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March 27, 1987

87-46

Relief Arrives in Ecuador;
Baptists Begin Distribution

By Marty Croll

QUITO, Ecuador (BP)—Baptists in Ecuador are preparing to distribute about 30 tons of Southern Baptist provisions for earthquake-stricken Ecuadorians.

A cargo jet packed with food, blankets, clothing, building materials and tools landed in Quito March 24. Although the provisions were unloaded that evening, a nationwide strike caused a two-day delay in distribution, said Larry Doyle, chairman of the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to Ecuador.

Ron Patterson, pastor of Lynchburg Baptist Church in Winterhaven, Fla., and a regional disaster relief coordinator for the Brotherhood Commission, is helping organize distribution.

"Baptists here are very grateful for all of this," said Doyle. "You can be assured it will be put to very good use."

Missionaries are working with Ecuador Baptists in a relief program they planned together the week after two powerful earthquakes jolted an area east of the capital city in early March and destroyed sections of the region's most important roadway and the country's most important oil pipeline.

Missionaries have rented about 3,200 square feet of warehouse space at the airport. From there they and national Baptists plan to distribute the provisions primarily in four areas during the next three months, Doyle said. Surveying regions suggested by Ecuador authorities, missionaries discovered people without homes and without food in villages cut off from commerce when whole sections of road were destroyed.

In the city of Lago Agrio, First Baptist Church has turned its Sunday school facilities into a distribution center for food and supplies. The provisions will be airlifted to the city, which sits at the edge of the jungle on the eastern face of the Andes Mountains. The major thoroughfare in that area was destroyed when mountain snowcaps and watery sludge rumbled down a river valley after the quakes.

In Tabacunco, about 50 miles northeast of Quito, food and supplies will support about 90 families whose breadwinners have been forced to abandon their work while they rebuild their homes, Doyle said. Baptist young people from the 15 churches in Pichincha Baptist Association around Quito will visit house-to-house in the area around Cayambe, the village nearest the epicenter of the earthquakes. They will give away packages of food that should feed families of five for five days.

Baptists also will supply tools and building materials to six families who lost their homes just east of Quito in the town of La Merced, Doyle said. The families were identified by students at nearby Baptist Theological Seminary, who went into the grade school and talked with children, then visited their homes. Their adobe-type homes were either destroyed or cracked enough to discourage the families from going back inside.

After meeting immediate needs, missionaries may ask for volunteer work teams from the United States to rebuild schools and public buildings, Doyle said, stressing such action would occur only in cooperation with the government's education department and local authorities.

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The Boeing 707 that carried the provisions to Ecuador had been scheduled to take off more than a week earlier, but jet fuel availability problems in Ecuador delayed its departure until just after noon March 24. The government agency INNFA, responsible for working with children and families, was instrumental in securing jet fuel for the plane's return flight, Doyle said.

The food, clothing and building supplies were purchased with money provided by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, the Florida Baptist Convention and Florida Baptist churches. State Brotherhood departments from Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and South Carolina also gave funds.

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Speaker Suggests Ways
To Avoid Teen Suicide

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
3/27/87

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)—Teenage suicide is not primarily a teenage problem or even a family problem, but "a crisis of society," a family counselor told a Southern Baptist seminar on family issues.

John O. Baucom, a Southern Baptist layman from Chattanooga, Tenn., who has written and spoken extensively on teenage suicide, said today's children are growing up in "a hurried society" filled with pressure yet "generally absent of significant adult relationships."

Baucom addressed the annual seminar of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission held March 23-25 in Charlotte, N.C.

The hurried society, where "the value is hurry up and grow up," is a society created by adults that thrusts that value upon children, Baucom said. The problem is that children can be "hurried up" physically and intellectually but not emotionally, he said.

That kind of environment, he said, builds anxiety and stress while sapping self-esteem. The consequences are often destructive, including suicide.

Baucom noted in 1986 more than 2 million teenagers attempted suicide -- 6,300 of whom died. Both figures, he added, are expected to rise this year.

The key to coping with the growing crisis is the caring involvement of adults in the daily lives of children and youth, he said, noting adults -- including parents -- "just aren't as available to children as they need to be."

He emphasized the need for "significant adult relationships," stressing, "It takes more than two adults today to raise one healthy child."

Baucom pointed out teenagers who don't attempt suicide are those who enjoy "multiple, significant adult relationships," who are integrated into society and who have a high degree of self-esteem.

He suggested several steps to parents to help "suicide proof" their children:

-- Accept the children unconditionally. "This doesn't mean you praise the child for everything, but that you accept the 'behavior,' not necessarily the behavior."

