

(BP)**- - BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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December 1, 1987

N-FMB

87-181

Missionaries Weather
Violence In Haiti

By Eric Miller

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary Mark Rutledge feels relatively safe amid the violence in Haiti but asks for prayer for fellow missionaries who are new to Haiti.

The first election in Haiti in 30 years was scheduled Nov. 29 but was called off because of widespread violence shortly after polls opened. At least 15 people were shot or hacked to death at one polling station by killers opposing the election, and 12 other deaths were reported.

"I personally did not go to church yesterday (Nov. 29) on the recommendation from most of the people I know here who said it wouldn't be too safe," Rutledge said. Some polling stations were located at churches, and "the worst place you could have been was at the polls and out on the street," he explained.

Rutledge said he hadn't heard of any Haitian Baptists being attacked or injured during violence. The executive committee of the Haitian Baptist Convention met two days before the election, he reported. The committee met in northern Haiti, where less violence has occurred.

Rutledge and his wife, Peggy, are from Murfreesboro, Tenn., and Glendale, Calif., respectively. They have heard gunfire on many nights and even grenades being set off. They stay away from the downtown area of Port-au-Prince, where much of the violence occurs.

"Pray for this country and for the people here as they go through this problem, that somehow God can use this to change this country," Rutledge said. He also asked for prayer for new missionaries Virgil and Patsy Suttles of Elberton, Ga., in their adjustment to the Haiti situation. The Suttleses arrived in Haiti Nov. 1. They and the Rutledges are the only Southern Baptist missionaries there.

The Rutledges arrived in Haiti in March, but both had worked in the country previously. They have had time to adjust to the latest violence, which started in June as anti-government groups instigated strikes calling for a three-man governing council to step down from office. Strikers also called for a general election to choose a new council.

Missionaries are still fairly safe in Haiti, Rutledge insisted: "Although we've had shooting at night, and that's unnerving, it's not aimed at us." There's no antagonism toward us as Americans or foreigners or as Christians. Because of that, I don't see how it would be unsafe to stay here."

The Americans who have been wounded were reporters who "were right in the middle" of the polling places and were wounded by people who did not want the election, he said.

For the missionaries, "it's been a matter of trying to stay at home and stay out of the violence," he said. "They're not attacking individual homes. It's aimed toward specific people."

Until the election, Rutledge had been going to language school two hours daily and to his office to handle administrative work related to well-drilling projects and an agriculture school. After the violence passes, he said, he will resume normal activities.

Retired Executive
G.W. Bullard Dies

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (BP)--G.W. Bullard of Spartanburg, S.C., retired executive director of the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South New Jersey, died Nov. 29 after an illness of several months. He was 76.

He led the Pennsylvania-South Jersey Convention and was editor of the Penn.-Jersey Baptist from 1972 until his retirement in 1978.

He was the father of George W. Bullard Jr., director of the missions division of South Carolina Baptist Convention.

Bullard was director of missions in Delaware Valley Association, Philadelphia, in 1965-1972. Earlier he was a pastor in North Carolina and Maryland. He was a native of Abbottsburg, N.C.

He attended North Carolina State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Following retirement he and Mrs. Bullard made their home first in Raleigh and later in Spartanburg. He was interim director of missions in Greenville Association from late 1985 until early 1987.

Survivors include the widow, Mozelle Bridgers Bullard; daughters Carolyn Rock of Baltimore and Judith Longshore of Spartanburg; son George W. Bullard Jr. of Columbia, and eight grandchildren.

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Alabama Baptists Vote Bylaws,
Debate Women In Ministry

*N-CO
(Ala.)*
By Mark Baggett

Baptist Press
12/1/87

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--In a series of razor-thin votes, Alabama Baptists approved a new set of bylaws and debated the issue of women in ministry during their 165th annual meeting in Montgomery Nov. 17-18.

The 2,209 messengers -- 500 more than were registered at last year's meeting in Mobile -- also re-elected Steve Tondera, a layman from Huntsville, as president.

