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Hearing examines relief
efforts in Ethiopia, Sudan

By Kathy Palen

WASHINGTON (BP)--Recent reports accusing the governments of Ethiopia and the Sudan of deliberately withholding food and relief from starving people for political purposes were the focus of a special hearing held by the House Select Committee on Hunger. The panel also examined U.S. relief efforts in both countries.

Critics of Reagan administration policy toward Ethiopia and the Sudan have claimed that while both countries are guilty of blocking food shipments to their own people, the United States has been more critical of Marxist Ethiopia than pro-Western Sudan.

But two administration spokesmen said although the nations' political situations do differ, the United States is making strong efforts to help the people in both civil war-torn countries.

"We judge the situations in both nations to be severe," testified Kenneth L. Brown, deputy assistant secretary of state. "Furthermore, both risk further deterioration during the next few months. Thus both merit strong continued effort toward remedy. Whereas there are some striking parallels in the two cases, there are some significant differences.

"One of the parallels is that in each case the United States government has been active in seeking realistic and practical solutions to the immediate constraints posed to the movement of food. We have used influence, moral suasion, public statements and private contacts."

Brown said the U.S. government has engaged in active diplomatic dialogue, confronted government officials and prodded other donors and international organizations toward the fullest possible implementation of the goal of feeding hungry people. The United States, he said, also has encouraged political solutions to the nations' conflicts.

"The twin objectives of feeding the people and stopping the wars do go hand-in-hand, but hungry people can't wait," Brown said. "They must eat. So our primary objective has been to devise ways and mechanisms to move and distribute food."

Walter G. Bollinger, deputy assistant administrator for the Agency for International Development's Africa bureau, said an estimated 3.5 million are in need of food in the Sudan, while about 7 million are in need in Ethiopia. Both nations' food emergencies are the result of the dual problems of drought and civil strife, he said.

But Brown and Bollinger both testified the Ethiopian government has been less cooperative with U.S. -- as well as other -- relief efforts. They pointed to the expulsion of foreign relief workers from the country last April as an example of that government's unwillingness to assist its own people.

Still, during the past year the United States has provided food and other aid worth more than \$112 million for famine relief in Ethiopia, Brown said. That money, he explained, has been sent through private voluntary organizations rather than directly to the Ethiopian government.

(The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board operates five feeding centers and several development projects in Ethiopia. The board's work is paid for by Southern Baptists who contribute to its world hunger relief fund.)

The U.S. government also has supplied 5,000 tons of food to the Sudanese during the past six months, Brown testified.

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Ongoing civil strife in both countries still magnifies and complicates the problems of implementing relief programs, Brown and Bollinger agreed. Both men cited numerous examples in which fighting either delayed or completely halted the delivery of food to famine victims.

"We must continue to be active," Brown concluded. "We must continue to work on problems and to reduce barriers to even more effective relief. We must continue to stretch the framework so that even better performance can be achieved. We have to recognize the limitations of what is possible as we seek to enlist rather than alienate leaders in the humanitarian quest. We will reinforce dialogue with leaders, both government and rebel, in the region as we persevere to do our utmost to feed the people."

Robert Parham, interim executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, concurred: "The moral tragedy of the crises in Ethiopia and the Sudan is that hungry children know no politics. Yet the politics of violence threatens millions of people, most of whom are women and children with a lack of food.

"As Southern Baptists prayed for rain during the African hunger crisis of 1985, we need to pray for peace during the hunger crisis of 1988. The Day of Prayer for World Peace on the denomination's calendar on Aug. 7, 1988, is an excellent time for Southern Baptists to focus our prayers for peace on Ethiopia and the Sudan."

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Chaney calls for magnifying
apostolic gift of church planting

By Mark Wingfield

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptists must magnify the apostolic gift of church planting to be successful in evangelism, Charles Chaney said during home missions week at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Chaney, recently elected special assistant to the president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, spoke to church starters each day of the week-long conference.

