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Papal Visit Creates Various Reactions In Host Cities

By Marv Knox

NASHVILLE (BP)--Baptist involvement in and reaction to Pope John Paul II's trip to the United States is as varied as the locales he will visit.

Baptists are to be involved with festivities surrounding the Roman Catholic leader's visit in Miami; Columbia, S.C.; New Orleans; and San Antonio, Texas. But Southern Baptist involvement will disappear by the time the pontif reaches Phoenix, Ariz., before heading to Los Angeles, Monterrey and San Francisco, Calif., and completing the U.S. phase of his trip in Detroit.

In Miami, witnessing rather than protesting apparently will be Baptists' focus when the pope begins his tour Sept. 10-11. Local Baptist leaders, expressing no desire to offend the city's Catholic majority, have said they are unaware of Baptist involvement in anti-pope protests.

However, some Southern Baptists will take advantage of the papal visit "with an evangelistic invitation for people to study the word of God with us," said Doyle Wetherington, director of missions for Miami Baptist Association.

Copies of the book of Romans, printed with the greeting, "A Message for Miami by Way of Rome," will be distributed by Miami Baptists during and after the visit. Most of the Scripture portions will be distributed through church activities, but college students near the pope's noon Mass will offer celebrants a drink of cool water and a copy of Romans.

The Archdiocese of Miami has invited 1,000 area religious leaders, including most Baptist pastors, to sit in a VIP section during the Mass. Jim Summers, pastor of Northwest Baptist Church, is among Baptists who have turned down the offer and has advised others to do so.

"It is a good opportunity to witness, but it may be taken as cooperating" with the pope and the Catholic Church, he said. "The best way to deal with this is to quietly absent ourselves."

But Steven Kimmel, pastor of Central Baptist Church, is attending the Mass and said he does not consider his attendance to be an endorsement of the papacy. "To participate means you acknowledge that Catholicism is a vital force in the lives of many people in this area," he said. Catholics in Miami outnumber Baptists 1.3 million to 50,000.

In Columbia, Ray P. Rust, executive secretary-treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, will join other denominational leaders on the platform at a non-Mass service on the campus of the University of South Carolina Friday, Sept. 11. Rust also will host former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, a Southern Baptist layman, who will greet the pontiff.

South Carolina Baptists already have expressed hospitality to the pope. State convention President Flynn T. Harrell and the convention's Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee have sent letters welcoming the Catholic leader to the state.

Columbia also will be the site of a meeting between the pope and more than 30 U.S. religious leaders, including two Southern Baptists. Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the convention's Executive Committee, and Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of the Woman's Missionary Union, will participate. The Americans will present a paper on the state of religion in their country, and the pontiff will respond.

"I am pleased Southern Baptists will be represented in the small meeting with Pope John Paul II," Bennett said. He noted he hopes to share with the pope and other religious leaders "something of the life and work of Southern Baptists."

Weatherford added: "Southern Baptists have work in so many countries where Roman Catholics are in a missions relationship with us. We need to be talking to each other more." She also said she is glad the pope has included women in the meeting, pointing out, "If he is seeking to understand religious life in the United States, he certainly needs to include the perspective of women."

In New Orleans the next day, the pope will be present for a brief reception for religious leaders at St. Louis Cathedral. Nolan Johnston, director of missions for the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans, will attend. Mark Short, executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, will not be able to attend, according to a convention spokesperson.

"Some folks say we shouldn't participate," Johnston said. "But I work with the archdiocese and other ecumenical groups every week. This is an opportunity to continue my support for the total Christian witness in our city." Johnston has participated with an ecumenical group which has issued a statement pledging that the members are praying the pope's visit will be a blessing to all and praying for his safety in travel.

San Antonio Baptists have adopted an eight-point statement on the pope's visit, said Robert Schmeltekopf, director of missions for San Antonio Baptist Association. The statement affirms the historic Baptist positions that Jesus alone is head of the church and that salvation is by grace through faith, not sacrament. But it also acknowledges the pope's contributions to world peace and human righteousness as head of the Roman Catholic Church.

