

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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September 26, 1989

89-138

Southern Baptists sending food,  
supplies, volunteers to Caribbean

By Mary E. Speidel

N-FMB

PLYMOUTH, Montserrat (BP)--Southern Baptists are sending emergency food and supplies to Montserrat and several other Caribbean islands hit by Hurricane Hugo.

Montserrat, in the Leeward Islands, was left in shambles when Hugo ripped through the area Sept. 16 and 17. A hospital, Baptist church and parsonage were destroyed on the island, said Bill Damon, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's associate director for Brazil and the Caribbean. About 90 percent of the island's 13,000 people were left homeless, but "the greatest need there is food," he said.

"Montserrat has been self-sufficient food-wise, but all of the crops have been destroyed," said Damon. "It will literally take years for them to get back to producing enough of their own food."

The Foreign Mission Board is sending rice, beans, canned meat, powdered milk, baby food, candles, propane lanterns and cooking oil along with four electric generators and eight chain saws. The air freight shipment was expected to go Sept. 29 to the nearby island of Antigua. There missionary John Hamilton of Decatur, Ala., will coordinate distribution to Montserrat.

Southern Baptist missionaries do not live on Montserrat, but missionaries on nearby islands are working with a Baptist congregation there, Damon said.

In addition to the initial relief, the mission board is coordinating a weekly shipment of food from New Orleans to Antigua and Guadeloupe.

The shipment to Antigua also will be distributed to nearby islands, said Damon. Southern Baptist missionaries Al Gary of Lubbock, Texas, and Dan O'Dell of Snowville, Va., will coordinate food distribution on Guadeloupe.

In the Caribbean, Hugo damaged the homes of some 62,000 people, according to American Red Cross reports. "What Hugo did partially to Charleston, Hugo did completely to some of the islands in the Caribbean," Damon said.

Southern Baptist churches and state conventions wanting to donate food should collect rice, beans, canned meat, powdered milk, baby food and cooking oil in cans or plastic containers, said Damon. Clothing is not being requested, he said.

The food should be shipped to KMA Enterprises, Napoleon and River Building, J-Cube 9, New Orleans, La. 70175. Donations should be designated for Foreign Mission Board/Brotherhood Disaster Relief for Antigua/Guadeloupe.

As food shipments go to the Caribbean, the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission said, volunteer disaster relief teams are preparing to do construction, electrical and general clean-up on the islands.

The Brotherhood departments of state Baptist conventions are helping to coordinate volunteer teams. Brotherhood volunteers also are expected to help in food distribution efforts.

A Georgia Baptist disaster relief team arrived Sept. 25 in Point-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe, where four Baptist churches were destroyed. Coordinator of that team is Stanley Hill, a layman from Harmony Hall Baptist Church in Gainesville, Ga. The 10 volunteers are from Gainesville and Santee, Ga.

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Volunteer teams also are headed to five other islands -- Saba, St. Eustatius, Antigua, St. Kitts and Nevis.

In response to aid received last year after Hurricane Gilbert, the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship will send volunteers to Nevis. Coordinator of that effort is Azariah McKenzie of Kingston, Jamaica, executive secretary of the fellowship, organized in 1976 to promote cooperation and fellowship among Caribbean Baptists. Most of the volunteers are expected to be from Jamaica.

Some 20 volunteers from Rehoboth Baptist Association in Centerville, Ga., will spend Oct. 1-7 on Saba, an island in the Netherlands Antilles. In addition to general clean-up and construction, they will help repair the house of a Southern Baptist journeyman couple who work on the island, Bill and Julena Mounce of Somerset, Ky.

A volunteer team of six from Birmingham, Ala., were to go to St. Eustatius Sept. 29-Oct. 8. The volunteers are from Lakeside Baptist Church and Crestway Baptist Church in Birmingham. The volunteers are members of Carpenters for Christ, a Christian construction team in Alabama, said team leader Tom Gachet, an engineer from Lakeside church. "In a matter of a few hours, we were able to round up enough team members to go," he said.

Teams from Georgia and Alabama are expected to work in Antigua. Volunteers from First Baptist Church of Fitzgerald, Ga., will go Oct. 7-14. The Alabama group coordinator is Mac Johnson, former director of of the Brotherhood department for the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

Teams from Hollywood, Fla., and Gentry, Ark., also are expected to go to St. Kitts.

