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November 19, 1986

86-172

1 Meaning, 10,000 Applications,
Rogers Declares Of Scripture

By Mark Wingfield

N-SWBTS

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—"The Bible has only one meaning but 10,000 applications," Adrian Rogers told students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Nov. 18.

Rogers, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of Bellvue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., spoke to an overflow chapel audience at the Fort Worth, Texas, school.

Rogers told students he always asks three questions of Scripture: "What did it mean then? What does it mean now? What does it mean to me personally?"

He said those questions should not lead a person to find additional meanings of the passage, but proper applications. "The Bible has only one meaning, but 10,000 applications," he insisted.

After chapel Rogers and Southwestern President Russell Dilday spoke to news media about the "Glorieta Statement" issued in October by the six SBC seminary presidents. In that statement, the presidents acknowledged there have been problems at some schools and affirmed the Bible as "not errant in any area of reality."

Rogers praised the presidents' statement as "in some ways stronger than the Baptist Faith and Message. "I'm grateful for the statement that the Bible is without error in any area of reality."

But Rogers said he is concerned about interpretations that part of the statement has since been given, noting, "I've heard it put in a somewhat different perspective lately."

Rogers later explained he was referring to comments made by President Roy Honeycutt to his faculty as Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He quoted Honeycutt as saying, "Inerrancy is not the way we interpret our high view of Scripture here at Southern Seminary," adding Honeycutt also said, "We do not believe the Bible is inerrant, but we do believe the Bible is not errant in any area of reality."

Rogers said: "I personally cannot cut a line that fine. I would like for him (Honeycutt) to clearly articulate what he means by that." People should "not say one thing in one place and something else in another," he added.

"What I thought was a very strong statement at Glorieta has been interpreted," Rogers said. "Baptists will only come together as we come together on a statement of what Scripture means. If that (Glorieta) statement begins to erode, the latter state will be worse than the first."

Dilday said the six seminary presidents are "not reluctant to face problems, adding their Glorieta Statement was a "good-faith effort to express what we believe."

"We struggled with terminology," he admitted. "We do have problems with the term 'inerrancy' as a result of its historical roots." That word has become politicized and has a root meaning associated with a human standard of perfection, he said: "The term 'inerrant' had too many qualifications. We wanted a term with a more positive tone to it. We take the Bible as it is. It does not mislead us."

Rogers said the presidents did not need to use the word "inerrant," noting, "We have tried to say you don't have to use our word."

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He added the whole controversy could have been avoided if Southern Baptist leaders had acknowledged in 1979 what the seminary presidents did in their statement. "The thing that was frustrating to conservatives was people saying there aren't any problems," he explained.

But Dilday said he had acknowledged from the start that there were problems in some Baptist schools, especially colleges and universities which do not receive SBC Cooperative Program budget funds.

"We must not let the whole fellowship be destroyed" because of those problems, Dilday said.

"We aren't that far apart," Dilday said of he and Rogers. "We probably differ in how serious those problems are."

The SBC Peace Committee's conclusion of dialogue with all six SBC seminaries is "not a complete exoneration of any school," Rogers said. But he noted Southwestern is "a very wonderful school."

Just like his own church, Southwestern is not perfect, Rogers said, "but the intent of this school is to honor the Bible."

In his message titled "Detours, Dead Ends and Dry Holes," Rogers challenged students not to lose hope when they face life's trials. The sermon was based on the Hebrew nation's exodus from Egypt as recorded in Exodus 13, 14 and 15.

The Hebrews were "going around in circles because it was God's will for them," Rogers said, adding God's timing is not always the same as man's.

"Sometimes you can get there too fast," Rogers noted. As an example, he cited young pastors he has observed that got too much too quickly. "They had not been through boot camp before they got to battle," he said. "I'm glad I started in a small church." He told how he had revered his predecessor at Bellevue, R.G. Lee. As a young man, "it would've blown my gaskets if I'd known I'd ever have the privilege of even knowing that man," he said.

"The will of God is not a road map, it's a relationship," Rogers insisted. "God may seem to be leading you in circles, but that doesn't mean he doesn't have the very best for you."