In the contest for first vice president, conservative candidate Robert Pitman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Muscle Shoals, defeated Dale Huff, pastor of First Baptist Church of Montgomery, by a 54-46 percent margin.

Two weeks before the convention, Pitman decided to withdraw his name from consideration for president after officials ruled Tondera, who served 18 days of the previous president's term, could be nominated again.

In other business, messengers approved a budget of \$24,156,000, to be distributed 43 percent to Southern Baptist Convention causes and 57 percent to state missions causes, the same as last year.

The budget represents a 3.76 percent increase over the adjusted 1987 goal of \$23,279,428.

Gov. Guy Hunt, a Primitive Baptist preacher elected last November, addressed the messengers in the opening session, stressing the importance of family strength and moral awareness.

Two issues occupied most of the business sessions: a set of proposed bylaws that will have to be approved by two successive conventions before taking effect; and a resolution affirming women "who are so capably serving God" and encouraging them "as co-laborers in their vocational ministries."

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According to the convention's Executive Secretary-Treasurer A. Earl Potts, the new bylaws were drafted to respond to the threat of ascending liability, in which the state convention could be legally responsible for the actions and indebtedness of its agencies and institutions.

The proposed bylaws, which combine the present constitution, bylaws and business plan into one document, were approved with one change -- an amendment offered by Jack Millwood, pastor of First Baptist Church of Chickasaw, relating to the convention's control over trustees of its member agencies and institutions.

Millwood recommended messengers retain a provision from the present constitution reserving the right of the convention "to change the terms of service of such trustees and to remove from office any and all of them at will."

After inconclusive voice and standing votes, messengers voted by ballot, approving the amendment 624-617.

Another amendment, proposing to reduce the terms of trustees of the educational institutions from three four-year terms to two four-year terms, was defeated in a close voice vote. Tondera's ruling on the voice vote was challenged by a separate motion but the presiding officer was sustained.

But the biggest procedural wrangle was reserved for a resolution affirming women in ministry.

Pete Tcherneshoff, director of missions for Marshall Baptist Association and chairman of the resolutions committee, said the committee avoided the issue of the ordination of women in bringing the resolution to the floor.

Mack Morris, pastor of First Baptist Church of Tillman's Corner, spoke against the resolution, saying it was divisive.

Frances Stephenson, messenger and deacon from First Baptist Church of Auburn, spoke in favor of the resolution: "I think you all are having problems with the language of the first part of the resolution (which states that 'an increasing number of women are answering God's call'). If the Lord would just quit calling these women, they wouldn't want to be ministers."

Pastor Charles Smith of Rosalie Baptist Church in Flat Rock said the adoption of the resolution would send a confusing signal to the press.

Smith proposed an amendment that would add the words, "except for pastoral ministers."

Again, a voice vote on the amendment was so close Tondera called for a ballot vote. Smith's amendment was defeated by 13 votes out of more than 1,300 cast.

After two hours of voting and discussion of amendments, the vote on the original resolution was delayed until a later session. Then, in the later session, after debate, a messenger moved to table the motion. The motion to table was passed by a ballot vote.

The only other resolution to spark debate was a resolution concerning the three Alabama Baptist institutions of higher learning.

The resolution encouraged trustees of Samford University, Judson College and Mobile College "to build their professional staffs and faculties from those who clearly reflect the dominant convictions and beliefs held by Southern Baptists at large." The language echoed a provision in the Southern Baptist Peace Committee Report adopted in June. The resolution, passed despite opposition.

Earlier, following the annual report by Samford President Thomas Corts, Pastor Ed Wallen of Vineland Baptist Church in Hueytown, approached Corts on the podium and asked him about recently-hired Provost William Hull.

Wallen complained Hull had been slow in responding to his and others' requests for a dialogue.

"It is certainly my intent," answered Corts, "and the intent of everyone at Samford to answer your questions and to be responsive to the denomination. No one that I know of is trying to loosen the ties between Samford and the convention."