The statement, adopted in May, urges Southern Baptists to avoid picketing and confrontational tactics. Rather, it encourages Baptists to continue their regular activities when possible and to offer appropriate ministries to visitors when practical.

Some churches in the direct line of papal traffic are planning such ministries as offering icewater to the crowds, Schmeltekopf said. Briefings on Roman Catholic beliefs and interfaith witness have been offered. The sanctuary of Trinity Baptist Church will be used Sept. 10 for an ecumenical "Celebration of Christian Unity" service.

Leaders in Phoenix, the three California cities and Detroit indicated Baptists are not known to be planning involvement in papal activities in their cities.

The crush of humanity striving to glimpse the pontiff is expected to cause difficulty in some locations.

In San Antonio, Calvary Hills Baptist Church is located less than a mile from the Mass set for 10 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 13. Police predictions about traffic conditions led to a decision to cancel services at the church and to hold meetings in individual homes. "The police didn't give us much encouragement," said Pastor Jarrell Griffin. Although 4,000 private buses are to be routed past Village Parkway Baptist Church, Pastor Jack Schmid said services will not be cancelled, but members who regularly attend the church's 8 a.m. service are being urged to attend a later service.

Crowd congestion also will close the Arizona Baptist Foundation offices during the morning of Sept. 14, said Perry Bramlette, vice president for administration. The offices are in the papal "impact area," and police said employees could not negotiate traffic, Bramlette said, stressing the closing is "not in honor of the pope, but because our employees could not get to work."

Another closing -- that of public schools and county offices -- Sept. 11 in Miami has caused consternation on the part of some Baptists. Officials have said the closings will be due to traffic congestion, but missions director Wetherington said such reasoning reflects the "tortuous logic" also used to justify public expense on the festivities.

Florida's Dade County will spend an estimated \$1 million for police protection. Wetherington and other Miami Baptists have expressed concern over the use of state funds to support what they believe to be religious events.

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That feeling has been mirrored in Texas. Editor Presnall Wood of the Baptist Standard, Baptists' weekly newsjournal in the state, has criticized Gov. Bill Clements' decision to authorize 800 state National Guardsmen to assist with security and control at a cost of \$180,000.

"The bottom line is Catholics, and Catholics alone, should pick up the bill for the pope's visit to Texas," Wood wrote.

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(Contributors to this story were Greg Warner in Florida, Linda W. Surrlette in South Carolina, Oscar Hoffmeyer in Louisiana, Ken Camp and Toby Druin in Texas, Elizabeth Young in Arizona, Herb Hollinger in California and Robert Wilson in Michigan.)

'Texas Affairs' Focus
Of San Marcos Meeting

By Toby Druin

Baptist Press
9/4/87

SAN MARCOS, Texas (BP)--More than 320 Texas Baptists met in the gymnasium of Southwest Texas State University Sept. 1, reportedly for a luncheon and evening of inspiration of fellowship and to discuss affairs of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The meeting, an informal gathering by invitation only, featured an address by Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church, who said he was invited by "long-time friends," John Baugh of Houston and W. Dewey Presley of Dallas, to deliver a devotional, inspirational message. He spoke on "the transforming power of a singular commitment" from Philippians 1, he said.

Both Baugh and Presley, co-hosts for the meeting, have been active, each for some 50 years or more, in Texas and Southern Baptist life. Baugh, a member of Second Baptist Church in Houston, is past chairman of the Baptist Foundation of Texas. Presley, a member of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, is past chairman of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee and both have held other denominational posts.

Baugh was contacted by the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and said the San Marcos meeting was in "the time-honored practice of Baptist polity, that is, Baptist people informally discussing our many points of view regarding the facets of Baptist work and our denomination's business."

They had sought no publicity for the event and planned it to be a private gathering, he said, but some church groups heard Jackson was to speak and came to the evening meeting. A total of 320 chairs were set up for the evening session, said Baugh, and more had to be brought in to accommodate the crowd. Fewer than 300 attended the noon luncheon and a "mini-cattle show" at Baugh's nearby ranch in the afternoon, he said.

Baugh acknowledged the meeting would be viewed by some as having political overtones but insisted he and Presley and their guests were just doing what Baptists have done throughout their history -- discussing matters of concern.