God brought the Hebrews to a dead end because "he was going to do something so wonderful people are still talking about it in the 20th century," Rogers said. "God always brings you to a point of desperation that he might bring you to a point of dependence."

When students face dead ends they should "refuse fear" and "renew faith," Rogers said. "Fear is the devil's tool."

Finally, God brought the Hebrews to a dry hole to test them, Rogers said. "They failed it miserably" and began to murmur. He told the students, "There is nothing more ugly than murmuring. When you murmur you speak against God."

The lesson, Rogers said, is "not only is Jesus necessary, Jesus is enough."

Rogers urged the students to realize that Jesus is sufficient to meet their needs and bring them through the detours, dead ends and dry holes, promising, "God will turn every hurt into a hallelujah."

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Supreme Court Rejects
Christmas Cross Case

By Kathy Palen

M-BJC
Baptist Press
11/19/86

WASHINGTON (BP)--For the second time this term, the U.S. Supreme Court has refused to review a case involving a municipal Christmas display.

Without comment, the high court rejected an appeal by the city of St. Charles, Ill., to keep a cross-shaped Christmas light display atop its municipal fire station.

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The American Civil Liberties Union and two of its members asked the U.S. District Court for Northern Illinois to issue a temporary restraint prohibiting St. Charles from including the three-story cross in the city's annual Christmas display. The cross was formed with strings of lights hung from the radio/television antenna and crossbar brace on top of the fire station building.

In granting a preliminary injunction, the district court ruled the cross display had "the effect of conveying an association with or tacit approval of Christianity."

The 7th Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously affirmed the lower court decision, calling the cross both a distinctly and a sectarian religious symbol.

Writing for the appeals court, Judge Richard A. Posner distinguished between the more traditional creche--or nativity scene--and the cross display. He said all decorations except the cross have lost their "religious connotations for most people," while the cross is "an ancient and vasiform religious symbol."

"The cross is either a secular decoration, in which event there are many equally or more decorative substitutes at hand, or an attempt to establish Christianity as the officially recognized religion of St. Charles," Posner wrote.

In their attempt to convince the Supreme Court to review the case, attorneys for St. Charles called the lower court decisions a "stilted overreaction to a legitimate observance of the Christmas holiday season." They argued the cross display did nothing more than attract shoppers to the downtown area and symbolize peace and goodwill during the Christmas season.

"The purpose of the Establishment Clause is deprecated when its meaning is tortured to forbid a city's traditional Christmas lighting display on the grounds that illumination of the lights for a few hours each evening poses a danger of establishment of a state church," the city's attorneys contended.

Attorneys for the ACLU emphasized the size and location of the cross made it not just one part of an overall display. They also argued a cross is not a traditional Christmas symbol.

"A cross does not evoke the traditional or historical roots of Christmas," they said. "It evokes the Christian religion itself and the events commemorated at Easter." (86-351, St. Charles v. ACLU)

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High Court Declines
Hearing Job Bias Case

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press
11/19/86

WASHINGTON (BP)--On the same day it issued an opinion in one religious job bias case, the nation's highest tribunal rejected another such case.

The Supreme Court Nov. 17 refused to review a case involving a member of the Sabbath-observing Worldwide Church of God and an automobile manufacturer.

Angeline Protos, an assembly line worker at Volkswagen's New Stanton, Pa., plant, was discharged from her job in March 1980 after she refused to obey a mandatory Saturday overtime policy.

When the company notified employees of the new overtime policy in August 1979, Protos gave her supervisor written notification that she would be unable to comply due to her church's strict prohibition against working on the Sabbath. The supervisor told Protos while she would not be required to work every Saturday, she could not be excused from all mandatory overtime.

When Protos began missing work on her assigned Saturdays, the company implemented its progressive discipline system, which ultimately led to Protos' dismissal.

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In a non-jury trial before the U.S. District Court for Western Pennsylvania, Protos claimed Volkswagen violated the provision of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that requires an employer to reasonably accommodate an employee's religious observance unless such accommodation causes undue hardship on the employer. Pointing to loss of efficiency, morale, production and quality, Volkswagen claimed it could not accommodate Protos without undue hardship.

Ruling in favor of Protos, the district court rejected Volkswagen's claim of undue hardship. The court held the company had not demonstrated "any economic losses" flowing from Protos' absences.

