



# BAPTIST PRESS

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December 16, 1988

88-200

Missionary appointments down,  
but still on target for goal

By Eric Miller

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--With 31 new Southern Baptist foreign missionaries appointed Dec. 13, total appointments came to 358 for 1988, compared to 407 in 1987 -- a 12 percent decrease.

Despite the drop in missionary appointments for the year, Southern Baptists still can reach their goal of 5,600 missionaries in 125 countries by the year 2000, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board statistician predicted.

But it's going to be "very, very close," said Jim Slack, a missionary to the Philippines and scholar-in-residence at the board. Southern Baptists might miss the goal if the appointment rate slows much more, he added. However, with the higher percentages of appointments gained over the last 18 years, especially the last eight, Southern Baptists still are on target, he said.

"We are naturally disappointed that appointments in 1988 fell below 400 for the first time in four years," said Harlan Spurgeon, vice president for mission management and personnel.

Yet appointing 358 people to missionary service in one year is a high achievement, Spurgeon noted, adding, "A drop in appointments in one year is not uncommon, and the factors are not always identifiable."

"Traditionally, we've seen occasional blips in our curve of appointment of missionaries," said FMB President R. Keith Parks. "We think this is not a trend, because the number of people we're dealing with continues to remain at a very high level. We really think we'll be back up next year."

Southern Baptists should not stop praying for the appointment of new missionaries because of the convention's "financial crunch," Parks said. "We believe that the sending of missionaries will generate support, and we desperately need more missionaries."

The Southern Baptist Convention's theological/political controversy is "sometimes discussed among candidates," Parks said. However, "we don't have any indication that it has had a measurable impact on our appointments at this point."

A focus only on 1988 in comparison to the last three or four years can be seen as negative, said Tim Brendle, associate vice president for mission personnel, referring to the 429 appointments in 1985, 411 in 1986 and 407 in 1987. "But if you back up and take a 10-year look back and look at the next decade, then we're very well on track," he added.

Annual missionary appointments totaled 247 in 1968 and climbed to 350 in 1978. The number topped 400 for the first time in 1982, with 406 appointments, but it dropped to 357 the next year and 343 in 1984.

"Missionaries do not come for appointment by accident," Brendle said. "It takes a deliberate effort on the part of the board, on the part of Southern Baptists in their praying, supporting, giving and their creating that environment in which those who would offer themselves for missions are clearly aware that Southern Baptists are still a missions people."

"If that is called into question at any point, then that's the most serious threat to the appointment of missionaries that we would have."

Missionaries to 'ride circuit'  
in southern Asian countries

By Marty Croll

BANGKOK, Thailand (BP)--Four Southern Baptist missionary couples will adopt an itinerant ministry similar to the early American "circuit riders" in order to enter limited-access Asian nations and help Christians there.

Three of the missionary couples most recently have worked in Indonesia, which has closed its doors to most missionaries with 10 or more years of experience in the country. The fourth, Bob and Margie Wakefield, have been traveling throughout southern Asia helping to equip local Christian leaders.

In December, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees officially formed the Southern Asia and Pacific Itinerant Mission, separate from its other geographically based mission organizations. This mission is different; these missionaries have no home.

They will travel a circuit between several southern Asian nations where governments have begun to curtail traditional missionary work. "Without this limited presence in these countries, we wouldn't have people available to train pastors and lay leaders, coordinate evangelism and church-growth projects, and provide resources such as media-type tools," said Jerry Rankin, director for Southern Asia and the Pacific. The new work promises to be exhausting, and it requires missionaries willing to pay the price, Rankin said.

"We came out of India recently, and we were tired," wrote Bob Wakefield. "We had been ill and constantly on the move, eating bad food, riding all night on noisy buses and traveling on bad roads, arriving at our destinations just in time for our meetings to begin. We slept wherever we could, occasionally resting on mats placed on the floor of little mud church buildings.

