushmen spoke Nama—but Kamau did not.

Then one of the police, a Nama, offered to translate. So both the Afrikaans-speaking security police and the bushmen were able to understand the sermon.

The two churches cooperated in continuing the outreach, Tsumeb Baptist Church providing resources and Nontsoub Baptist Church providing the people.

Within the first few weeks, several farm workers made professions of faith in Christ and were baptized.

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Missionaries Offered Gold
To Witness To Man's Father

By Eric Miller

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BARRANQUILLA, Colombia (BP)—The gospel means so much to Raul Castillo that he offered gold to two Southern Baptist missionaries if they would witness to his father.

But Bob and Joan Caperton wouldn't accept his gold. Instead, the couple from Alvin, Texas, gladly traveled four hours—driving an hour on paved roads and two hours on dirt roads, then hiking up the mountain along a muddy, rocky trail—to the Castillo coffee plantation to witness to Castillo's father.

Returning home to Barranquilla was even tougher. The Capertons left the plantation after dark on horseback, riding with Raul Castillo, who works with them in Barranquilla.

"I couldn't even see the horse in front of me," Caperton says adding, "You couldn't see in front of your nose." On horseback, they had to cross a river without a bridge.

The coffee grower didn't accept Christ, but the Capertons feel they planted a gospel seed. They witnessed for an hour—praying, singing hymns and reading a Bible they left with him.

Castillo, who is separated from his Christian wife, was receptive, Caperton says.

The coffee grower showed them the plantation as children raked coffee beans on the ground to remove the husks. They were inspired by the "beautiful farm," Caperton says. "Everything was green, and there was a beautiful waterfall. He lives up on a knoll, with the river circling around him and his coffee all around his house."

They stood on the patio "overlooking all of this beauty," Caperton says, and sang "How Great Thou Art."

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Missionaries Revising
Classic Spanish Bible

By Erich Bridges

EL PASO, Texas (BP)—In a quiet room in West Texas, three men are making history.

Word by painstaking word, they are laboring to produce the first popular revision in a generation of the classic Reina-Valera Bible, the 400-year-old Spanish contemporary of the King James Version.

The men are Southern Baptist missionary Joe Poe, retired missionary Cecil McConnell and Peruvian Bible scholar Moises Chavez. Their dream is a modern Spanish Bible, faithful to the Scriptures and the literary beauty of the Reina-Valera, but understandable and affordable to 250 million people of the Spanish-speaking world.

The complete New Testament began rolling off the presses in May. The full Bible probably will appear in 1988, almost a decade after the project began.

The Baptist Spanish Publishing House in El Paso, an arm of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, is publishing the Reina-Valera Actualizada Version. Poe directs the Bible Publications Department at the publishing house, which distributes Christian literature to more than 40 countries.

Nearly 750,000 New Testaments already have been sold, including a record-breaking order of 235,000 on a single day in August.

Mexican Baptists ordered 100,000 paperback New Testaments—with special covers reading "Mexico, Come Unto Me" above a national map and a soccer ball—for distribution in relation to the recent World Cup soccer competition. Another 100,000 are going to El Salvador with a special cover. Other orders are coming in from throughout Latin America. The New Testament also will be available at Baptist Book Stores and other bookstores in the United States.

The first edition of the New Testament features 13 short Bible studies in the back. The lessons are "designed for people who know nothing about the Bible, have never studied the Bible or perhaps don't even know how to find a chapter and a verse," says missionary Sam Shaw, promotion and distribution coordinator for the new Bible. Also included are four pages of Bible choruses. A cassette tape is being produced to provide musical accompaniment.

Publishing house staffers envision training Baptists to use the New Testaments to start as many as 20,000 evangelistic Bible studies. "That's based on each church that we know of in Latin America starting three Bible studies—home studies or in a club, a factory, a park, whatever," Shaw explains. The ultimate goal is for at least 5,000 of the Bible studies to evolve into churches.

"There's a real seriousness about not having these New Testaments sit on shelves," Shaw says.

Casiodoro de Reina and Cipriano de Valera would approve. Unlike the state church-sponsored scholars who produced the King James Version, the two 16th century Spanish monks risked their lives to begin translating the Bible into the language of the common people. That was a dangerous heresy during the Spanish Inquisition, which banned translation of the Latin Bible into "vulgar tongues."

The pair eventually escaped into Protestant Europe, but a number of their sympathetic brethren at the Monastery of Saint Jerome in Seville were burned at the stake. In 1569 de Reina published the first complete Bible in Spanish, 42 years before the King James Version appeared. His younger companion produced the first revision in 1602.

Their classic work did not have the profound impact on Spanish language and culture that the King James had on the English-speaking world. The powerful Roman Catholic Church never sanctioned it and even Catholic versions remained virtually prohibited books until recent years, explains reviser Chavez.

But like the King James, the Reina-Valera has never been surpassed in beauty and power. "Because it was produced in the golden age of Spanish literature, it has a place no other edition, ancient or modern, of the Spanish Bible would have," Chavez says. "Even modern Spanish critics recognize that. That's why I always say that the Reina-Valera Bible is the queen, because reina means queen."

Do the current revisers feel a spiritual kinship to their courageous predecessors? "Very definitely," replies McConnell, a veteran of more than 40 years of missions in Latin America, who contributed to the 1960 Reina-Valera revision. "Of course, we're not facing the hardships they had to face, the dangers to their lives and lack of support. We also have a wealth of material they just didn't have."

Aided by some 200 consulting Bible scholars from throughout Latin America and Spain, the trio aims for the most accurate revision yet made. Clarity is the key.

"If we have to choose between clarity and the old literary expression, I think we would choose clarity," McConnell explains. "But if the old is clear, then why change it?"

McConnell has another maxim, however: Don't make the Bible clearer than it is.

"When some of our consultants say, 'Let's say it like this because it sounds better in Spanish,' our answer is, 'It may sound better, but is that what it says?' We want it to say what it says."

They also want to appeal to all Christians. "Our Bible is not a Baptist Bible," McConnell asserts. "I don't want a Baptist Bible. I want Bible Baptists but not a Baptist Bible. The Bible is a biblical Bible."

The three colleagues hope to produce a Bible for general use by church members, preachers, seminary students and professors—and the Spanish-speaking masses searching for the Word of God.

Judging from soaring sales of the New Testament, they may succeed.

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