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March 2, 1988

88-35

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Simpson Resigns
As Indiana Editor

By Marv Knox

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--David Simpson has resigned as editor of the Indiana Baptist, newsjournal of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, effective March 10.

Simpson announced his resignation during a regularly scheduled meeting of the SCBI executive board Feb. 29 in Indianapolis. He did not disclose his plans, except to say he is moving out of the state. He told Baptist Press he will be a consultant with a privately owned business.

Simpson, 38, has been editor of the weekly newspaper and director of the SCBI communications division since September 1981. For the past 11 months, he also has been an interim "co-adviser" of the convention, supervising its missions division.

His resignation creates the fourth executive vacancy on the Indiana convention staff in the past year. Executive Director-Treasurer R.V. Haygood and Missions Director Glen W. Ray resigned March 20, 1987, in a dispute over use of hunger funds within the state. Church Growth and Ministries Director Lew Reynolds resigned effective the end of last year.

Simpson and Reynolds were named co-advisers following the resignations of Haygood and Ray. Following Reynolds' resignation, he teamed with Evangelism and Stewardship Director James Abernathy to lead the SCBI staff.

In his letter of resignation, Simpson distanced himself from those resignations. "My resignation has no connection directly or indirectly with those given in 1987," he said. "I have nothing to hide and invite a full inquiry by this board if deemed appropriate. I have intentionally tried not to stir controversy this last year and particularly in recent weeks. This would not be healthy for anyone."

In an oral statement to the executive board, he said: "This resignation is precipitated by no outward occasion. From no source have I experienced coercion. ... My departure has nothing to do with the problems experienced this last year. The staff resignations prior to mine are totally unrelated to me.

"Some will undoubtedly think, 'The pressure got to him.' I assure you nothing could be further from the truth."

He also commented on his role as an editor: "I have attempted to be fair and balanced in my presentation of the news. Editorially, I have enjoyed all the freedom a Baptist editor can expect, and I have spoken what I have felt."

Simpson also told Baptist Press his career change has nothing to do with any "moral aberration," family problems or the theological/political controversy within the Southern Baptist Convention. "This is my own decision and desire to do what I am doing," he said.

Simpson has spent his entire full-time professional career in Indiana. Prior to his editorship, he was pastor of two churches in the state. He also served two terms as the convention's second vice president and was chairman of the executive board for one year.

The executive board accepted his resignation with regret, said Chairman Don Moore, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Evansville.

"He was greatly appreciated in our state," Moore said. "He had one of the most influential voices among us and others. He was one of the most respected among staff members that we've had in a long, long time. He's also a very close personal friend."

The executive board believes Simpson's statement that the resignation is not related to the other resignations, Moore added. He also said the board sees "absolutely no need" for any inquiry into Simpson's departure.

Two SCBI staff members were assigned to fill vacancies left by Simpson, Moore said. James Ehrlich, language missions and Baptist Student Union director, will be the interim missions director. Bill Harrison, family ministries director, will be interim adviser to the state paper.

Meanwhile, the search continues for an executive director, he said: "We've had a rather large roster of names as far as prospects for executive director is concerned, and they have been narrowed considerably. We have decided ... to fill some of the other staff positions even while we look for an executive director."

That decision is based on dual needs, he noted: "We want to find the right man, God's man, for the top position. Realizing we don't want our ministries to go waning, we've got to find some staff people."

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N-10

Southern Baptist Leaders
Respond To SBC Presidents

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
3/2/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--Five Southern Baptist leaders from diverse sides of the denomination responded with varying degrees of agreement to a recent news conference conducted by the current and two former presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Adrian P. Rogers, current SBC president and pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., called a news conference Feb. 24 to "clarify the position of the past four presidents" of the SBC. It included 10 affirmations, six "prayerful desires" and five goals for the convention.

He was joined in the conference by Bailey E. Smith, an Atlanta-based evangelist, president 1980-82, and James T. Draper Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, president 1982-84. A third president, Charles F. Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, president 1984-86, concurred with the statement but could not be present because he was ill.

Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, said he "agrees with everything they said," and commented: "My basic impression, having heard the presentation and then read the statement, is that they, as the four most immediate presidents, were trying to clarify their own position and what they felt to be the conservative position as a whole.

"Conservatives have been disparaged and categorized and maligned with charges they are fundamentalist. That seems to be a favorite nomenclature to hang on them because it is a volative and pejorative term. They (the presidents) are trying to cease being identified with the critical, censorious, condemnatory spirit of J. Frank Norris Fundamentalism, and to identify with the mainstream of conservative/evangelicals as reflected by people like Billy Graham."