"In addition to being sick and tired, we were suffering from a severe case of loneliness," but, "the people we meet and serve ... see us as spiritual giants, warriors of God's elite army."

The idea for the new mission evolved from a project called National Indian Ministries, which the Foreign Mission Board set up in 1982 to help Baptists in other parts of India besides Bangalore, the one southern city where missionaries lived. Volunteers and personnel assigned to other countries came to work on a temporary basis with Indian Baptists.

But their visits were sporadic and defied long-term planning, said Rankin, who directed the work for a time from a base in Bangkok, Thailand: "We feel like that was a very successful plan, but it had these limitations. That's why we're moving to full-time assignments in this category of work. The other way was somewhat unreliable."

Rankin foresees a dire need for such strategies if Southern Baptists are to reach southern Asia for Jesus Christ. "We face an awesome challenge in the task of evangelization due to the population of the countries in the area and visa restrictions being imposed on missionaries," he told Foreign Mission Board trustees in December.

The population exceeds 1.4 billion in the 15 countries of the region where Southern Baptist missionaries work. "But there are 40 countries in the area with absolutely no missionary presence," Rankin said. "We see this new itinerant mission as a kind of task force that would be able to go in, survey and research, and identify if there are any groups in a country we can network with, to meet their needs somehow."

The director of the new mission will be Clyde Meador of Albuquerque, N.M., who worked with his wife, Elaine, in Indonesia for 14 years. Most recently Meador, a theological educator, was mission chairman in Indonesia. But government officials told him, like others, his visa would no longer be renewed.

The two other missionary couples, Von and Marge Worten and Jim and Carolyn McAtee, were involved in starting churches in Indonesia. The Wortens are from Pawhuska, Okla., and Phoenix, Ariz., respectively; the McAtees are from Jackson, Miss. The Wakefields are from Hartville and Waynesville, Mo., respectively.

Judge decides Armstrong  
Amendment unconstitutional

By Kathy Palen

WASHINGTON (BP)--A federal judge has ruled Congress' attempt to force the District of Columbia government to amend its human rights statute is unconstitutional.

In October, Congress enacted legislation -- known as the Armstrong amendment -- requiring the D.C. City Council to allow religious schools to discriminate against homosexuals. Failure to do so would have resulted in the loss of all the district's \$3.2 billion in funding.

U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth held the law placed an unconstitutional burden on the council members' free speech.

"Congress may at any time exercise its authority as the legislature, but that exercise of authority must be constitutional," wrote Lamberth, who said he was not persuaded that authority is broad enough "to permit Congress to create an elected city council, accountable to its electors, and then force the council members to vote in accordance with Congress' dictates."

The Armstrong amendment came in response to a D.C. Court of Appeals decision that held the D.C. Human Rights Act required Georgetown University -- a Jesuit institution -- to provide facilities and services to gay student groups.

The legislation, which was attached to the D.C. appropriations bill, gave the district's government until Dec. 31 to adopt language making it legal for a religious educational institution to deny funding, services or facilities to "any person or persons that are organized for, or engaged in, promoting, encouraging or condoning any homosexual act, lifestyle, orientation or belief."

All 13 council members joined in the suit against the federal government. The council members argued the law coerced political speech; effected an unconstitutional taking of district funds; discriminated among religions; and violated speech and associational rights of district residents.

"No one disputes that Congress could have enacted the amendment themselves," Lamberth wrote. "Congress' only arguable interest is in accommodating the free exercise of religion through causing the amendment to be adopted; the Armstrong amendment, however, plainly accomplishes this purpose through the most burdensome means."

The judge noted his decision was based solely on the free-speech question and expressed no opinion on the substantive constitutionality of the proposed amendment to the Human Rights Act.

"The court did not object to what Congress did but rather to how it did it," said Oliver S. Thomas, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs general counsel. "Congress is free to exempt religious organizations from the district's gay rights law, but it may not coerce the district government into taking such action."

"The obvious solution is for the law's sponsor to introduce a straightforward exemption that is not linked to an appropriations bill."