Another messenger said he has a notarized letter from a former Samford student, claiming a professor of religion taught "non-biblical, non-Christian beliefs."

Messengers also enjoyed a pageant celebrating Judson College's sesquicentennial. That session featured an address by Larry L. Lewis, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board president.

Next year's Alabama Baptist State Convention meeting will be in Birmingham at Central Park Baptist Church, Nov. 15-16.

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Icy Roads Put Chill
On Alaskan Meeting

N-CO
(Alaska)

Baptist Press
12/1/87

SOLDOTNA, Alaska (BP)--The Alaska Baptist Convention's experiment with a November annual meeting ended after only one try, when messengers voted unanimously to return to August meetings.

Participants in this year's meeting Nov. 10-11 in Soldotna traveled up to 500 miles by automobile, traversing icy, snowy roads. Others flew in from as far away as Ketchikan, 700 miles to the south, and Kotzebue, 600 miles to the north.

Royce Christmas, pastor of First Baptist Church of Kenai, was elected to a second term as ABC president. Other officers are Judson Owen, pastor of First Baptist Church of Palmer, first vice president; and Johnny McCoy, pastor of First Baptist Church of North Pole, second vice president.

Messengers approved a new budget of \$1,487,613, of which Alaska Baptist churches are expected to contribute \$440,661. The convention will forward 31 percent of its receipts from the churches -- about \$137,000 -- to the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program unified budget, which finances ministries worldwide.

The portion of the budget that will not be received from the churches primarily will come from the Southern Baptist Home Mission and Sunday School boards.

The meeting, held at First Baptist Church of Soldotna, attracted 134 messengers and 34 visitors.

The 1988 Alaska convention will be held Aug. 9-10 at Muldoon Denali Baptist Church in Anchorage.

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New Yorkers Re-elect Simpson,
Adopt Budget, Pass Resolutions

N-CO
(NY)

Baptist Press
12/1/87

PLATTSBURGH, N.Y. (BP)--Messengers to the Baptist Convention of New York's annual meeting Nov. 5-6 re-elected New York City clergyman Sam Simpson as president, adopted a budget of more than \$2.3 million and passed a slate of resolutions.

Simpson is pastor of Bronx and Wake Eden Baptist churches. Other officers are Joyce Munro, a layperson from Bridgewater Baptist Church in Bridgewater, N.J., first vice president; James Bradley, pastor of Bread of Life Baptist Church in Plattsburgh, second vice president; Jon Meek, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Aberdeen, N.J., recording secretary; and Fairy Harpe, layperson from West Point Baptist Church, West Point, N.Y., assistant recording secretary.

Messengers adopted a budget of \$2,342,637. Churches in the convention, which includes all of New York and parts of New Jersey and Connecticut, are expected to contribute \$535,433. Of that portion, 24.5 percent will support ministries around the globe through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget. That percentage is up 0.5 percent over the current budget.

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In addition to the churches, major contributors to the budget will be the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, which will give more than \$1.7 million, and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, which will contribute almost \$73,000.

Messengers ratified a resolution urging Southern Baptist Convention leaders, agencies and committee members to "honor and uphold our historic tradition of non-endorsement of individuals either for political offices or judicial service." The resolution was made in the wake of the Southern Baptist Public Affairs Committee's 7-5 vote to endorse Robert H. Bork for a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court last August.

Another resolution affirmed previous action of the state convention in deploring racism and affirmed the plurality of the members of the convention's churches and its intention to minister to all people.

Messengers also considered a proposal to escrow \$500 of the convention's contribution to the Cooperative Program if the Public Affairs Committee succeeds in its efforts to dissolve Southern Baptists' institutional and financial ties to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The proposal stipulated that the escrowed funds would be sent directly to the Baptist Joint Committee, a church-state watchdog organization comprised of nine Baptist denominations.

However, messengers adopted a substitute motion that put the convention on record favoring continued Southern Baptist participation in the Baptist Joint Committee.

About 200 messengers and guests participated in the meeting, held in the northern-most region of the convention, 60 miles south of Montreal, Canada.