Lewis, along with the other leaders contacted by Baptist Press, attended the news conference held at the conclusion of the SBC Executive Committee.

Lloyd Elder, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board president, said he discussed his reactions with the three SBC presidents "individually and face-to-face" after the news conference.

He said it is "not so much that I misunderstand them. It is more that I do understand but do not agree with everything they have to say, and I am happy for the proud Baptist right to say so." He added he does not "take much issue" with the statement issued by the four presidents, but disagrees with "the thrust and implications ... of (their) philosophical stance and political methodology. That tends to divide 'conservatives' from 'conservatives' and makes it more difficult to pull together as a family."

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Elder said he was "surprised and disappointed" at the news conference because he had heard such "hopeful reports" about Rogers' purposes for the meeting. Elder said he had heard Rogers:

"... Was going to speak out on behalf of and to all Southern Baptists, not just those who had supported his election. ... Was going to call upon us to quit fussing about divisive issues and to get on with the work of Christ, especially the urgent task of evangelizing the lost.

"... Was going to express his regret about the excessive political activities, caucuses and publications of those who claim to have elected him and the three previous presidents. ... Was going to distance himself from outspoken individuals and excessive organized activities that claim to speak for them on the issues and that continue to polarize our people into political camps. ... (And) was going to affirm the conservative beliefs of the vast number of Southern Baptists by balanced appointments as called for by the Peace Committee report."

Elder also said he had heard Rogers "was going to affirm the conservative biblical theology of his longtime friend Richard Jackson, certainly of Richard's right to receive consideration by fellow Southern Baptists. I had even heard that Adrian and some other 'conservative' leaders could genuinely support Richard's nomination as president because Richard is known by them to be a man of ultra-conservative theology, evangelistic urgency and missionary support and that he is a man of integrity and fairness.

"It seemed to be too much of a political rally with leaders of the 'Conservative Party' clarifying and defending their record since 1979. It was as if a denominational debate was held and the other team was not even invited to show up, let alone speak up."

The SSB president added: "The institutions and agencies of the convention were exhorted to respond to expectations as if they were not. To me, that is unfair. The SSB is doing its best to serve 14.7 million Southern Baptists in 37,000 churches in a very volatile environment. We need encouragement from our elected leaders for doing right, not public exhortations as if we are not following the Baptist Faith and Message statement and the Peace Committee report."

He noted the statement urged the denomination's news service, Baptist Press "to be fair, as if it is not fair. My feeling is when there is less politically excessive activity, it (BP) will report less. But beware of anyone who constantly tries to silence or censure the press."

Elder concluded his remarks on the news conference by saying: "Four fellow Southern Baptists took opportunity to clarify their views, but again it cast a cloud of suspicion on many of us who are just as conservative theologically and are giving our lives toward turning this denomination toward a powerful Kingdom witness.

"I am going to turn my disappointment in that press conference into an active good: to speak directly to these brothers about how we can in fact and in practice live up to our statements; to speak out to fellow Southern Baptists -- not politically, but honestly.

"All across this convention Baptists should be shocked if one single fellow Southern Baptist attempts to silence the freedom I have to think and to pray and to address the issues facing us. I don't want to be exclusive, to speak for or against one party. This whole family -- every Southern Baptist -- is needed in the mighty task we have for our Lord.

"In his name, can we not lay this aside and get on with the work he has called us to do?"

R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, said he agrees with Rogers "and his statement of regret that the denomination has become so politicized. I think that is a tragedy. It is becoming increasingly difficult for a person to express a sincere concern without it being taken politically.

"It is difficult to speak prophetically when everything is filtered through a polarized political position."

He added: "I must confess to being a little confused by some of the things said. They say we have a theological problem, but then say the vast majority of Southern Baptists agree theologically. I don't understand how we can identify the problem as being theological if such a tiny minority is in disagreement."

Parks also said he agrees with Rogers and the other presidents as reacting negatively to the term "fundamentalist" but added: "I think we have lost clarity by the use of the terms 'conservative' and 'moderate' and the implication is that if you do not agree with the majority, then 40 or 45 percent of those who vote at the convention are 'moderates.' In that sense, it is a political term. Basically, I think all Southern Baptists are conservative, and to imply otherwise is wrong."