The sponsor, Sen. William L. Armstrong, R-Colo., announced he has asked the U.S. Justice Department to appeal the ruling all the way to the Supreme Court if necessary. Other lawmakers have indicated they will introduce new legislation should the court ruling stand.

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CORRECTION: Please correct the second paragraph in the 12/12/88 BP article titled "Journeyman stint yields missionary career of concern" to reflect that Pegram is from Joppa, Md.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

Evangelical leaders to try again  
for unified worldwide efforts

By Art Toalston

SINGAPORE (BP)--One hundred years and six months ago, evangelical leaders met in London to coordinate their efforts to spread the Christian message throughout the world by the year 1900.

They made speeches but reached no clear decisions, and ultimately achieved no strengthening of world evangelization efforts.

Today world evangelical leaders are trying again. A pivotal juncture will be the Global Consultation on World Evangelization by AD 2000 and Beyond, scheduled for Jan. 5-8 in Singapore.

Each of 300-plus evangelical leaders expected to attend the consultation is affiliated with a denomination or organization planning to help evangelize the world by the year 2000. Their plans, however, are largely independent of each other, observers have noted.

No single group is sponsoring the consultation. Its organizers include people affiliated with such denominations as the Southern Baptist Convention and the Evangelical Churches of West Africa and such organizations as the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Campus Crusade for Christ and World Vision International.

Third World evangelicals will comprise more than half the participants, said Thomas Wang of Hong Kong, chairman of the consultation's program planning committee. Wang, a native of China, is international director of the Lausanne Committee.

Planning for the meeting began in May and from the start, Wang said: "We hoped, we prayed that this movement will have an international ownership. We look forward to a real cross-pollination" between evangelical leaders in the West and the Third World.

In the past, the Third World "has been mainly on the receiving end," Wang acknowledged. But now Third World Christians are "coming into maturity, maturity of a worldwide vision and a sense of responsibility to be a meaningful part of fulfilling the Great Commission." A number of noteworthy evangelistic plans have been initiated in the Third World, Wang said.

Consultation organizers hesitated to make predictions about what will result from such a broad-based gathering. But they have taken steps to provide the participants with possible options for specific decisions.

A team of 15 missiologists has drafted a 50-page working document listing 104 options that will be discussed during the four-day meeting. The establishment of an AD 2000 Global Task Force, staffed by representatives from various Christian denominations or organizations, is one such option.

The task force's role would be to mobilize networks of Christian groups to tackle the varied dimensions of world evangelization. And it could work to encourage and assist evangelistic movements on local, national or continental levels.

Another resource being distributed to consultation participants is a new book, "Seven Hundred Plans to Evangelize the World" -- published by New Hope Press of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union -- by David Barrett, an Anglican missions researcher, and James Reapsome, editor of Evangelical Missions Quarterly in Wheaton, Ill. Barrett has been based at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., since 1985.

The book sounds a caution to missions leaders: of the 788 plans chronicled by Barrett and Reapsome, 534 have passed off the scene or are "clearly in the decaying process."

The authors also list more than 300 reasons why such plans fail, most of which involve "internal problems within the church and the Christian world." Christians cannot blame external circumstances for their failure to evangelize the world, Barrett and Reapsome said.

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The Singapore consultation's focus on world evangelization, Wang said, differentiates it from the Lausanne Committee's second International Congress on World Evangelization to be held next July in Manila. In addition to discussions of the AD 2000 emphasis, the Lausanne event will stimulate fellowship among the 4,000 participants and focus on a broader range of issues.

"Whatever happens at the January consultation will enrich and strengthen the July congress," Wang said. "These two complement each other. It's like a two-stage rocket."

Use of AD 2000 terminology is not a statement of a particular end-times view, consultation organizers pointed out. The words, "and Beyond," in the title "mean that we should keep on evangelizing, because there will be new births, new generations if the Lord tarries," Wang said.

