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NATIONAL OFFICESBC Executive Committee:
901 Commerce #75C
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor**BUREAUS****ATLANTA** Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041**DALLAS** Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 720-0550**NASHVILLE** (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300**RICHMOND** (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151**WASHINGTON** Stan L. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

September 20, 1988

88-150

Food and hope
arrive in Jamaica

By Mike Day

N-CD
(B'hood)

KINGSTON, Jamaica (BP)--Three tons of food and a hint of hope arrived in Kingston, Jamaica, Sept. 17.

The delivery of 6,000 pounds of rice, beans, powdered milk and infant formula represented part of Southern Baptists' initial effort to aid hurricane-stricken Jamaicans. Another planeload was scheduled for Sept. 21.

The food was purchased with hunger relief funds from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, processed by volunteers recruited from Florida Baptist Men and delivered by a Missionary Aviation Fellowship plane.

The initial effort is just a glimpse of things to come. "The Foreign Mission Board wants to help, and all Southern Baptists want to help," said Boyd O'Neal, the mission board's on-site representative. "But we must first develop a plan for helping in the most effective way."

Another three tons of food, blankets, heavy plastic for makeshift roofs, and chainsaws for clearing fallen trees was scheduled to leave Florida Sept. 21, reported Bill Richardson, Foreign Mission Board director for Brazil and the Caribbean. He said he anticipates the first Southern Baptist volunteer teams will go to Jamaica in October.

O'Neal, coordinator for enlisting Southern Baptist volunteers for the Caribbean and Brazil, is in Jamaica to work with the Jamaica Baptist Union in long-term disaster relief efforts. Others involved are Cawley Bolt, executive secretary of the Jamaica Baptist Union; Cameron Byler, national disaster relief coordinator for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission; and two representatives from Florida Baptist Men.

The group will determine strategies to meet needs of victims of Hurricane Gilbert's attack on Jamaica, which left 38 dead and damage estimates near \$40 billion in Jamaican currency, or about \$7.3 billion in U.S. dollars.

"We are not here to tell you what to do," O'Neal told Jamaican leaders in a Sept. 17 meeting of the task force. "We want you to tell us what has happened and how we might help you."

Information from outlying communities has been sketchy and communication limited since Gilbert struck. "Our immediate needs are for food and plastic coverings for damaged roofs," Bolt said. "On-the-spot assessment of damage to our churches should be completed this week. We will then have an idea of our long-term needs."

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Mike Day, an editor at the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, accompanied disaster relief officials to Jamaica.

Gilbert destroys buildings,
but churches' spirit strong

By Mike Day

F-10
(B'hood)

KINGSTON, Jamaica (BP)--Hurricane Gilbert may have devastated the Baptist churches in Jamaica, but not the spirit of Jamaican Baptists.

"We are a people who are not unaccustomed to being afflicted with problems," said Azariah McKenzie, former leader of the Jamaica Baptist Union. "It is part of our life to practice resilience -- to fight back."

Jamaican Baptists began fighting back Sept. 18, just six days after Hurricane Gilbert swept the island east to west, leaving 38 dead and about 80 percent of all Jamaicans homeless.

In Bull Bay, 15 members of Gardener's View Baptist Church met in the roofless remains of their building amidst destroyed furniture and supplies to sing "To God Be the Glory."

Preliminary reports indicate Gardener's View was one of several Baptist churches almost demolished by Gilbert.

"We are here because God has been so good to spare our weakened lives," the worship leader told church members.

"We are here to worship, adore, praise and magnify his wonderful name, to pay tribute to his goodness and greatness and kindness to us. We are here to present ourselves as testimonies of the fact that those who dwell in the secret places of the most high shall abide in the shadow of the Almighty."

The tone of the worship service at Gardener's View was echoed across the stricken island. Members and guests at Bethel Baptist Church, Jamaica's largest, were urged to greet one another with, "It's good to be alive."

The deacon greeter then looked upward and added, "The next best thing to being alive is having a roof over your head."

B.K. Taylor, pastor of Bethel and president of the Jamaican Baptist Union, encouraged church members not to be afraid in the wake of the storm: "If we are dominated by our fears of what tomorrow will bring, we are diverted from being in God's will today. The only answer to the fears of tomorrow is faith in God today."

Jamaican Baptists will have to exercise that kind of faith to recover from Hurricane Gilbert's attack. About 95 percent of Jamaica's 286 Baptist churches sustained damage from Hurricane Gilbert's 160-mile-per-hour winds, said Cawley Bolt, executive secretary of the Jamaica Baptist Union.

Damage ranges from loosened roofing at the church and school at Yallah's Baptist Church to the destruction of Airy Castle Baptist Church in St. Thomas.