Upon appeal by Volkswagen, the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the ruling.

In a brief filed with the Supreme Court, attorneys for Volkswagen called the lower court decision the "latest in a series of divergent and inconsistent applications" of Title VII. They asked the high court to review the case so as to clarify the statute.

Attorneys for Protos argued Volkswagen never made any attempt to accommodate their client's religious observance. They contended the company also had not shown undue hardship, adding "attendance statistics alone can never show undue hardship." (86-496, Volkswagen Inc. v. Protos)

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SBC Taskforce Tackles
AIDS-Related Issues

By David Wilkinson

N-CLC
Baptist Press
11/19/86

DALLAS (BP)—A distraught mother comes to the pastor and explains her son has informed her that he is a homosexual and that he has AIDS. What does the pastor say to her?

Word gets out that a child in the church nursery has been tested positive for the AIDS virus. What does the church do?

An active member of the church is terminally ill. The rumor is that he has AIDS. How does the church respond?

These and many other related issues were explored by a Southern Baptist taskforce on AIDS, which met Nov. 17-18 in Dallas.

The meeting, convened by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, brought together a cross-section of pastors, agency representatives, social workers and healthcare leaders to discuss ways churches can deal with the growing AIDS problem.

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) attacks the body's immune system, leaving the victim defenseless against deadly "opportunistic" diseases. More than 26,000 persons in the United States have the disease. Perhaps 10 times that many have AIDS Related Complex in which the virus and symptoms are present without the opportunistic infection or malignancy of "classic" AIDS. Additionally, an estimated 1 million to 2 million people have not exhibited symptoms but are carriers of the virus.

The virus is normally transmitted through sexual contact or the sharing of contaminated hypodermic needles, usually in illicit drug use. About 2 percent of AIDS cases have resulted from transmission of the virus through a blood transfusion. Also, an infected mother can transmit the virus to her baby before or during birth. While the nation's homosexual community has been the most seriously affected, healthcare experts are expressing growing concern about movement of the virus into the heterosexual population.

In response to the problem, taskforce members focused on three key roles of churches and their pastors: education about AIDS, prevention of high-risk activities which can lead to AIDS, and ministry to AIDS victims and their families.

"In terms of prevention, education is the most important thing you can do," said William Sutker, an infectious disease specialist at Baylor University Medical Center who has treated more than 80 AIDS cases. "This is a devastating disease, but we must be careful to present the facts rather than contribute to the hysteria."

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In ministering to AIDS victims and their families, pastors "will have to get past the origins of the disease and realize that these are human beings who are dying," said William E. Amos, pastor of First Baptist Church of Plantation, Fla. "I believe homosexuality represents a sinful lifestyle, but that does not mean I can abandon the person who is suffering the consequences of his behavior."

The model for such ministry is Jesus Christ, added Kenneth Mahannes, pastor of Far Hills Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio, noting that "Jesus was able to condemn the sin without condemning the person who sinned."

Michael Williams of the Harlem Baptist Ministry in New York City noted many AIDS victims die "totally alone."

"Often they are forced to turn outside the church for help," he said. "Yet it is the church which ought to be loving these people and their families."

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Parks Visits China,
Finds Spiritual Depth

By Erich Bridges

BBB
F-FMB

Baptist Press
11/19/86

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—The Christians of China "have as much to offer us as we have to offer them," insisted Southern Baptist mission leader R. Keith Parks, back from a two-week visit to China.

Chinese Christians, he discovered, also have something many believers in the West lack— a great spiritual depth born of hardship.

"I went to China to try to learn from them," Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board reported upon his return. "I feel the Christians there have learned something about the Christian experience because of what they've been through that most of us have not learned."

Parks and his wife, Helen Jean, visited Christian leaders, pastors and churches in Guangzhou, Shanghai, Nanjing, Xian and Beijing in late October and early November. Accompanying them were Charles Bryan, the Foreign Mission Board's head of overseas operations, and his wife, Martha.

Cooperative Services International Director Lewis Myers and his associates, Britt Towery and Jack Shelby, also traveled with the group, along with their wives.