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Southwestern Seminary professor  
Virtus Gideon dies at 61

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Virtus Gideon, professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, died Dec. 14 following a heart attack. He was 61.

A native of Winters, Texas, Gideon was known for his work in translating the Gospel of Mark for the New King James Version of the Bible.

He was also author of "Luke: A Study Guide Commentary" and "A Greek Grammar of the New Testament: A Workbook Approach," which was used widely in seminaries and colleges.

He graduated from Hardin-Simmons University and Southwestern Seminary, where he received his master's and doctor's degrees.

Gideon taught at Hardin-Simmons from 1954 to 1957, when he joined the faculty at Southwestern Seminary.

At the seminary, he directed doctoral dissertations and projects for doctor of philosophy students. Gideon was chairman of the New Testament department in 1987-88.

John Newport, vice president for academic affairs and provost, called Gideon a "practical biblical scholar" noted for his personal devotion to students. "He spent a lot of time in conferences with students, and he had them in his home," Newport said.

Newport said Gideon "played a vital role in the development of the doctorate of ministry program at Southwestern."

"He was also very effective in our off-campus program," Newport said. "He was concerned that these students have the opportunity for a quality education without leaving their homes."

Gideon is survived by his wife, Imogene; two sons, Olan Milligan of Nashville and T.W. Milligan of Lubbock, Texas; a daughter, Cathy Harris of Red Oak, Texas.

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Disaster relief conferees  
urged to add 'missing 'R''

By Steve Barber

Baptist Press  
12/16/88

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist disaster relief workers from throughout the country received praise for their program of disaster response, relief and recovery but were urged to "add the missing 'R'" -- reconciliation -- during a Dec. 8-10 conference in Memphis, Tenn.

John LaNoue, associate director of Brotherhood for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, told 150 men and women from 17 states attending the National Disaster Relief Conference that their ultimate goal should be spiritual reconciliation of disaster victims to God through Jesus Christ.

"It's easy to become task-oriented at a disaster site and forget the main reason we are there," LaNoue said, adding that disaster relief volunteers should receive training as "advocate counselors" to serve as witness, "sharer," and advocate for individual victims.

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The idea for these counselors came to LaNoue from on-site experience.

As a general rule, far more people were being converted to faith in Christ during disaster relief efforts in foreign countries than in the United States, LaNoue discovered. This was because a group of translators -- not the core disaster crew -- spent a great deal of time with the victims when they were not translating. "These translators became advocates for the victims as well as instruments of communication and reconciliation," he explained.

LaNoue urged local churches and associations to maintain a pool of counselors to serve during local tragedies, such as house fires and accidents, and to be prepared for major calamities, should they occur in the area.

Conferees also were affirmed in their work and described as co-creators with God by Glenn G. Davis, a Southern Baptist minister who is a crisis counselor for the Forsyth County Sheriff's Department in Winston-Salem, N.C.

"There is most assuredly a biblical basis for why we help," Davis said. "We serve God by finding a way to help people who are hurting, by taking on responsibility instead of just 'avoiding being bad,' and by following up words with deeds so others will know us as Christ's disciples."

The weekend conference was replete with testimonies of how deeds of disaster relief volunteers served as a basis for witnessing and a vehicle for conversion to faith in Christ.

At times, the mere example of workers was enough, as in San Fernando, Mexico, following Hurricane Gilbert last October.

The Texas Baptist Men's crew had been feeding several thousand victims daily, but little verbal communication was taking place. The following Sunday, however, the small local Baptist church was jammed, and 35 adults received Christ as savior.

When asked to give a testimony, each one referred to the disaster team. One said, "It was the lives of these men who lived among us and helped us that made us want to know the God that they know."

Other conference activities included a parking-lot demonstration of disaster feeding units from seven states, discussions on networking with other relief agencies and Southern Baptist associations, and training in mass-feeding techniques from the American Red Cross.

Southern Baptist disaster relief response by volunteers is coordinated by the convention's Brotherhood Commission in conjunction with state Southern Baptist conventions.