-- Demonstrate love through concrete action. "Do things that are caring. And do things with intensity. We've got tough competition out there for the attention of our children."

-- Communicate. "Keep the channels of communication open. Make it safe for your child to communicate with you about anything."

-- Don't push. "Children today have enough stress. Don't push for grades. After all, what's a grade worth?"

-- Respect each child as an individual.

-- Find time to spend with your child. "If I invest quantity time in a child, I will eventually get quality time."

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Nevada Convention, Home Mission Board
Plan Las Vegas Evangelistic Thrust

By Michael B. McCullough

RENO, Nev. (BP)--Statewide simultaneous revivals, scripture distribution, house-to-house witnessing and sponsorship of 25 church-type missions are some activities projected for implementation prior to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meetings in Las Vegas, Nev., in 1989.

More than 30 pastors from across Nevada met March 12-13 with representatives of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to discuss plans for evangelistic and church starting efforts and to highlight positive results of the SBC's decision to hold its meeting in Las Vegas.

Messengers chose Las Vegas as the 1989 SBC meeting site during the 1983 annual meeting in Pittsburgh. An evangelistic emphasis in connection with the annual meeting was included in the vote to go to Las Vegas.

Bobby Sunderland, the Home Mission Board's director of direct evangelism and coordinator of the board's involvement surrounding the Las Vegas meeting, outlined plans for the thrust.

The central evangelistic emphasis will be simultaneous revivals held across the Nevada Baptist Convention, using the theme, "Here's Hope: Jesus Cares For You." The Nevada revivals will be a pilot for SBC-wide simultaneous revivals in 1990 using the same theme.

Pastors and evangelists from across the SBC will be enlisted to lead in the revivals, scheduled for the week prior to the June Las Vegas convention. The evangelists, music leaders and lay-support teams will be asked to provide their own expenses.

Additional evangelistic plans include a door-to-door canvass of Las Vegas. This project will be linked with prospect discovery and scripture distribution, Sunderland said.

Prayer partners enlisted by the board will pray for non-Christians living in Nevada and for messengers who attend the convention. The Las Vegas phone book will be divided up, and every name will be mailed to prayer volunteers across the SBC, with a request that they pray for those people to accept Christ as their Savior. A mass rally also is projected for Las Vegas during the weekend prior to the SBC.

Don Ledbetter, director of evangelism for the Nevada convention, will be the Nevada coordinator for evangelistic activities. He told participants in the recent meeting, "I believe, because the Southern Baptist Convention has voted to come to Las Vegas in 1989, that Nevada Baptists have an opportunity to tap SBC resources to make an evangelistic impact on Las Vegas and Nevada. ... This is a great opportunity to see the SBC respond to evangelistic needs. We must pray boldly, ask boldly and act boldly in this effort."

David Bunch, director of the board's church extension division, said plans are being directed toward church starts, construction and awareness tours in Nevada. Based on Nevada planning and recent new work probes in the state, special effort and help will be directed toward starting 25 new church-type missions as a part of the 1989 efforts, Bunch said.

He added co-sponsorship for these new works will be sought, linking sponsoring Nevada churches with strong churches from across the SBC. The co-sponsors will help purchase land, build buildings and support a pastor in the missions' early years, Bunch said. Church pastoral aid and seminary intern programs have been suggested as means for finding leadership for these new work starts. Language works are included in plans for the new work.

"I will be greatly disappointed if we are not able to secure solid support from across the convention," Sunderland said. He added the planned activities "may prove to be the beginning of an evangelistic and new work model for Southern Baptist Convention sites in the future. With all the thousands of people who attend the conventions, such plans will be a great opportunity for God to act in the area where Southern Baptist Conventions are to be held."

Nevada Baptist Convention Executive Director Ernest B. Myers summarized the impact of the planned activities: "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Nevada Baptists. When the plans become reality, it will put the work of Southern Baptists in Nevada ahead by years, while reaching thousands of people with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Opal Smith Receives
HMB Literacy Award

ROME, Ga. (BP)—Opal Smith of Douglas, Ga., was awarded the second annual Mildred V. Blankenship Literacy Missions Award, from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board during the Georgia Woman's Missionary Union state meeting.

Smith, 80, has been involved in literacy missions — both teaching students and leading literacy skills workshops — for 26 years. She still leads workshops and currently instructs a student twice a week.

She has led literacy skills workshops for the Northwest and Colorado Southern Baptist State Conventions and served three Christian Service Corps terms in Tucson, Ariz.