Across eastern Jamaica, acre after acre of coconut trees lies flat. Banana trees are folded over like soda straws. One man sitting on the ground was asked where his home was. He pointed to broken bits of concrete slab in the dirt nearby. "That used to be my house," he said.

"In 20 years of disaster work, I have seen damage this severe, but never damage this extensive," said Cameron Byler of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission. "Virtually no one is untouched by this disaster."

"We've found great destruction of crops and damaged buildings," added Boyd O'Neal, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's on-site representative in Jamaica.

Byler, O'Neal and Bob Bishop of Florida Baptist Men are working with Bolt and the Jamaica Baptist Union to assess damages and develop disaster relief strategies for the island.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Foreign missions 'starving,'
Southern Baptist leader warns

By Susan Todd

N-10
(WMMU)

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Almost 76 years ago, Southern Baptist foreign missionary Lottie Moon literally starved to death.

Today, the same thing that happened to Lottie Moon could happen to foreign missions if Southern Baptists do not do something about it, said Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

Weatherford has just returned from a two-week visit to China, including the Shantung Province where Moon lived and worked and ended up giving her life, meal by meal.

"Things aren't much different today from when Lottie Moon was in China," she said. "Those who go and give their lives end up paying, while we who are here in our comfort are not willing to sacrifice in order to simply let them survive."

Moon gave up her means of survival -- her own food and money -- to help the starving people around her. No extra hunger funds were available to help her feed them.

And because the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board was facing tight days financially in the early 1900s, she did not want to add to their burden by asking for more money. She chose to go hungry, instead.

Today, foreign missionaries are curbing their requests because they know the money just is not available to do all they see to do, Weatherford said.

"There are 'Lottie Moons' all over the world today," she said. "That same sacrificial feeling and spirit is being lived out today by hundreds of missionaries. And I think they are making unheard-of sacrifices to share Christ with the world."

Moon's sacrifices of years ago became more vivid to Weatherford as she traced the steps of Southern Baptists' most well-known foreign missionary.

The difficulty of Moon's daily existence became even more real for Weatherford as she traveled by air-conditioned motor coach between Pingdu and Qingdao. Pingdu is the village where Moon last lived, and Qingdao is the port from which she set sail for home. She never made it. She died of starvation on board ship in the Harbor of Kobe, Japan.

"I remembered that Lottie, weighing 50 pounds, was released from the hospital in Pingdu and went by mule cart to Qingdao," Weatherford said.

"The overwhelming feeling I had was that even now, 76 years after she left, it is still a harsh area. I think of what she lived with and through all those years -- and that she had to go by mule cart the way I had gone by air-conditioned motor coach in five hours. I can't imagine how long it took her to go by mule cart."

Southern Baptist missionaries today work in areas just as harsh as Pingdu, she said. And just as in Moon's day, enough money is not available to meet all their needs.

In fact, the Foreign Mission Board's budget has been slashed 12 percent across the board in recent days. Those cuts not only cripple the work of the headquarters staff in Richmond, Va., but also the work of almost 3,900 missionaries around the world.

Southern Baptists have not met the foreign missions offering goal for six years. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. But the 100th anniversary goal of \$84 million is \$14 million more than Southern Baptists gave to the offering in 1987.

Yet, Southern Baptists have reason for hope, Weatherford said: "I think Southern Baptists can awaken. I think we can reach this year's \$84 million goal, and I think we can do it without a great deal of effort."

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But the motivation for giving won't come from "sad stories," Weatherford said. It will only come when Southern Baptists become burdened for the people of the world who don't know Christ.

And it will only come when Southern Baptists get past the convention's theological/political controversy and get on with the cause of missions, she said: "We can't let the controversy determine what our missions giving is going to be. No matter what political side you're on, Christ's mandate to go into all the world is the same."

Tight economical situations are no excuse, either, she said. History shows that Southern Baptists gave the most generously and sacrificially during the days of the Great Depression.

"Southern Baptists can do anything they want to do," she said.

When they do give, they will not be disappointed, she said. Evidence is strong in China that the work done many decades ago has lived on and is now flourishing.

"Our investment of lives and money were not wasted in China. Even when the church as we know it was not visible, it was still there," she said.

During her visit, one pastor rejoiced with her that on the previous day, a Sunday, 60 new believers had been baptized. Similar success stories are being told by other Chinese nationals who have carried on the work started by Moon.

But if Southern Baptists do not come to the rescue of foreign missions now and give the money necessary to support the missionaries and mission causes around the world, foreign missions could face the same fate that Moon faced, Weatherford said. Already, foreign missions is starving, she insisted.