The discussions, he said, were about the Texas Baptist convention, not the Southern Baptist Convention. Theme of the meeting, he said, was "Texas Baptists have the right to know ... a need to know the truth. The Baptist way ... speaking the truth ... in love ... Ephesians 4:15."

He said the possible candidacy of Jackson for the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention, which meets in San Antonio, Texas, next June, was not discussed. Jackson was nominated for president in St. Louis in June 1987 and got 40 percent of the vote in losing to Adrian Rogers.

Jackson, contacted by the Standard Sept. 3, confirmed that he had been asked to bring an "inspirational, devotional message" at the meeting and that the topic of discussion was Texas Baptist affairs, not his candidacy for the SBC presidency.

He said he has not been asked to be a nominee for the SBC presidency in 1988 but added his position remains unchanged on the subject, that anyone is free to nominate him who feels he can serve the convention.

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Jackson and Baugh said their friendship dates back some 10 years to when Jackson met with Baugh and other members of a pastor-search committee at Second Baptist Church in Houston. Jackson told the committee of his commitment to remain at the Arizona church, where he now has baptized more than 15,000 people in 20 years and led the SBC in gifts to the Cooperative Program in 1986 by giving \$1 million through the denomination's unified giving plan. Jackson recommended H. Edwin Young to the committee, and the church called Young as pastor.

"We love Richard Jackson and have invited him back on other occasions," Baugh said.

Baugh and Presley, both of whom have been active in the group "Laity For ... The Baptist Faith and Message," called the San Marcos meeting, Baugh said, because of their concern that the Texas Baptist convention is about to be confronted with the disruptive spirit and controversy that have plagued the SBC the last nine years.

"There is but one major issue before 2.5 million conservative, mainstream Texas Baptists," he said. "We must preserve our Christian principles and Baptist ideals.

"We Texas Baptists shall preserve and further elevate truth, integrity, mutual respect, trust and unity in Texas and Southern Baptist affairs," he said.

Baugh added it is time for Texas Baptist pastors to stand before God, their congregations and their fellow Texans and state openly whether they want the spirit that has dominated the SBC the last few years "to infiltrate and control the hearts and the minds of Texas Baptists."

The meeting, he said, was pointing toward the state convention annual meeting in Fort Worth Nov. 10-11, "and to everything Baptists will do for the next decade."

"We need to be true to the expectations that Jesus Christ has of his people," Baugh said, "and if meeting together to discuss our love for our denomination is political, then it will just have to be called political. But we don't see it as political.

"We see it as the continuation of the necessity to follow Baptist polity by which Baptist people do come together and do discuss Baptist affairs and vote according to their hearts' desire following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I don't know how you can get any more Baptist than that."

Baugh said he has planned no more such meetings but said he would make every attempt he can to get "like-minded fellow Baptists to ask God to give them the guidance in the election of those who are leaders in the state of Texas."

He noted that Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, has announced he will permit his nomination for president of the BGCT.

"I think I know Dr. Gregory's heart, that if he is elected president of the Texas Baptist convention, he would intend to be an independent, conservative representative of Texas Baptists," Baugh said, "and I am for that."

Asked if he were endorsing Gregory for the presidency, Baugh said, "I am for us having an independent, conservative representative Texas Baptist for president."

As to the admonition of the SBC Peace Committee that groups discontinue political meetings, Baugh observed the Peace Committee also noted that some politics is "an intrinsic" part of denominational life, including voting and public and private discussions.

"Are we to interpret the report of the Peace Committee that individuals are prohibited from taking about Texas Baptist individuals and Baptist affairs in our state?" he asked.

No Visa Extensions,
Missionaries Told

By Marty Croll

JAKARTA, Indonesia (BP)--For more than 12 years, Southern Baptist missionary Clyde Meador has worked in Indonesia, first developing churches and later teaching theology. But now Indonesia is asking him to go back home.

Meador's family is one of 16 Southern Baptist missionary families who have been told the Indonesia Religion Department will no longer supply them a letter of recommendation allowing them to live there.