Southern Baptists now relate to Chinese Christians through Cooperative Services International, an office formed in 1985 to help the denomination assist Christians and others in countries where missionaries do not work. Christian missionaries, including Southern Baptists, left China early in the Communist era.

China suffered during the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, and Chinese Christians suffered with their nation. Radicals persecuted intellectuals, artists, religious people and many other groups during those years. China now openly acknowledges the period was a national tragedy.

During their visit, Parks and his wife made a point of asking individual Christians which Bible passages had helped them most during the dark days. "I think without exception they all mentioned the 23rd Psalm," he said.

But Parks found most Christians eager to talk about today's freedoms rather than yesterday's repression.

"One of the most striking things is that none of them dwell on their difficulties during the Cultural Revolution," he observed. "Under prodding they'll tell you a little bit. They all emphasize the fact that China suffered. It wasn't just the Christians suffering. All intellectuals suffered—universities, seminaries, churches. It was not directed at Christians per se."

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The fact that Christians did suffer along with millions of others, however, accomplished something the church had long prayed for. "It caused the Christians to be identified with the Chinese people," Parks said.

Parks came away from China with several other impressions:

--Growth and activity. China as a whole seems to be preoccupied with construction and forward movement. In the churches, most of the pastors "would say (they had) baptized 1,100 or 1,300 or 1,500. Every one of them was reporting those kind of baptisms," along with multiple, overcrowded worship services, Bible studies and prayer meetings. In the cities he visited, Parks saw Bibles and hymnals in the hands of most church members.

--Openness. He said he sensed no "restriction or surveillance" among Christians or in public.

--Urgency among Christians. "I was impressed with the sense of urgency they have in training leadership, recognizing that most of their leaders are old. They've opened 10 seminaries now with a total of 500 students, roughly. ... They are preparing for the future of Christianity in China, and they're pretty excited about that future."

--Cooperation. Chinese Christians, he said, are open to working with overseas Christians who are "willing to accept them ... work with them on the basis of a post-denominational, post-missionary stance ... and respond to meeting needs that they define."

Parks said he had expected to feel an overwhelming emotional impact on his first visit to China. Instead, he felt "unexpectedly at home" there, perhaps because of his many years of mission work among Chinese elsewhere in Asia.

"But the cumulative experience was as moving as any I've ever had," he reflected. "These people, who have been through the fire and have been refined, share the quality of their experience in such an unassuming way. On occasion it would just move us to tears."

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Virginia Baptists
Cling To Moderation

N-CO

Baptist Press
11/19/86

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--In the face of a rising conservative tide in the Southern Baptist Convention, Virginia Baptists clung tenaciously to moderation during their annual meeting Nov. 11-12 in Richmond.

The highlight of the 163rd session of the Baptist General Association of Virginia was the election of Reginald M. McDonough, a self-proclaimed moderate-conservative, as its executive director. McDonough, executive vice president of the SBC Executive Committee since 1981, will succeed Richard M. Stephenson, whose 18-year tenure will end Feb. 28, 1987.

In another matter of high attention, the general association also expressed its commitment to religious liberty by setting aside some of its Cooperative Program budget funds to assist the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, under attack from Southern Baptist fundamental-conservatives.

The \$75,000 placed in an escrow account, to be used in the event the SBC alters its relationship with the Joint Committee, is the first effort by a Southern Baptist state convention to provide a contingency plan for the controversial Washington-based agency.

W.L. Lumpkin, former state association president, offered the motion concerning the Joint Committee, a Washington-based religious liberty group supported by nine Baptist denominations. For the past decade, the committee has been a target of SBC fundamental-conservatives who say its positions on tuition tax credits and religious activities in public schools are at odds with Southern Baptist opinion.

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A special committee of the SBC Executive Committee is scrutinizing the relationship between the convention and the Joint Committee. Some observers predict messengers to the 1987 SBC annual meeting will vote to stop the SBC's contributions to the agency, which currently are about \$419,000 annually.

The Virginia motion will "guarantee continued full funding" of the Joint Committee during October and November 1987. The SBC's current fiscal year will end Sept. 30, 1987, as will its budget, which was approved last summer and includes funding for the Joint Committee. Supporters of the motion said the action was necessary this year since the Virginia association will not meet again until November 1987.