The New Testament gift of apostleship is the primary missionary gift, and God continues to give Christians that gift today, Chaney said. Furthermore, the primary task of New Testament apostles was church planting, he said.

"We need to be careful to distinguish between the role of the 12 (disciples) and the role of the apostles," he said. "The 12 were eyewitnesses to the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. They do not continue.

"Apostles were those specially called by Christ to be sent on a mission. They do continue," Chaney said. Barnabas is one example of someone the New Testament calls an apostle who was not among Jesus' 12 closest disciples, he said.

Chaney's view on the apostolic gift is the same theological stance Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis has advocated. Lewis has stated this view in speeches across the nation, including messages at several state Baptist conventions and a spring chapel sermon at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Lewis said his view is accepted by many, but not all, New Testament scholars. "This is my opinion and not dogma," he said.

Chaney explained his own views on the apostolic gift were forged 10 years ago while doing an exhaustive study of 1 Corinthians 12-14.

"I believe with all my heart that the apostolic gift continues in the church today," he said. Although it is the primary missionary gift, not everyone called to be a missionary must have this gift, and not everyone who has this gift is a missionary, he said.

Church planting plays a crucial role in evangelizing any area and forms the framework for other kinds of missionary activity, he said.

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Church planters come in various types, Chaney noted. Some may work best in cross-cultural situations, while others do best in mono-cultural settings; some are vocational, and some are bivocational; some are recognized leaders, while some are lay followers; some are male, and some are female.

Chaney said he believes women and men alike have the gift of church planting. However, that does not depart from the views of the Home Mission Board's directors that women should not be pastors with the principle authority in a church, he said.

"Praise God, some women have the apostolic gift," he added. "We need to turn men and women loose to use their gifts."

Likewise, laypeople may not feel called as missionaries but may have the apostolic gift to help start churches, Chaney explained.

The role of church planter must be held up as a worthy calling of the same importance as preaching, teaching and evangelism, he said: "We need to change our reward and recognition system. We need to recognize the planter as well as the waterer and the harvester."

Southern Baptist schools and agencies also must begin to equip church planters just as they do pastors, Chaney said: "About 95 percent of theological education in the Southern Baptist Convention is related to the pastor-teacher. We only have occasional courses in church planting."

He called for seminaries to provide more education from the church planting perspective to help the Home Mission Board get the most capable men and women. Church planting should be made attractive to the very best students, he said.

Also, Southern Baptists at all levels must change their status symbols, Chaney said. The focus should be on the many church planters rather than the few mega-church pastors.

Chaney encouraged church planters at the conference to dream big dreams: "We need churches planted in every racial, ethnic and socio-economic group in every geographical area of this nation. I hope that will become a burden of your life."

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Elder calls for home missions
partnership aimed at local church

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptists must become partners in home missions, striving to reach America with the gospel in the same way the Apostle Paul sought to win the Roman empire for Christ, Lloyd Elder said.

Elder, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, preached to 2,800 people attending home missions week at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

The ministries of Paul and his missionary associates were effective because they cooperated to build up the local church, Elder said. He called on Southern Baptists to return to partnerships that strengthen local churches rather than denominational structures.

Associational, state and national leadership must point their programs toward the local church, he said: "I do not think we can long endure a denominational environment that takes attention away from what God has given the local church to do. We need a denominational network that supports, and does not hinder, the work of the local church."

Local churches, not convention agencies, should be in the headlines, he said, referring to a 10-year theological controversy that has rocked America's largest Protestant denomination.

Elder affirmed the emphasis Southern Baptist Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis is placing on church starting. "We must start new churches," he added. "We will not reach a growing nation with a declining number of churches."

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Church growth practices must be based on biblical revelation and not sociological findings alone, he cautioned, noting, "We need to be very careful about our theology of church growth and be sure we get it from holy Scripture and not simply from what works in a community."

Christians should not change their theology to accommodate a growth technique just because it works, Elder said.

"We need to ask the Lord for a breakthrough in growth," he added, explaining Southern Baptists are barely holding their own with biological and transfer growth.