"Lottie Moon is starving again."

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Southern Seminary begins
major campus expansion

By Pat Cole

N-LO
(SBTS)
Baptist Press
9/20/88

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary broke ground Sept. 13 for its largest building project since the Louisville, Ky., school moved to its present campus from a downtown location more than 60 years ago.

Representatives of the seminary administration, faculty, students, alumni and trustees turned the first shovels of dirt during ceremonies that officially began construction on the \$15.9 million Campus Center Complex.

The complex will house comprehensive facilities for physical fitness and wellness, including a gymnasium, natatorium, racquetball courts, exercise rooms, locker facilities and elevated running track.

The campus center, to be built in three phases, also will include a chapel, student cafeteria, conference rooms, banquet and private dining rooms, administrative offices, medical clinic, book store, student commons area and post office.

Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt called the groundbreaking an "auspicious and memorable occasion" in the life of the seminary. The first phase, the largest of the three buildings, will cost about \$8 million and will take about 20 months to complete, he said. The seminary already has about \$10 million in cash and pledges committed to the total project.

The seminary, in keeping with the philosophy of its founder and first president, James P. Boyce, has given less attention to buildings than to other resources for theological education, Honeycutt noted. Boyce believed the seminary should place its priorities in the order of brains, books and bricks, he said.

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"I think that commitment of Boyce has characterized this institution," he observed. "We come at this time to add additional bricks to carry out the programs that are related to this institution."

Preaching professor Raymond Bailey portrayed Boyce in a dramatic monologue during a worship service preceding the groundbreaking ceremony. Bailey noted buildings can be "shrines to the past and the greatness that's gone before us." But, he added, buildings also can be "temples of hope" that are built "in consecration to God for persons who have the hope which is in Jesus Christ."

Southern Seminary, with an enrollment of 3,200 students, is the oldest of the six Southern Baptist seminaries. It was founded in 1859 in Greenville, S.C., and moved to Louisville in 1877.

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Don't hold missionaries
hostages, Lewis urges

By Jim Newton

N-HMB
Baptist Press
9/20/88

ATLANTA (BP)--Attempts to sabotage Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program budget would, in effect, hold hostage 7,500 home and foreign missionaries, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board President Larry L. Lewis said.

"But you do not change the direction of the convention by holding our missionaries hostage," Lewis said in a speech to state Baptist executive directors, Sept. 16.

"Neither can you remedy some perceived flaw by destroying the very mission that brings us (Baptists) together as a people," Lewis said.

Lewis said he is grieved that "we are living in a day when there is now underway an organized effort to sabotage the Cooperative Program."

He was referring to reports from the Southern Baptist Alliance meeting Sept. 8-10 in Nashville when about 700 Baptists took initial steps toward setting up a financial system to support mission causes in addition to, or as an alternative to the SBC Cooperative Program.

During the Alliance meeting, there were repeated references to opposition by Alliance members to financial support of the Home Mission Board because of the board's policies prohibiting aid to churches with women pastors, or to some divorced missionaries or missionaries who speak in tongues.

Lewis said he interpreted the actions of the Alliance as an attempt to sabotage the Cooperative Program. He said it was the first time in SBC history there has been an organized campaign to plead with churches not to give through the Cooperative Program, the denomination's unified budget plan which supports all mission causes.

"We need to stand fast behind the principle that the Cooperative Program is not a line in the budget, but rather is the lifeline to missions," Lewis said.

Stressing that missions is the purpose for which the convention was founded in 1845, Lewis said sabotage of the Cooperative Program would "destroy the very mission that brought us together as a people."

Lewis' comments came at the conclusion of an address to executive directors of state Baptist conventions stressing the importance of a partnership between the Home Mission Board and state conventions in achieving their shared mission objectives.

He listed seven essentials in such a partnership relationship: open communication, joint planning, good administration, efficient operations, mutual respect, unselfish concern, and adequate funds.

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Lewis reported projections indicate the denomination will fail to reach its \$37.5 million Annie Armstrong Offering goal by about \$7 million. The projections indicate income through the special offering for home missions will reach about \$30.4 million at the end of December, an increase of one-half of one percent. It would be the lowest percentage of increase in 18 years.

Lewis said part of the purpose of a partnership relationship between the state conventions and the Home Mission Board is to match resources with needs. "That's why we exist," Lewis said.

"I have a dream that any time, anywhere, there is a need for a Southern Baptist church, we will stand ready to help, and we will have adequate resources to do so," Lewis said.

The Home Mission Board and state conventions must be together in the task of procuring the resources needed to see that missions prosper and our missionaries are adequately taken care of, he said.