As these volunteers complete their assignments, mission board officials hope to send follow-up teams to Guadeloupe and Antigua.

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Baptist volunteers helping restore  
order to lives in South Carolina

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

Baptist Press  
9/26/89

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)--In the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo, Southern Baptist volunteers found disaster in the faces of the hungry and homeless.

"You look at these people's faces and you see a disaster. In their faces you can see more disaster than in the broken trees," said James Shamblin, a volunteer with the Baptist Men organization from Jackson, Miss.

Shamblin and nine other men from Mississippi manned their state Baptist convention's disaster relief unit at Charleston Heights Baptist Church during the weekend following the hurricane and were to be replaced with a fresh crew Sept. 26.

Mississippi was one of 11 states sending disaster relief units to South Carolina after Hugo hit the Atlantic coast near Charleston early Sept. 22.

By Sept. 25, Southern Baptists were operating 13 feeding stations along the coast from Charleston to Myrtle Beach and in rural communities as far as 50 miles inland. By that evening, they had served 30,020 meals during the first three days after the tragedy.

Charleston Heights, where the Mississippi unit was stationed, is a transitional community. Hundreds of poor people who live near the church were left nearly destitute by the storm.

In middle- and upper-class neighborhoods, hurricane damage may be a temporary inconvenience, Shamblin noted. But in poorer neighborhoods, "it will affect these people for the balance of their lives."

"Some of these things will never be replaced," he said of the damaged roofs and blown-out windows. "These people don't have resources."

Shamblin, a businessman who had triple bypass surgery last summer, said he traveled the 650 miles from Mississippi to South Carolina because of a biblical mandate to help people in need.

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"I love children, so I came down here to give them a cup of water or that Kool Aid," he said, pointing to a large jug of red fruit punch in the disaster unit's mobile serving line.

"I like to see them smile. I want to come and share and put joy in their chaos for a brief moment."

The thousands of fallen trees and leaky roofs, the hundreds of damaged houses and blocked streets revealed only a small part of the trauma South Carolina's hurricane victims faced. Whether poor or rich, all were affected by the common inconveniences brought about by Hugo's visit -- no electricity and no water.

"Our biggest problems now are electricity and water," said David Brien, director of missions for Screven Baptist Association in Summerville, S.C. "In some areas, it's going to be three weeks before they get power back."

With no means of storing perishable food and with limited abilities to cook, items such as ice and non-perishables became prized commodities. Across the street from the Screven Association office, a National Guardsman stood watch at a Wal-Mart while a few people at a time were allowed to roam the darkened aisles for necessities.

By the morning of Sept. 25, church members began bringing ice and food supplies to the associational office, where volunteers sorted the goods and doled them out free to people who had need.

Six miles down the highway, South Carolina Baptist volunteer Hubert Line supervised a bulk-food distribution point set up by the American Red Cross at Baptist College at Charleston.

Although the campus was badly damaged and littered with debris, the gymnasium was converted into a temporary warehouse where food was channelled to the 13 disaster relief units to prepare hot meals.

People who received assistance and witnessed the Southern Baptist effort expressed amazement and appreciation.

Loving Phillips, a longtime Charleston resident who lives near Citadel Square Baptist Church, was astounded to learn that free hot meals were being served there by the Alabama disaster relief unit.

A volunteer who stopped her on the street to ask directions inquired if she had enough to eat. Although her nearly 200-year-old house was not seriously damaged, she had only a can of pork and beans and some asparagus left.

"You mean they'll serve anyone? And for free?" she asked, her expression changing from placid to bright-eyed shock. And she soon departed to tell some friends.

Members of Charleston Heights Baptist Church also were amazed to find the Mississippi disaster relief unit serving two hot meals a day on the church parking lot. Worshippers who ventured out Sunday morning found large chunks of their building's roof twisted on the front steps and resting in trees across the street.

Upon seeing the feeding in the midst of the debris, one church member said: "I did not know our Cooperative Program did all this. This has given me a different view of our Baptist work."

Pastor Bruce Russell, moved to tears in recounting the man's reaction, drew a parallel between the bad results of the storm and the good results of Southern Baptists' unified missions offering.