"If this is carried out, it will have significant impact on our (Baptist) work," said Meador, who is from Albuquerque, N.M. He and his wife and their two daughters moved to Indonesia in 1975, just months after they were appointed career missionaries.

If unchanged, the situation leaves the Meadors with less than a year before they will be required to leave. Other Southern Baptist families would have to move out next winter, he said.

By early next year missionaries expect about 10 other families to receive the same notice, which has come in an official letter of clearance required from the Religion Department as part of the visa-approval process. The note has appeared on the letters of missionaries who have held visas recommended by the Religion Department for 10 years or longer. The note has not appeared on visas for healthcare workers or the one agriculturist assigned to Indonesia, whose visas are processed through other channels.

Unless government officials reverse their course, nearly two-thirds of the Southern Baptist missionary force in Indonesia -- about 50 missionaries -- will have to leave by early 1989. Some mission groups started receiving the notation last year. But the first Southern Baptist missionary saw it in June, said Meador, who received his notice the second week of August.

Without Southern Baptists, the well-established Indonesian Baptist Convention should be able to maintain existing churches and institutions. But by requiring the missionaries to leave, the government's new policy would hamper Baptist outreach and new church growth, Meador said.

With a population of about 170 million, Indonesia is the world's fifth largest country, behind China, India, the Soviet Union and the United States.

"This is the most serious threat to our missionary ministry that I can recall in the last 27 years," said Ed Sanders, chairman of the Southern Baptist missionary organization in Indonesia. "They (the government) mean business."

The visa denials result primarily from Muslims exerting a growing pressure on the Indonesian government, according to missionaries and mission strategists at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Muslims make up about 90 percent of the population, and as Islamic nationalism has solidified in recent years, foreigners have felt an increasing pressure to leave.

Last year a mid-level Religion Department official stated in a public letter that no new missionary visas would be given for extended periods, reported Harry Bush, a church developer in Bali. The last religion visa to be granted came in 1984, Bush added. Two missionary families are studying language in the country now and will be able to stay only if they receive a visa after their student visa expires. One couple was appointed last month to Indonesia but has not begun language school yet.

Southern Baptist medical missionaries, too, have felt pressure over the years from anti-Christian elements in Indonesia. Once the government enacted a policy that all foreign medical personnel must leave the country within five years. Another time, responding to Islamic concern, the government forced Baptists to sell a hospital in a strong Muslim area only six years after they built it.

In 1979 the Immigration Department stamped a "not-to-be-extended-again" notation on 10 Southern Baptist missionary visas. But after an organized prayer campaign and meetings with high-ranking government leaders who were Christians, the policy behind the notation was reversed.

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Because of tension between themselves and Indonesian Baptists, missionaries at that time were not certain they had full backing from the Baptist convention. But recent years have brought healing, and now the convention is fully behind the missionaries, Meador said.

"We're feeling very solid support from our nationals in this, both spiritually and in trying to appeal this with the government. We're trying everything we can to counteract it. The union (convention) is filing appeal letters with almost every department of government, trying to get them to overturn (the denials)," he said.

In addition, the U.S. Consulate in Indonesia is working on the missionaries' behalf.

Missionaries and Indonesian Baptists are appealing the denials first by asking the government to reverse its policy. If this fails, each missionary will ask for considerations based on his or her contributions to the country. Some missionaries might consider transferring to other fields or becoming an Indonesian citizen, a possibility still under study by missionaries and Foreign Mission Board officials.

"We've lived under this threatening cloud since before the attempted communist coup in 1965," said church developer Ray Rogers, who lives in Mojokerto. "I remember back at my first mission meeting 22 years ago, people were saying we didn't even have time to unpack."

But missionaries agree this newest threat is more ominous than any other. "In 1979 and 1980 it looked very, very serious, but this is much more serious than it's ever been before. I personally feel that with us getting this many notations, they're not doing it with the intention of reversing it," Meador said. "But that doesn't mean they won't reverse it."

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Honeycutt Appeals For
'Authentic Education'

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
9/4/87

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Amidst continued "harassment and intimidation," faculty and students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary were urged by the school's president to take the risks of "authentic theological education."