The motion states, "In the event that the 1987-88 SBC Cooperative Program budget omits or reduces funding for the Baptist Joint Committee, the treasurer shall send the \$75,000 directly to the Baptist Joint Committee. If the Baptist Joint Committee is fully funded, then the treasurer shall send the \$75,000 to the SBC Cooperative Program."

Lumpkin noted the \$75,000 represents two months of the Joint Committee's entire budget. He said the motion to provide the money was necessary in order to maintain the Joint Committee and to "give a lesson to our sister state conventions on the importance of the Baptist Joint Committee."

The motion passed on a standing vote after President Sherrill G. Stevens determined a voice vote was too close to call.

In addition, more than 1,700 messengers sent a message of disapproval to the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board over its recent refusal to give financial assistance to churches with women pastors; deflected an effort to sever ties with the University of Richmond, its largest affiliated institution; and adopted a committee report that affirms believer's baptism by immersion while leaving to the local church the right to determine the role baptism plays in membership requirements.

A motion instructing Stevens to send a letter to Home Mission Board directors "urging them to reconsider their decision that 'no financial support be given in the future for a woman serving as pastor of a local church'" passed on a voice vote observers said was close.

Pleading for consistency, Tommy Taylor, pastor of London Bridge Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, opposed the motion. He argued that messengers earlier had expressed support for the autonomy of the local church and now must recognize the autonomy of other Baptist bodies, including the national convention.

Russell F. Starke II, pastor of Bruington Baptist Church in Bruington, said the board's action endangered local church autonomy by withholding assistance until a church conformed to the board's specifications.

The attempt to delete the University of Richmond's \$511,332 portion of the general association's budget was led by Howard Baldwin, a messenger from Bethany Place Baptist Church in Richmond and a graduate of the university. "We've lost control of the institution," he said, noting the school is "drifting in the direction of secular humanism" and adding trustees had "elected a non-Baptist as president of the University."

Samuel A. Banks, an ordained United Methodist minister, was elected university president this summer.

Baldwin's motion failed on a voice vote.

In other business, Carl W. Johnson of Richmond was elected without opposition as general association president, a position that automatically makes him chairman of the powerful Virginia Baptist General Board. Johnson, a layperson who is vice president for finance and treasurer at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, succeeds Stevens, pastor of Montrose Baptist Church in Richmond. Virginia Baptists traditionally alternate between laypersons and ministers in choosing their president, who is limited to a one-year term.

Also elected were W. Jerry Holcomb, pastor of Kings Grant Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, first vice president; and T. Floyd (Skip) Irby Jr., pastor of West End Baptist Church in Suffolk, second vice president.

Messengers approved a \$15 million budget for 1987, a 7.47 percent increase over the current budget. The first phase of the budget—\$14.13 million—must completely be funded before contributions are made to the second phase, which is \$835,000. The SBC Cooperative Program will receive 38 percent of the first phase and 40 percent of the second phase.

Executive Director Stephenson announced as part of the general board report that the 1987 state missions offering goal will be \$1 million, half of which will fund the debt on the new Virginia Baptist Building.

Next year's annual meeting will be in Williamsburg, Nov. 10-11.

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D.C. Convention Opts
To Avoid Resolutions

N - CD

Baptist Press
11/19/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—For the second consecutive year, delegates to the District of Columbia Baptist Convention opted not to deal with any resolutions during their annual meeting Nov. 13-14.

Again this year, the convention's executive board recommended the suspension of resolutions in an effort to promote an harmonious meeting, said James A. Langley, D.C. convention executive director.

Delegates gathered at Broadview Baptist Church in Temple Hills, Md., instead heard various presentations and addresses on the importance of "living the gospel in word and deed."

Lloyd Elder, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, urged delegates to be "tough-minded disciples," who build their lives on the solid ground of Jesus Christ.

In outlining principles for such building, Elder told participants to hear the words of Jesus Christ, respond obediently to those words and build wisely on Christ.

Elder said Christians also must "realistically face the destructive forces of life" rather than being so dismayed that "they walk away in despair." He added while there are always troubles in the Christian family, a life built on the Solid Rock will endure.

Christians also should enjoy the results of building on Jesus, Elder said, noting, "It is an enduring joy, and no circumstance can snatch it from us."