"The Cooperative Program is just about like this devastation. You have to see it to believe what it does."

Historic FBC, Charleston  
heavily damaged by Hugo

By Mark Wingfield & Joe Westbury

N-HMB

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)--Hurricane Hugo severely damaged dozens of churches in South Carolina, including the mother church of the Southern Baptist Convention, First Baptist Church of Charleston.

The historic congregation is the oldest Baptist church in the South. Although the SBC was formed 181 miles away in Augusta, Ga., First Baptist Church in Charleston and its pastor, Richard Furman, were influential in the process.

The church has met since 1699 on its current site in what is now the Charleston Historic District. The sanctuary was erected in 1822 and still contains most of the original handcrafted woodwork and furnishings. It was designed by Robert Miller, the noted American architect who created the Washington Monument.

However, as Hurricane Hugo swept through town Friday, Sept. 22, the church lost its roof. Subsequent rains flooded the sanctuary and lower levels of several other adjacent structures.

The elaborate pew stalls and other woodwork in the 167-year-old sanctuary are water-soaked and swollen. Church members came Sept. 24 to pull up the ruined carpet.

Chunks of plaster have fallen from the ceiling in several places, including directly over the pipe organ. Minister of Music David Redd said the organ had sustained severe water damage and all hymnals were ruined.

Work crews were scheduled to place a temporary roof on the building Sept. 26, and large machines were being brought in to attempt to remove moisture from the interior.

Damage to other churches remains unknown due to the loss of telephone lines and areas being sealed off to anyone other than homeowners, said Cliff Satterwhite, associate Brotherhood director with the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

Speaking from the state's disaster command center set up at the Baptist Building in Columbia, Satterwhite reported contact with pastors or congregations in the hardest-hit areas of the state is virtually impossible.

"We have a number of churches, at least 50 or 60, which have sustained damage to varying degrees. First Church, Charleston's roof is basically ready to cave in, and Cooper River Baptist Church is extensively damaged," he said.

"Many of the churches we have been able to contact are reporting broken stained glass windows, a lot of damage to their roofs and water damage to their sanctuary interiors. We had a terrible rain storm yesterday and that didn't help things."

"We have been unable to contact any of our churches on the barrier islands, which were the hardest hit. The National Guard is only allowing homeowners onto the islands for 90-minute tours to try to locate their homes.

"People are reporting some houses were moved two blocks from their foundations by the high tides and winds, pieces of homes are being discovered in the marshes, and others simply cease to exist."

Jairy Hunter, president of Baptist College at Charleston, has six large trees in his home and had to relocate his family elsewhere, Satterwhite said.

"Charleston is starting to restore power in some sections of the city, but it is very slow in coming. The water supply is very contaminated and is also being restored; some areas can now use it to bathe with, but people cannot drink or cook with it.

Volunteer work crews will be needed once the damage to the churches can be determined, Satterwhite said. "There aren't many steeples left standing in Charleston these days," he added.

Missionaries get Venezuelan  
visas after lengthy delay

By Robert O'Brien

N-FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Venezuela granted work visas in mid-September to two Southern Baptist missionary couples after a wait of more than a year.

That opens the way for missionaries Calvin and Devra Morris of Atlanta to enter Venezuela. But it comes too late for Mike and Sondra McGinnis of Chattanooga, Tenn., who resigned in July to join an independent mission agency.

Bryan Brasington, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's director for Spanish South America, said he believes work visas will come through soon for missionaries Richard and Susan Hutchens of St. Louis, Mo., and Aiken, S.C., respectively, who applied along with the Morrises last year.

"A lot of people have prayed that the visas would come through," said Betty Law, associate director for the area. Venezuelan work visas, last approved for Southern Baptist missionaries in May 1988, have been difficult to obtain over the years.

Brasington requested cancellation of the McGinnises' visas. Board officials said he did so because the McGinnises have accepted a job with the Atlanta-based agency Ambassadors for Christ International and begun soliciting support funds as that organization requires.

The McGinnises began the visa application process before starting a year of language study in December 1987. They still had not received visas by April of this year. The McGinnises declined to accept assignments the Foreign Mission Board offered in four other countries when hope for Venezuelan visas looked slim.

