



BAPTIST PRESS

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87-87

Texas Baptist Men Assist
West Texas Tornado Victims

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (BP)—Texas Baptist volunteers continue to assist in cleanup and repairs following the tornado that virtually leveled the West Texas town of Saragosa on May 22, killing 29 people and injuring 121.

Of the 107 houses in the community, 60 were destroyed completely by the storm. The remaining 47 sustained varying degrees of damage but were considered habitable.

Texas Baptist men will coordinate volunteers and materials for rebuilding, said Bob Dixon, director of the emergency task force for Texas Baptist disaster relief.

Tom Martinez, chairman of the Saragosa Building Committee, has asked a Texas Baptist representative to be an advisory member of his committee. Jerry Bob Taylor, manager of Circle Six Baptist Encampment, has filled that role and has acted as on-site volunteer coordinator. He is expected to be relieved by Manuel Galindo of Valley Baptist Academy in Harlingen on June 7.

Bob Gilley of Lake Palestine Baptist Church near Flint, Texas, has been put in charge of a lumber yard at the disaster site and is responsible for the distribution of building materials. Repair work on homes that can be made liveable is being done prior to any new construction to replace homes that were destroyed.

Because local volunteer response promptly met the needs of disaster victims, the Texas Baptist disaster relief unit and mobile field kitchen was not requested. Taylor, regional disaster relief director, arrived at the disaster site soon after the tornado with volunteers from the Odessa, Texas, area to feed victims. First Baptist Church in Pecos, Texas, supplied a refrigerated truck for feeding operations and provided electrical generators.

Richard Faling of the Texas Baptist Family Recovery Task Force surveyed area families. Although there is no Baptist church in Saragosa, three families in the disaster area were related to First Baptist Church in nearby Balmorhea, Texas. The task force provided financial assistance through the Balmorhea church.

The Texas Baptist Child Care Task Force, directed by Chris Shelby of Meadowbrook Baptist Church in Irving, Texas, was set up in Balmorhea for five days. An average of 28 children were cared for each day.

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Drummond Urges Recommitment
To Evangelism Priority

By Linda Lawson

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6/8/87

NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptists can have a future as great as their past in evangelizing the world, but it will require a hard look at the present and a "heart commitment" to the priority of evangelism, a seminary professor said.

"I cannot lead my students to lead people to Christ if I do not lead people to Christ," said Lewis Drummond, the Billy Graham professor of evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. "They must see in us a commitment to action. Let's lay the foundation again."

Drummond spoke during the 96th anniversary observance of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board on the board's contributions to evangelism.

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He urged Southern Baptists to learn from the experiences of British Baptists and become relevant to today's world. Drummond, who taught at Spurgeon's College in London, said the strong evangelistic thrust of Baptists in Great Britain was blunted by urbanization, secularization and humanism which also threaten the Christian movement in the United States.

"The Bible Belt days are gone," said Drummond. "We had better learn to cope."

Noting that the Bible Belt was "woven" out of the second great spiritual awakening in the early 1800s, Drummond said a key to the future is for Southern Baptists to seek revival, a "deep profound moving of the spirit."

"We've got the foundation. We've got the structure. We've got the commitment. I am convinced, if we can just get hold of God and never give in, our future will be as great as our past," said Drummond.

Tracing the history of Southern Baptists and the Sunday School Board, Drummond said evangelism has been "the heartbeat and the heart cry."

"Evangelism has permeated every facet of the Sunday School Board up to the present moment," he said. He cited books published by the board including "Building the Standard Sunday School" by Arthur Flake in 1922, "Christian Witnessing" by Frank Leavell in 1932, "Using the Sunday School in Evangelism" by Leonard Sanderson in 1958 and "New Testament Evangelism" by Herschel Hobbs in 1960.

He noted the number of tracts produced by the board and distributed through churches increased from 3.2 million in 1944 to 13 million in 1953. "Only God can record what the little tract has meant in evangelism," said Drummond.

He said the "Million More in '54" campaign led to inevitable quips by some, "keep them alive in '55."

"We did, you know. We reached the mountain peak in 1955 and 1956 in reaching people," he recalled.

At the same time, Drummond noted the number of Southern Baptists it takes to win one person to Christ in one year has increased from 20 to 43 since 1940. Also, he said, church growth experts have predicted flat or negative growth for the denomination in the next decade.

"This ought to disturb us," Drummond said. "We have an illustrious history with illustrious results, but I believe we have an illustrious future."

"We must seek God for a fresh touch from heaven upon us. That's what will give us an illustrious future."

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Lewis 'Excited'
About Challenge

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6/8/87

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The new president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board says he is excited by the prospect of winning and baptizing one million people by the year 2000.