He also noted Rogers' statement that the Peace Committee report is not intended to be a creedal statement. "We do not want to be creedal, and I think it is difficult to explain what we mean by 'tending toward creedalism,'" he said.

"The more specific detail we use to describe Southern Baptists the more we tend toward creedalism. The more we define the Baptist Faith and Message statement, the more creedal we become.

Two other conservative leaders also responded to the statement.

Paul Pressler, a Houston appeals court judge and regarded as one of the architects of the conservative resurgence, was mentioned by name in the question-and-answer session. Rogers was asked if the leaders were "putting distance" between themselves and other high-visibility conservative leaders.

Rogers said, "This is not an attempt to put distance between us and Paige Patterson and Paul Pressler. ..." He jokingly referred to being interested only in "the written page and the Apostle Paul" and then said, "I thank God for Paige and Paul and all of the people who have been part of the conservative resurgence."

Pressler told Baptist Press he had heard "rumors I was going to be disowned. The news conference did not live up to those who were hoping that. I was very appreciative of the comments Dr. Rogers made concerning me. I didn't feel it was a put down."

He added: "There has been a concerted effort in the rumor mill to try to divide conservatives because we love and appreciate each other and we work together. We do not allow propoganda by the liberals to cause disharmony in our ranks."

Eldridge Miller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Sallisaw, Okla., and an SBC Executive Committee member, represented the Southern Baptist Advocate, which he said is a publication of "advocacy journalism in support of the conservative resurgence."

"I think the news conference helped focus attention back on what the real issue is, which is the nature of Scripture," he said. "I think it was an effort to draw us back to the real issue. It is not women's ordination, not dispensational premillennialism, not right-wing politics. It is centered around what the Bible is."

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Child Care Bill Includes
Church-State Safeguards

By Kathy Palen

N - BJC
Baptist Press
3/2/88

WASHINGTON (BP)--Taking a first step to address the nationwide shortage of childcare services, a panel of the U.S. House of Representatives has begun consideration of a bill to broaden such programs, including those provided by churches.

During a day-long hearing, members of the House Subcommittee on Human Resources heard representatives from religious, educational, medical and labor organizations testify in favor of proposed legislation that would create federal childcare programs and standards.

The Act for Better Child Care Services, H.R. 3660, would provide \$2.5 billion to states in fiscal year 1989, with 75 percent of the funds going to help low- and middle-income families pay for child care. The remaining 25 percent would be used to help states start new childcare services, train workers, develop referral programs for parents and enforce childcare standards.

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Under the proposed legislation, churches would be eligible to receive federal funds for the operation of childcare services. But in the interest of protecting the First Amendment, the bill contains a number of provisions to protect against federal funds being used to advance religion.

A religious organization electing to participate would be required to:

-- Waive its exemptions under federal civil rights laws, including an exemption that allows religious organizations to engage in preferential hiring by favoring their own members.

-- Waive all exemptions pertaining to childcare services under state and local statutes, including exemptions from compliance with licensing and regulatory standards.

-- Hire separate staff members from those employed in any full-time parochial school operated by the organization.

-- Refrain from engaging in "any program or activity that has the purpose or effect of advancing or promoting a particular religion or religion generally."

The legislation also would prohibit religious organizations from using the funds to renovate or improve church buildings or other properties not used solely for secular purposes.

During their testimony, several witnesses mentioned the importance of these church-state provisions.

Mary Hatwood Futrell, president of the National Education Association, said the federal government has a responsibility to assure that childcare legislation is in compliance with constitutional law and state and federal statutes regarding the separation of church and state.

"The NEA has historically been deeply concerned that federal resources not be provided to non-public and sectarian schools," Futrell testified. "We recognize that this legislation would permit public funds to be used by such providers. And we are prepared to accept this as long as Congress assured that none of the funds appropriated for these programs would be used for sectarian purposes or practices or in ways that would have a sectarian effect."

"Moreover, this legislation makes a clear delineation between childcare services and educational programs. We believe this delineation is crucial. Funds appropriated for child care of school-age children must not be used for any services provided to students during the regular school day, for which students would receive academic credit, or that would supplant or duplicate the academic program of any school."

E. Robert Goodkind, chairman of the American Jewish Committee's Family Policy Task Force, alluded to current efforts by some groups to loosen the bill's restrictions on religious organizations. Although he said the committee supports the bill as introduced -- including appropriate language to safeguard church-state separation -- Goodkind said his organization is willing to work with other groups that have raised concerns.