Another couple who had been on hold, Charles and Karen Oak, accepted an assignment in Spain, but the McGinnises said they "did not feel led of God to accept the options offered." The mission board rejected McGinnis' request to work in Venezuela on tourist visas because Venezuelan lawyers indicated that approach is not legal in their country.

Brasington continued the McGinnises on salary through Sept. 30 for the normal two-month period following resignation, although they announced they would join Ambassadors for Christ International to conduct leadership training seminars in Venezuela and possibly other South American countries. Normally, support ends after a resigned missionary finds another position.

When he resigned, McGinnis said: "It was with a heavy heart and struggle that I came to a decision that it was reasonable for us to resign. But we believe that was God's leadership. The only recourse was for us to continue to wait indefinitely. The board cannot allow that. They cannot just pay a man's salary to sit in the United States, and we didn't want that. We understand the board's policy concerning that, and we received it gladly. We were weary of waiting for something to break."

McGinnis was out of the country and unavailable for comment on the latest developments. Mrs. McGinnis said she felt no further comment was necessary.

McGinnis first drew attention last year when he wrote a letter questioning missionary Michael Willett's theological beliefs. Willett, a seminary professor also assigned to go to Venezuela, later was dismissed by the Foreign Mission Board for "doctrinal ambiguity," particularly regarding the deity, miracles and resurrection of Christ.

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Moody urges students  
to be bold witnesses

By Brenda J. Sanders

N-10  
(MWBTS)

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9/26/89

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Seminararians are preparing to enter the "most important work in the world" and must be bold witnesses for Christ, Jess C. Moody told students at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

"On no campus is any subject more important than biblical theology -- believing in God's word and teaching God's word," said Moody, pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Church in Chatsworth, Calif., formerly First Baptist Church of Van Nuys.

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Moody was guest speaker during the Week of Preaching lecture series at Midwestern Seminary. The series is sponsored annually to provide an opportunity for spiritual renewal and inspiration for seminarians and area guests.

Moody pointed to a number of belief systems spreading through America today that are contrary to the gospel message of salvation through Christ. He urged Christians to be aware of these systems and be prepared to respond to their claims with the word of God.

"Jesus Christ is the only reality there is," Moody said. "Without that knowledge, all other knowledge is non-knowledge. Without the sense of Christ, all other sense is nonsense."

He warned that the "seeds of death" being sown today include the New Age movement, belief in reincarnation, gnosticism, secularism, atheism and the acceptance of counterfeit Christs."

"I'm here to tell you that the gods of this age need to be dealt with," Moody said. "The apostle Paul said, 'Be ready to give an answer for the faith that is within you,' and I want you to know you must be ready."

Christians will be prepared to confront people who maintain the varied belief systems when they take the word of God seriously, Moody continued.

"You Christians who are sucking your thumbs and are afraid to tell the world about Jesus Christ, listen to this: You've got 29,000 more verses of Scripture than they do," he proclaimed. "You have 29,000 proofs of God they don't have.

"Don't be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It will stand the test of the hardest scrutiny. These little hammers have come and gone and have beaten upon the anvil, and the hammers all get worn out, but the anvil still stands. It's still there -- the word of God."

When carried to their ultimate conclusions, Moody said, all sciences, all forms of knowledge and philosophy, all agencies of creativity, point to Jesus Christ.

"The gospel of Christ changes the whole world's question marks into a glorious exclamation point," Moody said. "Jesus Christ, the savior -- as much a man as if he were not God at all, as much God as if he were not man at all -- came, lived and died, and rose again."

Christians must be bold in taking this message to the world, he emphasized: "Give a solid answer to those who question what you believe. Be in that great, glorious battle. That's why God chose you.

"You're going to go through Satan's defenses like a cannonball through a crate of eggs."

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Hardin-Simmons announces  
gifts of \$8.7 million

N- (O  
(Texas)

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9/26/89

ABILENE, Texas (BP)--Hardin-Simmons University has received \$8,720,844, members of the Texas Baptist school's trustee and development boards learned Sept. 15.

The total included a \$3,588,726 gift from the estate of William Buel Irvin and Ollie "Jimmie" Camp Irvin and \$5,132,118 in cash and pledges from trustees and former trustees participating in the HSU Centennial Campaign, announced President Jesse C. Fletcher and Senior Vice President for Advancement Richard M. Styles.