In Arizona, her literacy work with the Yaqui Indians helped open up four border towns to home missionaries and their work.

Smith also served two terms with Christian Service Corps at Clear Creek Baptist School in Pineville, Ky. There she tutored adults who felt called to the ministry but did not have the reading and writing skills necessary to meet college requirements.

"Her ministry, especially in Arizona, has demonstrated the value of literacy work as a viable tool for missions," said Mildred Blankenship, associate director of church and community ministries at the Home Mission Board, for whom the award is named.

"She is representative of the many literacy mission volunteers who have made a commitment to literacy and followed through with it," Blankenship added.

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Baptist Women Befriend
Female AIDS Sufferer

By Evelyn Knapp

Baptist Press
3/27/87

BUKOKA, Tanzania (BP)—When Betty Whitson befriended a malnourished, poorly dressed woman seated in the rear of Bukoba Baptist Church, the prospect of AIDS never crossed her mind.

But when the woman accepted Whitson's invitation and attended the weekly Baptist women's meeting, she was identified as an AIDS patient by a woman who worked at the local government hospital.

Whitson, a Southern Baptist missionary from Texas, appealed to the women to receive the visitor with love and compassion. Such action would go against the typical response of both Tanzanians and Americans who fear contact with AIDS victims.

But at Whitson's urging, the women gathered around the woman, laid their hands on her and prayed for her recovery. They collected \$5 to buy her a new dress, and a group visited her later at home, bringing her food and inviting her to come back to future meetings.

The woman was in Bukoba to receive the 40 tuberculosis shots which is the recommended treatment for AIDS patients in that hospital. The Baptist women's group feels God sent the woman to them that they might minister to her for as long as she remained in the area.

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(Knapp is the press representative for the Baptist Mission of Tanzania.)

Musicians Launch
Annual Hymn Search

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SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Church Music Conference will launch an annual hymn search to encourage the writing and composing of church music, said Paul Hammond, editor of publications for the conference and fine arts dean at Oklahoma Baptist University.

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One hymn, selected by the conference's executive council, will be printed in the program and sung during the annual meeting of the conference. Each year's hymn will be placed in a file to be made available to hymnal committees, editors and publishers.

The competition is being established because new hymns always are in demand by churches, Hammond said.

"There has been a renaissance of hymn-writing in the last 10 to 15 years," he said. "Because there are a large number of hymns being published, there's always a need for good, new hymns that are written in contemporary language and are current in thought."

The theme for this year's contest is "Music and Missions."

"We are looking for a strong missionary statement concerning the sharing of the Good News at home, in our nation and in our world," Hammond said.

Any member of the music conference is eligible to submit hymns. Non-members may become eligible by becoming regular members, for a \$20 annual fee, or associate members, for a \$10 annual fee, of the conference.

The conference seeks original hymn texts, with or without music, that are written in inclusive, contemporary language.

The hymns must also mustt least three stanzas long. They should be submitted in three non-returnable copies and should not have the name of the author on any copy. The deadline for entering the first contest is Jan. 1, 1988.

Guidelines may be obtained from Mary June Tabor, secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1141 N. Robinson, Oklahoma City, OK 73103. Membership applications also may be obtained from Tabor.

The music conference is an organization of several hundred church musicians from the United States and abroad.

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'Minnie' Tells Students
To Trust In Christ

By Susan Coker

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Sarah Cannon, known to millions as the beloved Minnie Pearl, wasn't wearing her ruffled dress and trademark straw hat with a dangling price tag when she spoke at Belmont College in March.

Clad in a checked blazer and straight skirt, the 74-year-old performer simply presented herself: a genteel, educated woman with a touch of Minnie's country wit and homespun humor. Cannon's 47 years of performing experience on the Grand Ole Opry stage and elsewhere provided the backdrop for her comments on faith.

"The joy of Jesus -- not just knowing him but also rejoicing in the faith -- will keep you going when everything else barely will," Cannon told an audience at the Tennessee Baptist Convention school.

"You're probably thinking, 'What does an old woman have to say to me? What does she know about my problems?'" she said. "The answer is, I haven't always been an old woman."

Cannon told the crowd that the saddest words to her are "but everybody does it. ... It will kill you," she stressed.

Throughout her address, Cannon expressed her concern for the welfare of the students and young people in general. "From the time you were born and lifted your tiny voice singing, 'Jesus Loves Me,' you felt safe. That's the best song in the world," she said. "As simple as those words are, they mean more than anything else."

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(Coker is a newswriter in the Belmont College public relations office.)



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