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs General Counsel Oliver S. Thomas, whose organization has taken no position on the new measure, nevertheless cautioned that the safeguards written into the bill must be kept. Without them, he said, "the program would be an open invitation to First Amendment violations."

Thomas added: "This bill is an excellent example of the high price churches pay when they accept government funding. Personally, I can't imagine a church agreeing to give up teaching the Christian faith to its preschoolers in order to qualify for a few thousand dollars in federal aid, but apparently it happens."

Creating Singles Ministry
Can Be Complicated Puzzle

By Terri Lackey

N-SSB

NASHVILLE (BP)--Creating a single-adult ministry, like fitting together puzzle pieces, can be an elementary challenge or a maddening chore, depending on the variety of needs to be met, a singles advocate told ministers in Nashville.

Creating a single-adult ministry where all singles feel comfortable is possible but difficult, said Harold Ivan Smith, a Kansas City, Mo., author and lecturer. Smith, founder of Tear Catchers, a Christian singles, advocacy firm, was the keynote speaker at a mid-February conference for ministers to single adults sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's family ministry department.

Differences in job status, social circles, economic patterns and religious beliefs among single adults make a church's job challenging in planning a ministry to attract the 65 million Americans in that category, Smith said.

Referencing a Gallup Poll that detailed the emerging trends of 'baby boomers,' Smith said single adult types can include the "would-be's," "post evangelicals," "winner blues," "minorities and single women," "professional women" and the "left outs, drop outs, locked outs and opt outs."

Would-be's comprise one-third of the baby-boom generation, born between 1947 and 1964, and were once considered blue-collar workers, Smith said.

"They are now white-collar workers who type America's letters and drive America's trucks," he said of the group he described as not financially strapped nor worry-free. "Consequently, they don't eat gourmet burgers. They eat at McDonald's. And rather than go out to see a movie, they rent one."

Putting would-be's in the same ministry environment as "yuppies" or young urban professionals, "becomes like tiny little pebbles between the sock and the shoe," he said.

Smith cited as an example a church-planned ski trip which the more affluent might think bargain-priced but would-be's couldn't afford.

"In most churches, it's not really the big issues that cause the conflict among single adults, it's the small things," Smith said. "In the early church, the members accepted wisdom, prayer and fasting as ways to solve problems. Today, single adults believe in functional rationalism. If there is a problem, they just attend a seminar about it."

Religion is an important part, "but not the most important part" of a post-evangelical's lifestyle, he said, noting, "Their interest may be high, but their commitment is low."

The winner blues "are the single adults who have it all," he said. "These fast-trackers describe failure as just staying put; not moving up the corporate ladder. Many of these people stay at work because they hate to go home. They deal with their loneliness by becoming workaholics."

Smith said an incredible number of winner blues go through an excruciating mid-life crisis: "Life is going so well, and they suddenly hit the skids. They know something is missing in their lives."

Minorities and single women make up a growing category of single adults with whom churches must learn to deal. Members of this group often find themselves in "economic desperation," he said.

There are about 7.2 million more single women than single men in the United States, evidence enough that many young women will never marry, he said.

The world is full of professional women who sometimes find themselves in the position of being "the other woman," he added.

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Relationships of single adult women with married men at the workplace is escalating, Smith said. A work project, a convention and a strong emotional bond sometimes lead to relationships at work.

Smith described four overall categories of single adults who need special ministry from a church, including the left outs, drop outs, locked outs and opt outs.

"Left outs take no initiative toward the church, and the church views them as unattractive prospects," Smith said. "These are the largely invisible single adults -- the handicapped, poor, migrant workers and those with language barriers."

Drop outs are technically affiliated with a church, but they are not active. "Many times they move from the area and don't become involved in another church," he said.

Locked outs are people whose lifestyles differ from a church's values and traditions: "These include certain ethnic minorities, drug abusers, ex-convicts and even celebrities. They are not just the down-and-out; they include the up-and-out."

Opt outs take an active anti-religious stand, Smith said, adding, "They are secular humanists or garden variety agnostics who run around the lakes on Sunday mornings enjoying nature."

Single-adult ministers who gain a better understanding of what types of single adults are "out there" will better be able to minister to them on the levels they need, he said, noting, "You need to try to reach them on their own turf."

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Music Missions Volunteers
Exceed Requests For Help

By Charles Willis

N-SSB
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3/2/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--Free professional music help is going begging in some areas of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Volunteers who offer short-term help to churches in conjunction with Musicians on Mission workshops thus far have exceeded the number of churches requesting help.