During a business session, delegates elected Erle Cocke, member of Briggs Memorial Baptist Church in Bethesda, Md., convention president.

They also adopted a budget of \$1,128,227—including \$252,426 in support from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Sunday School Board. The convention is expected to give 33 percent of receipts—excluding designated mission giving—from its 71 member churches to world mission causes sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention and American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

Next year's meeting will be held Nov. 12-13 at the First Baptist Church of Hyattsville, Md.

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Retired Home Missionary
Jewell Beall Dies

N - HMB

Baptist Press

ATLANTA (BP)—Jewell Beall, a pioneer in Southern Baptist ministry with blacks, died Nov. 18 of cancer.

Beall, 81, was a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board consultant for Baptist centers affiliated with its Christian social ministries department from 1948 until her retirement in 1970.

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In 1985 the board named a new award in honor of Beall—the Jewell Beall Church and Community Ministries Award. The annual award recognizes a church, pastor or layperson who displays unusual sensitivity to Christian social ministries.

In 1934, Beall and her husband, Noble, were the first white Southern Baptist home missionaries appointed to work with blacks, despite comments from friends that it would "ruin" their reputation in the denomination.

They discovered many black pastors who lacked formal Bible training in Alabama, so they began an extensive education program.

After her husband died, Beall was appointed special consultant by the board. In that position, she coordinated the work of "Good Will Centers," the forerunners of Baptist centers and other board Christian social ministries.

Beall attended Sanford University in Birmingham, Ala., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Funeral services were held Nov. 20 at Second Ponce de Leon Baptist Church in Atlanta.

The family requested contributions be sent to the Jewell Beall Memorial Fund at Southern Seminary. This scholarship fund will be used to help students preparing for missions.

She is survived by two children, Helen Gatlin and Judson Beall, both of Atlanta; three sisters; 10 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

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ABTS Names Mullins
Award Recipients

N-Ed.Cm.

Baptist Press
11/19/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A retired Southern Baptist Convention employee and the publisher of a Nashville, Tenn., daily newspaper have been named recipients of the 1986 E.Y. Mullins Human Relations Awards.

The Mullins awards are presented annually by the American Baptist College of American Baptist Theological Seminary, a predominantly black Bible college sponsored jointly by the SBC and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.

The awards were presented during the seminary's annual president's scholarship banquet to Marjorie Howard, who recently retired from the SBC Education Commission after 33 years of service, and John Seigenthaler, president of Tennessean Newspapers Inc. and editor and publisher of The Tennessean.

Seminary President Odell McGlothian cited the recipients for "being outstanding community citizens who have given their time and talents to the residents of Nashville and surrounding areas."

The awards honor E.Y. Mullins, former president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., who was instrumental in the founding of American Baptist Theological Seminary.

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India Hospital Receives
First Funding In Months

By Marty Croll

N-FMB

Baptist Press
11/19/86

NEW DELHI, India (BP)—The Indian government has allowed Southern Baptists to send \$69,000 to the Baptist Hospital in Bangalore, indicating a respite from a four-month freeze on financial support for Baptist work in the country.

But the money for the hospital will not help other mission outreach in India. Missionaries have been forced to consolidate or eliminate programs to fund ongoing evangelism in the country since Indian government officials froze foreign donations to the work in June. Missionary salaries, deposited in stateside banks by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, are not affected.

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To receive the money, the hospital was forced to organize as a separate entity and sever an official relationship with the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries, known as the Indian Baptist Mission.

Located near the southern tip of India, the Bangalore hospital has been the hub for most Southern Baptist mission work there. A convention of more than 250 churches has grown out of work connected with the hospital since it was dedicated in 1973. More than 200 of those congregations have been started during the past three years.

The mission is awaiting word from officials who direct the government's Foreign Contributions Regulation Act on whether two separate requests for funding will be granted.

During a hastily called meeting with government officials in New Delhi July 4, missionaries asked for enough money from the Foreign Mission Board to run their programs for three months. The director of the office that administers the foreign contributions act told the missionaries the government would review their request and if no action resulted within 120 days, or four months, it could be considered granted. He also told them officials would act within 45 days.