Larry L. Lewis, a featured guest on "Life Today," a Christian talk show on the ACTS television network, said it will not be easy, "but we can do it."

"God's plan for our world is to sow it down with Bible preaching, soul winning churches," he told host Jimmy R. Allen.

Lewis, became the 15th president of the Home Mission Board June 1 from the presidency of Hannibal-LaGrange College.

God called and commissioned him to start new churches, Lewis said. He started 13 missions in 14 years as a pastor. In one 10-year period, while serving in Southern Baptist "pioneer" areas of Ohio and New Jersey, he led churches to begin nine new missions.

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In order to reach the goal of 1 million baptisms by the end of this century, Lewis said Southern Baptists need to grow by at least 1,000 new churches each year. And Baptists need to begin 1,500 new churches each year to compensate for those that fail to prosper.

The greatest opportunity for new church growth, Lewis said, is among ethnic groups. Language churches grow at a rate five times faster than Anglo churches, he added.

Asked his opinion of the moral climate of the nation, Lewis said he believes there is a "sense of spiritual awakening in America." A trend toward conservatism flies in the face of "rampant secularism" in the nation, he said.

The new Home Mission Board president said, "God holds nations responsible for the national character." The great hope for America, he said, is spiritual awakening, noting, "I want to see the fires of revival sweep this nation."

"Life Today" is produced by American Christian Television System, a service of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. It is carried on cable systems and low-power and full-power TV stations accessible to some 6.5 million nationwide.

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Students Paint Mixed Picture
Of Involvement In Missions

By Beth Harris

Baptist Press
6/8/87

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Southern Baptist student involvement in domestic summer mission projects is down this year, but other phases of student mission work are up, missions leaders told the Southern Baptist Student Ministry Advisory Group.

As of May 1, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board had appointed 1,347 student summer missionaries, a 6 percent decrease from last summer's 1,441, Bill Berry of the HMB special mission ministries department told the advisory group, which met at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, May 20-21.

However, more than 1,300 students have participated in short-term missions through SPOTS — Special Projects Other Than Summer — teams, Berry said. These teams worked during spring break and Christmas, Thanksgiving and end-of-school breaks.

Students also are more involved in work with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, said Helen Wood of the FMB student section. This year, 128 student summer and semester missionaries will work with the board, and about 70 more students will work in ministry teams in the Philippines, Thailand and Venezuela.

Berry attributed the home missions summer slump to four factors:

- Although the overall student population is up, fewer students are in the traditional student missions age range, 18 to 23.
- Cuts in financial aid are forcing some students to spend summers working in higher-paying jobs, rather than participate in missions.
- Students perceive summers differently than their predecessors did, with many seeing summers as a "time to make themselves more marketable" through career-related work.
- Sacrifice and servanthood may not be emphasized as much as it was in the past.

Another factor in the decline might be the wide range of options open to students, including camp staff positions and church staff jobs, said Mike Robertson, also of the HMB special mission ministries department.

Nevertheless, student giving to missions has increased, Berry said, noting, "It may be that students are giving instead of going."

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The advisory group is composed of Southern Baptist agency personnel, student workers and student representatives. It meets annually to evaluate student ministry and advise the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's national student ministries department on long-range planning.

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Beth Harris is a promotion specialist for the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

Southern Seminary Students
Appeal For Reconciliation

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
6/8/87

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—In response to "the biblical mandate for reconciliation," more than 600 students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary have signed a "Pathway to Peace" statement calling upon Southern Baptists to "embrace their need for each other."

The one-page document, endorsed by the seminary's Student Government Association, contains brief statements addressed to the student body of the Louisville, Ky., seminary, trustees of the seminary, fellow Southern Baptists, "candidates" for Southern Baptist Convention president and prospective seminary students.

The statement to the convention affirms "the holistic nature of the gospel" and the belief that "our historical strength lies greatly in our diverse gifts and points of view."

It adds: "We are tired of misconceptions and the labeling of our school. We are a Southern Baptist institution reflecting the richness of Southern Baptists and we intend to remain Southern Baptist. We implore all Southern Baptists to make the effort to support initiatives for peace and elect leaders who are publicly committed to the preservation of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Student Government Association President David Key, a theology student from Augusta, Ga., said the document was prepared "to help move the student body from an inactive to a proactive state" in addressing some of the concerns of the current denominational crisis. The convention's six seminaries have been targets of criticism during the eight-year theological and political controversy within the convention.

"Many students have said they feel like children in a divorce court who have no say in their future or in their seminary family's future," said Key. "In a sense, attacks on the seminary are attacks on us as students because we have felt led of God to come here."

The statement to SBC presidential candidates encourages the person who is elected "to be sensitive to minorities as well as majorities in committee appointments and to respond to the entire SBC rather than a political or ecclesiastical party."