"It's time with some weeping in our hearts we say, 'God, help us reach the masses who do not have Christian families and are not inside our kind of people,'" he said.

Evangelism and discipleship in the local church must nurture authentic believers, Elder said. He cited the 49 percent of Southern Baptists who are either non-resident or inactive members as "the greatest heresy we're experiencing."

At the beginning of the week, Lewis urged missionaries and church planters not to get discouraged in their difficult task.

Preaching from Psalm 137, he said nothing is more pathetic than when Christians lose their song. The world has never needed to hear the song of the gospel more desperately than now, he insisted.

Throughout the week, conference participants refreshed their spiritual energies and sharpened ministry skills in a variety of classes.

George Worrell, recently elected vice president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., was the conference Bible teacher. Worrell, former evangelism director for Missouri Baptists, substituted for Manley Beasley, evangelist from Euless, Texas, who was ill following surgery.

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Good sponsoring churches provide
missions with more than money

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--It takes more than money to make mission churches grow, a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board leader said.

Mark Clifton, associate director of the board's church starting department, led a conference on how established churches can effectively sponsor a new mission during home missions week at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Churches of all sizes and resources can be good sponsors of mission churches, he said. The key is to pair needs with resources. Some missions need large financial assistance; others require less.

"If a church can't provide any money, we don't need to make them feel like a second-rate sponsor," Clifton said. "You can't say, 'We can't start a church because we don't have any money.'"

"Money never started a church. You don't have to have five acres of property on a prime corner before you can start a church."

Clifton recommended churches sacrificially provide mission churches as much money as possible: "Whatever it costs you, God will provide. Pastor, if you and I don't believe that, we're in the wrong business."

If Southern Baptists wait until they find the perfect sponsoring churches, they'll never start enough mission churches, he said.

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More than money, sponsoring churches can give their missions administration, identification and affirmation, Clifton said.

Administration involves keeping the mission's records and membership rolls, he explained. Identification is the link between the mission and Southern Baptists nationwide.

Affirmation is essential to the mission and doesn't cost any money, Clifton said, noting, "The mission needs to know the sponsoring church will be there if the times get tough."

Clifton also recommended missions and sponsoring churches spell out their relationships in written covenants. A covenant should include how offerings will be handled and who is eligible for membership, he said.

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Guard family priority,
music ministers urged

By Charles Willis

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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Pressures to build bigger and better music programs may cause church music leaders to get their personal priorities out of order, a long-time music minister said at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Loyd Landrum, minister of music at Vineville Baptist Church in Macon, Ga., and a minister of music for more than 30 years, said he believes the increasing expectations of pastors and church members have caused some leaders to place their jobs ahead of their families.

"It's a growing problem," Landrum told participants in the Church Music Leadership Conference. "There is pressure to increase the budget, grow a larger choir, develop an instrumental program, develop a youth choir capable of touring."

Landrum said families should come after God but before career in the order of personal priorities.

"There is an occupational hazard here because we are handling religious things in our jobs," he observed. "All the activity can diminish the personal relationship to God. Handling holy things does not necessarily add to the spiritual growth of the individual."

The shift in priority away from family and toward work happens gradually, he said. "A period of life comes when the marriage isn't quite the priority it was the first couple of years. As a person grows older and comes under the pressures of being at the church and producing, there is a natural shifting away from one priority to another."

Landrum urged music ministers to have a strong, private devotional life, engage in soul-winning and Christian witnessing and to give priority to quality time with their families.

"Protect family time just as you would any other engagement," he said.

He recommended time spent with spouses away from the children and time alone with each individual child.

"For a long time I insisted my children be involved in everything going on at the church," he recalled. "Every other kid I knew had some options." He later concluded that within reason, "Why should my children be any different?"

Many of today's ministers of music "have focused so tight on church music," Landrum concluded. "They have to be careful they don't take work home, the same as with any other individual business person."

The Church Music Leadership Conference is sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church music department.