Roy L. Honeycutt, in a convocation address opening the fall semester on the Louisville, Ky., campus, warned that the "larger context" of political and theological controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention has created new risks for the denomination's oldest seminary.

Nevertheless, "despite the decade of harassment and intimidation of this faculty, both seminary administration and faculty remain committed to authentic education as a hallmark of this seminary," Honeycutt declared.

"We reject forthrightly every form of pseudo-scholarship which interprets education as merely the indoctrination of students with pre-digested teachings, the ratification of tradition or the conformation of custom," he said.

Honeycutt, in his fifth year as seminary president, contrasted authentic and simulated education. While the latter is highly popular, he said, its proponents often "misconstrue scholarship with custom or tradition. A few are more concerned with acceleration and a 'quickie degree' than they are with authentic educational experiences. Regardless of the theological direction from which it may come, there is no place in authentic education for brainwashing."

Honeycutt stressed that genuine theological education rests upon the foundational Baptist principles of primacy of Scripture and liberty of conscience. The seminary's commitment to academic freedom, he said, "arises from the Christian faith with its promise of freedom in Christ to know the truth which is from God, which judges all human forms and institutions and which will set persons free."

On the other hand, he pointed out that honest pursuit of truth can be hazardous within a free church tradition where decisions are determined by majority vote. The temptation, he said, is to confuse truth with majority opinion.

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Despite the fact that Christian history is replete with illustrations of the "fallacy of the majority" Southern Baptists in recent years have been prone "to forget too quickly those dark centuries in which the majority was wrong," Honeycutt said. It was the majority, he pointed out, which "crucified Jesus and hounded the early Church during its infancy."

The Old Testament scholar counseled seminary faculty and students to take courage in the prophet Isaiah's message of hope to the people of Israel who were languishing in exile.

"Despite the shadowed nature of our times, which are so much like Israel's exile in a strange land, this can be the finest hour of our generation," he said. "So I urge upon you, faculty and students, to keep the vision of an authentic education despite the pressures now being applied upon institutions of learning."

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Dilday Tells Students
To Imitate Jesus Christ

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
9/4/87

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--President Russell Dilday urged students of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Sept. 1 to shun worldly models and base their ministries solely on Jesus Christ.

Dilday spoke to an overflow crowd of students in the first chapel service of the fall semester at the Fort Worth, Texas, school. In a sermon from II Corinthians, he said ministers should follow the apostle Paul's example in placing Jesus Christ as the source, sufficiency and subject of ministry.

Dilday pointed out five metaphors Paul used in II Corinthians to describe ministers. A minister is "a captive of the triumphant Christ, a dispenser of the fragrant aroma of Christ, a sincere communicator of Jesus, a projector of the light of Christ and a clay pot for the treasure of Christ."

These may not be flattering metaphors, Dilday said, because "the ministry is not for people who have ambitious egos."

"Your ministry is about to self-destruct if you become a huckster or a peddler of the word of God; if you engage in self-promotion; if you're overconfident in your own competencies; if you become defeated easily; if you use underhanded, manipulative methods; if you tamper with the word of God; if you preach about yourself," he said.

The secret is "to keep your ministry focused on Jesus Christ," he added. "The one essential factor is Jesus."

Paul placed Jesus as the source of his ministry, Dilday said.

To surrender to the ministry of Jesus "may sound morbid," he said. "But it isn't, because of that remarkable paradox that when you surrender to Jesus you become truly free. That's the secret.

"That had better be the source of your ministry, too," Dilday told the students. "For when you get in trouble, when you have difficulty, when you're tempted, when you're discouraged, when your life totters on the brink of disaster, you can fall back on that certainty that you are in this work because he called you to it. You didn't just choose it.

"If you know down deep in your heart that you've been captured by Christ, that you've been commissioned by him, then you're on your way," he said.

Dilday also said Paul found Jesus as the sufficiency of his ministry.

This is contrary to modern ministers who measure their sufficiency "by the same criteria as the business world," he said. Such "corporate leaders" must depend on "political strategies and cunning" to get the work done.