The 1988 meeting of the convention will be held Nov. 3-4 in Utica, N.Y.

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Northern Plains Baptists
Conduct Final Meeting

N-CD
(N. Plains)

Baptist Press
12/1/87

BILLINGS, Mont. (BP)--The Northern Plains Baptist Convention held its 20th and final annual meeting in Billings, Mont., this fall.

The convention will reorganize into two fellowships -- one for Southern Baptists in Montana and another for Southern Baptists in North and South Dakota -- during the coming year.

Despite the coming reorganization, the convention adopted a "dual tracking" budget of almost \$1.2 million and elected a slate of officers.

The 1988 budget will be \$1,177,810, with \$299,290 of that to come from Baptist churches in the three states. Of the churches' contributions to the budget, 13.5 percent will support worldwide ministries through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program unified budget. The primary sources of revenue from outside the convention will be the Southern Baptist Home Mission and Sunday School boards.

Convention president is Jim Eller, pastor of Beulah Baptist Church in Beulah, N.D. Other officers are Philip Fike, pastor of Westside Baptist Church in Rapid City, S.D., first vice president; and Bob Batchelder, pastor of Kirkwood Baptist Church in Bozeman, Mont., second vice president.

Messengers approved a resolution noting, "Whereas we are separating the Northern Plains Baptist Convention into two fellowships, be it resolved that we will continue to pledge our spiritual and fraternal support between our fellowships."

Among other resolutions, messengers voted that the convention "affirms and adopts the position of the Southern Baptist Convention's stand against abortion on demand and affirms the sanctity of human life."

The meeting attracted 154 messengers and guests.

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Michigan Baptists
Celebrate 30 Years

N- (O
(Mich)

FLUSHING, Mich. (BP)--The Baptist State Convention of Michigan celebrated its 30th birthday in Flushing Nov. 10-12.

Participants in the BSCM's annual session also adopted a budget of almost \$2.6 million and elected a slate of officers.

The 30th anniversary celebration included a homecoming of former state convention staff members and presidents, publication of the convention's history and a reception.

The new \$2,582,711 budget is to include \$1,029,232 in receipts from Michigan churches. A total of \$293,331, or 28.5 percent of the amount raised by the churches, will go to world ministries through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget. The new budget marks the 17th consecutive time Michigan Baptists have increased the portion of their budget that goes to the Cooperative Program by 0.5 percent.

The lion's share of the budget that is to be received from sources other than Michigan churches will come from the Southern Baptist Home Mission and Sunday School boards.

Convention officers are Damon Patterson, pastor of Monroe Missionary Baptist Church in Monroe, president; Albert Burt, pastor of Baring Cross Baptist Church in Flint, first vice president; Levi Parish, pastor of Eastgate Baptist Church in Burton, second vice president; Wendell (Joe) Ryckman, pastor of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in Redford, recording secretary; and Betty Babb, pastor's wife from Merriman Road Baptist Church in Garden City, assistant recording secretary.

The meeting attracted 617 participants, including 370 messengers.

The 1988 Michigan Baptist annual meeting will be Nov. 8-10 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Grand Rapids.

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N- Texas

Texas Baptist 'Consortium'
Will Offer Bible Courses

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
12/1/87

DALLAS (BP)--Students at five state universities in Texas will be able to receive transfer credit from the Texas Baptist university of their choice for biblical studies courses offered through the Baptist Student Union beginning this spring.

The new procedure, made possible through an unprecedented consortium-style arrangement involving Texas Baptists' eight universities, will be used at the five state universities that have severed relationships with denominationally-affiliated Bible chairs.

"We believe this cooperative venture represents a new day for Texas Baptists as we seek to fulfill our longstanding commitment that every student on a college or university campus in Texas should have access to biblical studies courses," said Jerry Dawson, director of the Christian Education Coordinating Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The transfer procedure will be in effect for the spring semester at the University of Texas campuses in Austin, El Paso and Arlington, at Texas Tech University in Lubbock and at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls.