As of early November, missionaries had not heard from Indian officials about that first request. An Indian attorney was seeking clarification of the law, and missionaries hoped to begin receiving funds later in the month.

Under the law, the mission would have to apply for funding each time the Foreign Mission Board deposited money into its account. In the past, the mission has used about \$50,000 a month, including funds for the hospital.

Missionaries made a second request Aug. 30 for \$70,000 that was being transferred from the Foreign Mission Board for use in India when they were first notified to accept no more foreign funds. Under the law, the government has until Dec. 30 to act on that request.

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Baptists Help
Honduran Farmers

By Stanley Stamps

N-FMB

Baptist Press
11/19/86

CHOLUTECA, Honduras (BP)—More than 200 families in 22 southern Honduras communities are benefiting from a Baptist project designed to help them replant crops lost to a drought earlier this year.

The project, sponsored by the Honduras Baptist Convention and financed by Southern Baptist hunger funds, will help an estimated 2,000 people before the end of the year.

Local Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries are providing bean and corn seeds for replanting the customary second harvest, made possible by late rains. The early harvest, which normally follows the spring rains, was a 90 percent loss this year because of inadequate rains and unusually high temperatures in the southwestern region bordering El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Each participating family receives seeds adapted to the peculiar growing conditions in the area to plant a plot of about two acres. Baptists also supply basic grain supplements twice each month to the families to help them until the second crop can be harvested.

Provisions, including corn, beans, rice and shortening, are purchased on the local market. Francisco Flores, pastor of First Baptist Church in Choluteca, is supervising the project.

After years of experience with this type of recurring emergency, Baptists chose the replanting approach rather than setting up regular relief distribution or food-for-work projects. Those approaches create a false sense of security and have fewer long-range results, said Southern Baptist missionary and social ministry coordinator Jim Palmer.

About 75 percent of the people receiving assistance are Baptists, Palmer said, but evangelism is part of the project objective. The families live in remote communities not touched by government or benevolent agencies. They live on the land and depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

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Southern Baptist missionary Ralph Wilson said light rains have fallen in the region recently, enough to stimulate hope. But he noted that in the last 12 years annual rainfall has been erratic, with a normal year followed by a dry year, which in turn may be followed by a rainy year marked by floods. Early or late harvests, sometimes both, have been damaged severely or lost.

Government sources estimate more than 300,000 people have been affected by the most recent drought.

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(Stamps is a Southern Baptist missionary in Honduras.)

Entire Mission Converted
When Lay Pastor Preaches

By Ken Camp

F-Texas

Baptist Press
11/19/86

DALLAS (BP)--When the East Texas plumber preached at the North Texas Hispanic mission, the whole congregation became Christians.

When Royse City, Texas, Hispanic Mission met for its second service, eight persons were present not counting the preacher, and there were eight professions of faith in Christ.

"I could feel the Holy Spirit there. God gave me the right words to speak that could touch the people's hearts," says Jesse Polo, lay pastor of the mission.

People who made professions of faith are enrolled in discipleship training, where they will learn the meaning of believer's baptism and other basic Baptist doctrines before being baptized.

Royse City Hispanic Mission was begun in late September under the sponsorship of First Baptist Church of Royse City. The mission originally met in a small community center, but the congregation quickly outgrew the facility and now meets in the fellowship hall at First Baptist Church.

"We weren't sure we could get them to come here to our building, but it seems to be working," says Lawrence Cox, pastor of First Baptist Church. More than 30 persons attended the mission on a recent Sunday.

Polo, who is neither licensed to preach nor ordained, works four days each week as a plumber in Mount Pleasant, Texas, each Friday, he drives 80 miles west on Interstate 30 to Royse City, where he visits prospects and conducts Sunday services for the mission.

"I went to visit one lady who was sick," he says. "When I walked in to see her, her face lit up and she said, 'Brother Jesse!' To these people, I'm their pastor."

First Baptist Church pays Polo's expenses and provides a modest honorarium for him, but he does not receive a regular salary for his work in the mission.

"I feel called to come witness to the people here, to show to these Spanish-speaking people that we care," says Polo, a native of Mexico City who has lived in Texas 12 years. "I know their beliefs and the way they think. They know I understand them. They feel the warmth here at the mission. They feel loved."

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