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"Don't become a peddler of the word of God," Dilday said. "Don't become a virtuoso in exegetical evasion. Don't tamper with the word of God."

And Dilday said Paul made Jesus the subject of ministry.

"What we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as lord," he said. "Showmanship has no place in the ministry. The pulpit is not a perch from which to exhibit a preacher's gifts and skills. It's a platform to reveal and declare the glory of Christ."

Also in the opening chapel, President Emeritus Robert Naylor gave his now-traditional charge to new students. As the incoming class stood, Naylor declared: "I now pronounce you Southwesterners. It is an honorable name. You will discover it is a debt for life."

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'Flee, Follow, Fight,'
Leavell Tells Students

By Breena K. Paine

Baptist Press
9/4/87

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"The biggest question that you're going to face the rest of your life is, Who are the real men of God, and who are those who are merely mouthing something that they have heard and merely claim to be real prophets?" Landrum P. Leavell II told students at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

In the first chapel service of the seminary's new academic year, the seminary president challenged students "to flee, to follow and to fight."

"Who are the true prophets and who are the false prophets?" Leavell asked. "The Bible says we are not to judge, but it also says we have the privilege of being fruit inspectors.

"The false prophet has a morbid craving for controversy," he noted, quoting from I Timothy 6:4, and "he believes 'gain is godliness,'" characteristics applicable to ministers of this day, Leavell said.

To be a true man of God, however, the Christian must flee a lack of submission.

Leavell challenged students to determine: "Is my call real? What would I do if it suddenly seemed all the doors to ministry were closed? Would I still feel that God had called, or would I brush away a few crocodile tears and look for another job?"

According to Leavell, the commitment of many Christians is shallow. In 1976, Southern Baptists adopted Bold Mission Thrust to share the gospel with the whole world by the year 2000. However, he has "come to conclude that we may well have acted on the spur of the moment."

"It was the right thing to do, but I don't believe there is a depth of commitment in a voice vote or a raised hand, or a punched ballot. ... We might have done better if we had taken out a year or two prior to the vote during which we issued a call to repentance and prayer ... to determine if indeed we meant business, and if we were willing to make the commitment required to fulfill the Bold Mission Thrust."

Leavell added, "If you and I are going to flee, we're going to have to ... repent of our relationship to our families. I question whether one can make an in-depth, lifelong commitment to Jesus Christ if he or she is incapable of making an in-depth, lifelong commitment to one's spouse and children.

"We need to repent of our attitude toward sin. When we can't get the victory in our lives over sin through the power of God, ... we need to quit exporting our brand of Christianity."

"According to evangelist Eddie Martin, 'There's a system in the demise of fallen evangelists,'" Leavell continued. "The sequence is 'money, pride, sex.' The same holds true of any Baptist preacher.

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"The Christian who falls usually will shed a crocodile tear or two, and readjust his halo, and say, 'I didn't intend for this to happen. I can't explain it. It just happened to me.' But you make your own decision to sin. Nobody makes it for you."

Christians who flee should also follow, said Leavell: "We want to be Christians, and we want to go to heaven, but we run from the disciplines that are attached. Failure to follow ... Jesus Christ has left our churches in disarray."

"No one of us is prepared to fight unless and until we flee and follow. Many young folks want to fight before they join the army."

Christians have stopped "fighting Satan; we're fighting one another," Leavell noted. "Before God is going to bless us in our fight against Satan and the minions of hell, we're going to have to draw some new lines between Christians and the lost. ... We're going to have to heed the words of Jesus when he said, 'Come ye out from among them and be ye a separate people,' and until we do the separating, the blessings are going to tarry."

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Annie Armstrong Offering
Reaches All-Time High

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ATLANTA (BP)--Receipts from the annual Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, which provide funds for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, have reached an all-time high.

Current receipts of \$29,086,636, represent a 9.3 percent increase over receipts for the same period last year. The amount also exceeds the required 1987 operating budget of \$29 million.

"I am grateful for this outstanding support of the Annie Armstrong Offering. This record offering indicates solid commitment to home missions and the ministry of the Home Mission Board," said HMB President Larry Lewis.