The new transfer credit procedure differs substantially from the traditional arrangement -- still followed by most Texas colleges and universities -- in which state schools directly grant credit for biblical studies courses taught by instructors whose salaries are paid by respective denominations.

Dawson noted Baptist involvement in the traditional arrangement has been built upon three guiding principles: church-state separation will be protected; courses will be offered as free electives to students in a non-sectarian manner; and biblical content instructors will realize they are guests at the university, operating at the invitation of the host school.

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"This procedure has served us well for about 60 years, and we deeply appreciate those host schools that wish to continue offering biblical studies courses in the traditional manner," said Jack Greever, director of student work for the convention. "However, some host institutions no longer wish to carry on this traditional relationship. The new Texas Baptist consortium will make available biblical studies courses to students at those schools."

In July, University of Texas system officials announced UT campuses would drop any official connection with Bible courses taught by instructors paid or selected by religious groups. Texas Tech and Midwestern State later followed suit.

A University of Texas system spokesman said at the time the decision stemmed from a legal opinion Texas Attorney General Jim Mattox issued in May ruling state universities may grant credit for religious courses only if the courses are secular in nature, do not advance or inhibit religion and are offered in a manner that avoids excessive entanglement between government and religion.

At a recent hearing before the Texas House Committee on Higher Education, Mattox indicated one way biblical studies courses could pass constitutional muster would be to move the courses under the accreditation umbrella of private schools and then allow students to transfer course credits to state schools.

Under the new Texas Baptist consortium arrangement, a student registering for a biblical studies course will complete an application for admission to the Texas Baptist university of his choice as a special student. Admission is for the single course for purpose of transfer and does not constitute admission to the degree program at that Texas Baptist school. That designated school will be the institution of record for granting credit to the student.

Preliminary indications reveal the transfer-credit biblical studies courses will not be listed in the state schools' catalogs, nor will tables be set up at the schools' central registration areas. Course offerings will be publicized through Baptist Student Unions, and the Baptist Student centers will serve as registration sites for the Bible classes.

A fee will be collected at the time of registration. The fee will be equal to the current semester credit hour cost at the state school that will receive the grades.

Transfer of credit is the responsibility of the student taking the biblical studies course. Each course will be taught by a qualified seminary-trained instructor and will be offered at the Baptist Student center.

"Through this carefully designed cooperative venture, we believe our Texas Baptist institutions have developed one method of offering biblical content courses that will serve students well today and in the future," said Dawson.

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Students Use Skills, Learn
Service In Foot Clinic

F-SSB
By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
12/1/87

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--When a Christian medical student stooped down to wash Louise Coleman's street-weary feet, Coleman learned that she, too, could be a service to others.

She left the Richmond Street Center with her feet clean, toenails trimmed, sores bandaged and a new pair of socks. She also had a new feeling of worth.

The Baptist Student Union at the Medical College of Virginia started the unique foot clinic for street people last February.

Foot ailments is one of the acute problems street people consistently face, said Steve Smith, last year's BSU president.

"He brought the idea back to the BSU. They bought into it and agreed to do it," said Dean Trickett, campus minister for the Medical College and Virginia Commonwealth University campuses in Richmond.

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The students soak the clients' feet in a salt solution, trim toenails, scrape bunions, bandage sores and provide a clean pair of socks. The clinic is open one evening each month.

"It gives them (street people) a new sense of worth for somebody to be willing to stoop down and clean their feet," BSU President Ann Burnes said.

Coleman is one example.

After the students first treated her feet, she returned monthly. She later began helping around the center -- not just on foot clinic night, but as a server for the daily meals offered at the center and at other times. Now she is almost a permanent fixture around the center.

Some clients return to the foot clinic. Others never return. Some aren't willing to allow the students to wash their feet, Burns said.

The students usually don't know what impact they have had on a client during the brief treatment. "We know we have helped them and shared God's love," Burns said.