Four hundred volunteers from 25 states have worked in 300 churches since the first Musicians on Mission workshop in Van Nuys, Calif., in 1986, said Fred Kelly, coordinator for the church music department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

"With the exception of the Wichita (Kan.) workshop, where revivals were in progress, we have had 25 to 30 more volunteers at each location than we had requests from churches," Kelly said. "When we don't assign these persons a church, they tend to cancel plans to attend the workshop."

But he said he hopes increased efforts to encourage churches to request needed help will improve the ratio: "Opportunities for volunteers have been limited, based on the number of churches requesting assistance. We don't have a numerical goal, but our desire is simply to get into as many churches as possible with music help."

The concept of the five-year missions emphasis is to obtain assistance for churches that do not have full-time music leadership and to use trained musicians from across the country in one-on-one teaching.

"As Southern Baptists we have probably the greatest corps of trained church music leadership of any denomination," he observed. "If we could get those trained persons where they are needed, that would be the best thing we could do."

More than 1,800 people have attended the conferences in Van Nuys, Calif.; Wichita, Kan.; Baltimore, Md.; Dayton, Ohio; Phoenix, Ariz.; and Des Moines, Iowa.

In addition to providing help in choral and solo work; piano, organ and other instrumental accompaniment; techniques in directing congregational singing; worship planning and even instrument tuning and maintenance, some volunteers have had unusual opportunities.

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Ted Evans, a Mission Service Corps volunteer from Canton, N.C., was called on to play for a wedding in a church where he had gone to work with the youth choir in a town outside of Baltimore.

In another church assigned to him in connection with the Dayton workshop, difficulties with the sound system resulted in Evans' operating the sound equipment while the minister of music sang for a wedding.

David Hottel of Mt. Ararat Baptist Church in Stafford, Va., worked at First Baptist Church of Parker, Ariz., in May 1987 in connection with a workshop. According to Pastor Gary Harr, Hottel not only worked with the choir, but he also critiqued the individual vocalists and instrumentalists.

"He spent about three days with us, and he really gave our choir a lot of work and a lot of confidence, Harr said.

Volunteer choir director Carol Breazzeal asked Hottel for suggestions of Christmas music that would be suitable for the eight- to 10-member choir.

The church subsequently asked Hottel to return to help with the Christmas music. He spent a second week of volunteer work with the choir in October.

Musicians from Friendly Avenue Baptist Church in Greensboro, N.C., accompanied Minister of Music Jim Alley to the workshop in Des Moines. The 14-member handbell choir provided revival music for eight days in two churches. Among the group were piano, organ, violin and cello players.

Musicians on Mission workshops this year are planned in Sudbury, Mass.; Indianapolis; and Beaverton, Ore. Other future sites include Alexandria, Va.; Denver; San Diego; Honolulu; Mechanicsburg, Pa.; and Cincinnati.

Musicians on Mission will culminate in 1991 at PraiSing II, a celebration event to introduce a new "Baptist Hymnal."

Meanwhile, Kelly continues to encourage volunteerism, both organized and independent.

"You don't have to go to another state to be involved as a musician on mission," he said. "You can just go across town to help someone who has needs."

Churches in state conventions where future workshops are planned may contact their state music secretary to request volunteer assistance, Kelly said. People who wish to volunteer music skills should contact their state music secretary or Kelly at the Sunday School Board.

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Baptist 'Expeditors'
Ship Food Worldwide

By Breena Kent Paine

F-10
(NOBTS)

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A team of Baptists ships thousands of tons of food and supplies every year to needy people throughout the world.

They call their operation Missionary Expeditors, and their motto is "serving those who serve him."

Expeditors began 33 years ago when Oscar Braslow, owner of American Import-Export and a member of First Baptist Church of New Orleans, wanted to create a company specializing in forwarding supplies for missionaries and charitable organizations at cut costs.

The business is now run by Jack Fong, a Baptist from Chicago who bought the business from Braslow in 1984. Braslow chose Fong because he wanted Expeditors to "continue being run by a Christian," he told Fong, who hired two students from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary to work with him.

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Surrounded by large maps of areas of the world, seminary students Claude Guillotte and Keith Sargent said their geography knowledge has broadened extensively since they took the job.

"I just sent a shipment to 'Her Highness, the Princess of Tonga,'" said Guillotte, who used the maps to find the tiny island.

Guillotte, from Mobile, Ala., has found a strong tie between charity organizations.