Leonard Irwin, Home Mission Board vice president of planning explained that the figure indicates "a real increase of around 5 percent, when considering inflation." Irwin estimated final receipts will be 81 percent of the \$37.5 million goal.

All funds received beyond the operational budget that are received this year will be used for responding to needs of metropolitan areas through evangelism, starting new churches and ministry to language groups, Irwin said.

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Mission Volunteer Recounts
Rugged Trek To Safety

By Jerilynn Armstrong

Baptist Press
9/4/87

DALLAS (BP)--"You only know your strength when you are tested and must struggle. My time in Mozambique was a struggle, and I endured," Kindra Bryan told the media at her homecoming in Houston Aug. 29.

The struggle included a walk of more than 200 miles in the midst of a civil war as well as suffering from several diseases, including malaria and dysentery.

Despite the struggle, "I never doubted I was exactly where God wanted me to be," she said.

Flanked by family and friends at Second Baptist Church of Houston, Bryan said she and the six other missionaries kidnapped never were mistreated by their captors, but she constantly was aware of the fighting going on around them as they traveled and always was uncertain she would make it out alive.

Bryan was kidnapped May 13 from a rural missionary clinic where she had arrived to assist in medical care only four days earlier. She was working for Youth With A Mission, an international missionary organization based in Hawaii.

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She and her fellow missionaries were taken captive by guerilla forces of Renamo, also known as the Mozambique National Resistance, a rebel group seeking to overthrow the Marxist government.

"I volunteered to work in public health in Mozambique because I felt the Lord's leadership to serve in a Third World nation, but I never expected the three-month ordeal," she said.

When asked if she felt she accomplished any of her goals, Bryan said yes. "My time definitely was not spent in the medical field, but our group was able to share the gospel with our captors and they responded," she explained. "One of the missionaries, Patricia Perkins, is an accomplished artist and drew the plan of salvation for the soldiers. After sharing with them, they asked if they could have Jesus in their lives and knelt with us in prayer."

Even though their captors were kind toward the group that included a 19-month-old baby, the living conditions were harsh. For three months they trudged across Mozambique through the jungle, mountains, swamps and rivers.

Bryan lost 20 pounds after suffering from malaria, dysentery and worms which bored through the soles of her feet.

"Physically, the experience was brutal. We walked 10 to 12 hours many days traveling to six Renamo camps during the three months. Several in our group experienced heat stroke and had to be carried on litters by the soldiers," she recalled.

"The last two weeks we were walking 12 hours during the night, fearful of the fighting going on around us. I found this to be the most frightening because when it is pitch dark the jungle becomes full of uncertainty," she said.

The diet of the group consisted of maize meal and occasionally meat from wild game including hippopotamus, wildebeest, buffalo and elephant.

"We slept on straw mats out in the open or in grass huts. We did not brush our teeth for three months and ran out of shampoo after the first month," she said.

The most restful time for the group was a five-week period they stayed at a Renamo camp in the Gorongoza mountains.

"It was an incredibly hard climb to reach this camp, but we were in the midst of a beautiful tropical forest. At this time only a month had passed, and I was still struggling with my situation and God's leadership," she said. "The time in the mountains was a tremendous growth experience for me spiritually and came to be like a sanctuary. I found peace in the midst of my turmoil and a closer walk with God."

The group crossed the border into Malawi Aug. 18 and immediately were confronted by the international press.

"At times during my captivity I wondered if everyone had forgotten me back home, but when I was met with all the media attention my first reaction was to run and hide in the bush," she said. "I am a very private person, so answering questions and giving interviews is difficult, but I hope through this experience I am able to share God's love for people and the plight of the Mozambicans.

"The civil war has been going on for years, and the people are tired of the war and the deaths. I saw a lot of suffering."

Bryan expressed her thanks to the U.S. government and its help in her release and the prayers of Southern Baptist churches and people of all religions.

Her immediate plans are to rest and spend time with family and friends. "In the near future I will have to find a job and plan to finish my degree in public health," she said.

"I do not know what the Lord has in store for me, and I will wait for his direction, but through an experience like this you learn a lot about yourself and the concern and care of others," she said.