"They need help, but they respond to kindness because they don't expect to find it," Trickett said. "Street people are not folks most people normally see or care for. People tend to look past street people."

Washing their feet provides close contact with the clients even though the job is sometimes unpleasant. "I've never gotten used to it," Trickett said.

Initially, some of the students wanted to use gloves. "We took them the first time but never used them." The thin latex gloves presented a tremendous wall between the students and clients. "Gloves send a message stronger than anything we could say. Wearing gloves says we are afraid to touch them," Burns said.

"What if they have athlete's foot? What if you get disease from it? What if? What if? What if?" Burns said, noting the questions would be unending. "This is something worthwhile, and God will take care of us."

Burns admitted she was apprehensive the first time the group went: "Now, I look forward to going. It's a way I can be a servant to people who aren't loved very much. God still loves them and it's a way for us to share that love."

The clients ask a lot of questions about why the students are washing feet, she added. "That gives us a chance to explain why we do it. It's a witness and a way to share. Those who go understand what we are doing and what it's about."

For the BSU, the project has provided a sense of community, Burns said. "This is something really worthwhile we can do together."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press

Guatemalan Baptists
Dedicate Radio Station

N-FMB

Baptist Press
12/1/87

LAS CASAS, Guatemala (BP)--Guatemalan Baptists and missionaries dedicated a new shortwave radio station Nov. 20 to broadcast the gospel to more than 100,000 K'ekchi' Indians in northern Guatemala and southern Belize.

Radio K'ekchi' is in the remote town of Las Casas. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board provided funds for equipment and construction of the station's studio. K'ekchi' Baptist Association will pay operating costs and provide staff for the station.

The K'ekchi' people have been responsive to the gospel, missionaries report, and more than 100 churches of K'ekchi' Baptist Association are thriving. K'ekchi' Baptists have dedicated themselves to baptizing 100,000 K'ekchi' people by the end of this century.

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Beyond the station's K'ekchi' programming, said Southern Baptist missionary Mike Owen, "We hope some of the night hours are going to be filled with Spanish." With a 5,000-watt power base, the projected Spanish-language programming could reach as many as 1 million people in the region, according to missionaries.

The station already has faced several obstacles because of equipment importation problems, licensing delays and deadlines and finances. But Guatemalan Baptists hope it will begin broadcasting soon.

"So far, so good, as long as Baptists keep praying," Owen said. "We're walking in faith," and cooperating with the government. "We look forward to going on the air shortly after the first of the year."

Southern Baptist representative David Daniell, a mass media specialist who works in Mexico City, moved to Las Casas recently for a one-year assignment to help Guatemalan Baptists develop Radio K'ekchi'.

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Volunteer Says India Trip
Turned Whole Life Around

F-FMB
By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
12/1/87

TOPEKA, Kan. (BP)--A year and a half later, Jan Davies is still discovering what she learned on a week-long volunteer missions trip she and her husband took to India.

At first, she didn't want to go. It gave her chest pains just to think about the trip. But when she prayed, a small voice in her mind said, "Janice, there is something there I want to teach you that you can't learn here."

For 10 days the Southern Baptist volunteer stared into dirty and destitute faces in Bombay. "It turned my whole life around," says Mrs. Davies, a soft-spoken mother of two who grew up on a farm in the settlement of Soldier, Kan. "The things I thought were important seem so unimportant now. The things I didn't see as important, they became extremely important."

She describes her experience much like other Southern Baptist volunteers who have participated in short-term partnership mission projects with Baptists overseas and have come home with a new perspective that ultimately had an impact on everything around them.

"I've always been the type of person that has never really wanted a lot of company in my home," she says. "It's like, 'My things are my things, and I don't want to share them.'"

But the children in Bombay made an impact on Mrs. Davies, a schoolteacher. Back home she responded by taking in 11 foster children in a nine-month period through an emergency-care program. Many of the children were abused and neglected. She and her husband also have housed three foreign exchange students since the India trip.