The document, which was shared with seminary trustees during their annual meeting on the seminary campus, asks trustees "to recognize the sacredness" of educational environment which "encourages students to encounter God" and invites "open pursuit of knowledge and practical experience."

The document also invites any Southern Baptist "to join us in this effort of peace and reconciliation by visiting our campus and experiencing God at work within the lives of our seminary community."

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Leavell Addresses
NOBTS May Graduates

By Breena Kent

Baptist Press
6/8/87

NEW ORLEANS—Three mandates for ministry are to "wake up, cast off and put on," Landrum P. Leavell II, told nearly 200 graduates during May commencement exercises at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Leavell, president of the seminary, said Christians should "wake up" because Christ's return is at hand: "The fact is, some generation is going to be alive when Christ returns, and it may be ours. Whether he comes in our lifetime or not, the most transcendent fact is that Christians are to stop living like the devil and start living like Jesus."

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Christians should "cast off the works of darkness," he added. "The media has done their usual thorough job of telling the distorted story of sinful saints. It ought to be clear to every one of us ... that the world expects from professing Christians a standard of morality that is higher and nobler and more exalted than that by which worldly people live.

"We get so caught up in our egos that we think that everyone else is at fault and we're not," he said. "Friends, if no one's told you, I want you to know before you graduate, you'll have (critics). They're out there.

"Don't allow anyone's criticism of you to be regarding your lifestyle, your commitment to Christ, your standard of morality. ... If you're on Christ's side, don't give the world any reason to ever question that."

Instead, "put on" the gown of righteousness, he said, noting, "A real Christian, a true believer, is going to have a genuine concern for the church." This concern is "that Christ's bride be dressed in his righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne."

He concluded: "If you're not concerned for people, ... you're in the wrong business. The qualities that the world is looking for should mark every true believer in Jesus Christ. The world must not look in vain for these qualities."

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Baptist Bridge Dedication
Draws 2,000 in West Africa

By Marsha Key

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6/8/87

MORETAN, Togo (BP)—Dedication of two vital bridges and a pharmacy built in Togo by Southern Baptist volunteers drew a crowd of 2,000 people, media coverage and favorable comments about Baptists from the Togolese government.

The May 27 celebration highlighted the close of a three-year partnership project between North Carolina Baptist volunteer workers and Togo Baptists. Project workers drilled 113 wells and constructed 16 water catchments, two bridges and a pharmacy.

The project also resulted in health education seminars for 42 villages and development of a literacy program. Evangelistic efforts helped start 42 churches and preaching points, with 1,200 people already baptized and 1,000 awaiting baptism.

As Togolese government officials gathered at the ceremony, Togolese air force planes flew over to salute the partnership effort. The event was publicized on Togolese television and through the Voice of America radio broadcast to Africa.

The Togolese chief administrator for the region complimented Baptists on their work and said, "Healed bodies are important, but they would be of no use if souls were not made well.

"Someday the souls of those who believe in Jesus will go to live with God," the official added. "But while we are on earth, our souls live in bodies that we must take care of. Baptists are not only caring for our bodies, but also our souls."

Forty-two North Carolina Baptists, including representatives of the state Brotherhood and Woman's Missionary Union, were at the dedications.

The bridges are improving commerce in an area that was nearly cut off from the rest of the country during the rainy season. Already the bridges are resulting in road improvements and new local markets. And because of new accessibility, the gospel is spreading into once-remote villages.

The pharmacy will be important for a wide region, making the physical quality of life better. No longer will people have to travel four hours or more for medicine.

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Marsha Key is missionary press representative in Togo.

National WMU Fills 2
Professional Positions

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Karen Windham of Douglasville, Ga., and Andrea Mullins of Casper, Wyo., have joined the professional staff of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

Windham became circulation group manager May 26.

She is a graduate of Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and since 1985 has worked for Arthur Anderson & Co., where she has worked in multiple phases of financial planning, research and implementation.

In her new position, she will manage order processing, customer communications, maintenance of circulation records, accounts receivable and other customer service functions in the circulation group, which is responsible for handling WMU's 850,000 magazine subscriptions.

Mullins will join the national WMU staff Aug. 3 as Baptist Women consultant. She succeeds Jimmie Winter, who is now promotion associate in new areas for WMU and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Mullins presently is Wyoming WMU executive director and has held various WMU positions on the church, associational and state levels. She has written for WMU's Contempo magazine for women ages 18-29, and she writes articles, editorials and a WMU column in the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention Horizons, newsjournal of the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention.

As consultant, Mullins, along with other WMU staff, will plan and design materials for Baptist Women organizations. Some of her responsibilities will include speaking at state and associational WMU meetings, conducting leadership training conferences and writing for WMU publications.