"When I first came, I thought, 'Why are there so many charity organizations?'" he admitted. But he soon found although hundreds of organizations help needy people throughout the world, "very few overlap," and "all of these groups work together."

For example, in a recent shipment of vegetable seed to Uganda, Feed the Children acquired the seed, World Vision paid for the shipping and World Care made the arrangements for distribution in Uganda.

Expediteurs also arranges the shipment of wheat, vegetable oil, oats and similar products which the U.S. government channels through charity organizations because of their contacts for distribution in needy countries. The U.S. government then pays the ocean freighting of these products.

"The good news is when it goes through groups like Food for the Hungry, the gospel goes in with it," said Guillotte. Such Christian organizations teach Bible studies as well as distribute food. "The people come because they're starving to death, not only for bread, but for spiritual bread as well."

Expediteurs also is "sort of a clearing house," said Fong. To send food and supplies to the world's hungry, an organization must raise money, find commodities and identify agents overseas who know how to distribute the products.

"The same organization doesn't always have all three. So, we piece together elements of what would eventually be a whole project," he said. "In everything we do here, we want to have the wisdom to (find) the most economical, the timeliest and the most secure shipping."

As freight forwarders, Expediteurs not only sees the triumphs of hungry people being fed; it sees the tragedies, as well.

For instance, a shipment of TNT pesticide was turned away from a Central American country because the country's authorities saw the brand name and thought it was full of explosives. And when a country in Africa would not receive several tons of corn seed, the country's authorities ordered it burned rather than let Expediteurs ship it to another country.

Even more tragic is the recent kidnapping of a consignee in the Philippines who would clear shipments through customs for a charity organization. Word spread that money was wired to him to clear the shipments, he was taken hostage and his abductors are demanding money for his release. Expediteurs is affected by the event because no one in the Philippines now forwards supplies.

"So you see the strife in this business," said Guillotte. "The media emphasizes the failures, like shipments rotting on the docks. But the large majority of it does go to those who need it," he said. "We need to encourage those people walking the roads feeding the hungry children."

To those who work at Expediteurs, their job is a ministry. Sargent, from Asheville, N.C., said, "We do our very best to get the best prices for missionaries, smooth things over and make it one less thing they'll have to do."

"What makes us different here is that we take a personal interest in each shipment," explained Guillotte. "Most of the people we work with aren't pros. We have to advise them, and we have to instill in them a sense of trust that we can do it."

But Fong feels "how we conduct our business with other agencies is in itself a witness." The company constantly is in contact with people employed by shipping lines and other organizations who are not Christians.

However, the main goal of Missionary Expeditors is to ease the process of transporting supplies for missionaries and charity organizations. And in so doing, the trio is touching the lives of people throughout the world.

"It has to be a call here," said Guillotte. "We could hire someone with experience who's not a Christian, but I don't think it would be good for the business.

"Jesus said you'll always have the poor with you; what that says to me is we have an opportunity to serve ... and there is so much work that needs to be done.

"We try to never lose sight of the fact that we're here to help hungry, hurting people who need the gospel."

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(BP) photos available upon request from New Orleans Seminary.

Vital Statistics Strong For
World Missions Conferences

By Steve Barber

N-CO
(B'hood)

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3/2/88

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--World missions conferences in the Southern Baptist Convention involved more churches and associations in 1987 than in the last 27 years, reported Carlos Cobos, director of the conferences for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

In his annual report to state world missions conferences directors, Cobos said 4,085 Southern Baptist churches in 212 local Baptist associations drew a total attendance of 1,201,282 in 1987.

The number of participating churches and associations was the largest since 1960, when 4,337 churches and 233 associations participated.

The 1987 gains set the stage for a series of simultaneous world missions conferences slated to begin in 1989, Cobos said: "These simultaneous events will involve all of a state convention's churches and associations having conferences during the same week or two-week period. The conventions showing the most interest in the idea now are Alaska, Arkansas, Maryland and Puerto Rico. Other state conventions also are considering this approach."

The state conventions with the largest number of participating churches in 1987 were Mississippi, 352; Georgia and Kentucky, 339 each; Virginia, 291; North Carolina, 273; Tennessee, 270; South Carolina, 230; and Louisiana, 229. Across the convention, 62 percent of all churches participated.

Other highlights of the annual report were 418 people who volunteered for missions during the conferences, 451 professions of faith in Christ and missions receipts of \$1,313,500.

World missions conferences are coordinated by the Brotherhood Commission in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board and state conventions involving associations and churches.

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