Mrs. Davies suddenly saw hell-bound people all around Topeka. Many were relatives. She began telling them the truth about spiritual things. "If I don't tell them, the blood is on my hands when they die," she says. "I am going to have to confront God with that, you know."

"It's such an honor and a privilege now. It's not a chore. And it's not an option anymore."

Thinking back, she knows she learned the value of salvation as she was forced to consider just what she could do for the masses of people around her in India. "When you see such poverty as we saw, your first instinct is to give the people something, a material thing," she says. But instead, it occurred to her she was giving them her most precious possession simply by telling them about Jesus. "They required no more," she says.

"The thing God brought across to me the most was his love for those people -- people who were dirty and had nothing, who lived in little hovels and had rats running all over their church and had open sewers. God saw such worth in them. He died for them, and he impressed on me I could love them because of how much they meant to him."

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Life had been comfortable for Mrs. Davies before her husband, Dave, got excited about foreign missions. She had grown up reading the Bible and considered herself knowledgeable about religion. In fact, she thought her knowledge of the Bible made up for other ways she felt inferior to her husband, who became a Christian at 19.

But in 1984 he flew to Brazil on a volunteer mission trip and left her at home. Davies, who runs the Baskin-Robbins ice cream shop the family owns at the southeastern edge of Topeka, had never intended to be a missions enthusiast. In fact, when he first heard an impassioned plea from his pastor for volunteers to Brazil, he scoffed.

"I said, 'This is stupid. Why don't we just mail these people some money, build them a church, buy them a piano or something?' I tell you, we (in America) have a different idea of what we need. We think if the hymn books are two years old then we need new covers on them, and we tend to think the church needs painting if we haven't done it in two years.

"But in Brazil, these people didn't have hymn books. They had little wooden benches and they sat in the floor. What they needed was people who could come and share the gospel with them to their neighbors and friends."

Davies didn't like strange food and just the thought of flying made him extremely uncomfortable. He had never led anyone to faith in Jesus, and he'd never preached. Bound for Brazil, the plane climbed, but his spirits dropped as he considered his inadequacies. Then, after two weeks of doing all the things he was scared to do, he came home changed.

He was stunned as he compared the living conditions in Brazil to the house he had moved his family into five months earlier. He told his wife they would sell their home and move into something smaller if they were unable to find a way to use it for God's purpose.

The next year he went on another mission trip, to Zambia in southern Africa. During that trip Mrs. Davies found someone to care for her two young children for a time and gave herself to extensive Bible reading and soul-searching prayer. She was beginning to feel something was missing in her life.

She saw things in the book of Jeremiah that started her thinking about her unfaithfulness to God. She also began to see things about her marriage. At first she had thought her husband's new missions zeal was "just another tangent." But she began to understand that her attachment to "houses, clothes, new what-nots -- things, just things" was blocking her understanding of God's plan for them both.

"My quiet time was the pits," she said. "I didn't know how to pray. It was five minutes of read this thing and, 'Oh, dear God, forgive me,' and then let's go."

But at one point, as she sat cross-legged in the middle of her living room floor, she saw a mental picture of herself as a starving little girl wearing tattered clothes with knotted and matted hair. "God said to me, 'Janice, this is how you are spiritually. You're starving. You're fat materially, but you're starving spiritually.'"

Her mind scanned the things around her. She saw nice furniture, a nice home. "He showed me how I was a (spiritual) adulteress, how I ran after all kinds of things but not him." She repented, and a new sensation emerged. "I felt like a locust, you know, when they come out of the shell and they fly away, and they're free. They're free, but they leave this old locust shell behind. That's exactly how I felt."

At his shop, Davies once talked with customers about the weather. Now he shows them a photograph of his trip to Zambia and tells about God. On one occasion Mrs. Davies led an employee into the the back office, where the woman prayed to receive Christ.

This fall she started teaching at Lafayette School, in an area Topekans know as neglected and hardened. She has taught nine years but never to children from such a background. She was afraid when she took the job. But many times as she has been driving and thinking about Lafayette, a voice from within has said, "Jan, this is your Bombay."