For the year, Hardin-Simmons received a record gift total of \$9.2 million, Styles said. That amount is twice the total for the previous year.

A total of \$500,000 of the Irvin estate gift has made possible the Irvin Chair of Education. The remainder is to be credited to the Centennial Campaign, with a portion of the funds to endow the Irvin School of Education.

The Irvins both were 1921 graduates of Hardin-Simmons and received the John J. Keeter Jr. Alumni Award, the highest honor given to former students, in 1978.

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He was superintendent of schools in four Texas cities, ending his career in Dallas. They were longtime members of First Baptist Church of Dallas. He died in 1985, and she died March 2 of this year.

The trustees and former trustees topped their \$4 million Centennial Campaign goal by more than \$1.1 million.

The trustee program was the first phase of an overall Centennial Campaign effort aimed at raising a base goal of \$15 million and a challenge goal of \$22.5 million.

The university, located in Abilene, will be 100 years old in 1991.

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New SBC hymnal project  
prompts candid letters

By Charles Willis

F-SSB

Baptist Press  
9/26/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--More than 2,000 letters offering suggestions, admonitions and support have filled the church music department's mailbox at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board since a new Baptist hymnal was announced for 1991 publication.

Wesley L. Forbis, editor of "The Baptist Hymnal," and Terry W. York, hymnal project coordinator, say the volume of correspondence has been both gratifying and overwhelming since the new hymnal was announced in 1987. Between them, Forbis and York have answered every piece of correspondence without resorting to form letters.

The number and, in some cases, length of opinions may prove that the hymnal is second only to the Bible in importance in the hearts of Southern Baptists. And, like helping the person who wants a "large-print, pocket-sized Bible," meeting all the customer's needs may be an impossibility.

For every need and opinion, correspondence would indicate, there is a directly opposing need and opinion. While some want only Victorian hymns, others prefer only 1980s compositions. Some wrote to offer goodwill and prayers for success, while others wrote to say something on the order of, "If you do (or don't) use this specific hymn, we won't buy the new hymnal."

Members of the hymnal committee surely could only conclude Southern Baptists are anything but apathetic when they consider to congregational singing.

"I am a seventh-generation Southern Baptist," one wrote, "my roots too deep to change easily to something else. ... I prefer 'thee' and 'thou' and 'ye' in songs, in certain contexts. There is a grace, a reverence and purpose in these that is just gentler and more palatable than the harsh stripped and peeled 'you.' (Has anyone ever used 'y'all' in a hymn?)"

While many expressed support for newer works in the "Baptist Hymnal," 1975 edition, a few hymns came under criticism for failure to stand even a short test of time. One early 1970s hymn in particular, which shall remain nameless, was singled out by several correspondents as already dated.

"Maybe it's just me," observed one church leader, "but can anyone really sing that song with a straight face?"

Others expressed frustration over missing verses or texts altered from earlier hymnals.

"I would like for you, Wesley Forbis, and members of the committee to please add to the hymn 'Were You There,' 'Were you there when he rose up from the grave,' the most important and effective verse of that song," declared one writer. "I cannot imagine serving on a committee of this type and failing to include this verse."

Others have not forgiven previous hymnal committees for removing the word "worm" from Issac Watts' "At the Cross."

One indignant Southern Baptist argued, "If the Lord Jesus, speaking prophetically in the 22nd Psalm could say, 'I am a worm, and no man,' surely I can say with the great poet Issac Watts, 'such a worm as I.'"

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Many letters included lists of desired hymns from the "Broadman Hymnal" of 1940 and the "Baptist Hymnal," 1956 edition. And more than one writer devoted multiple pages to single-spaced, typewritten lists of hymns to exclude.

Some with fewer needs wrote one-sentence letters, such as, "I would very much like to see 'Are Ye Able' put back in our hymnal."

The need for hymns in certain subject areas troubled some Southern Baptists.

"We need more tuneful hymns on the Christian home," one minister of music wrote. "We are singing, 'God, Give Us Christian Homes' to death!"

Hymns and choruses aside, the range of topics covered by interested parties included technical musical matters, indexes, page layout, book bindings and worship aids.

A director of missions expressed himself briefly and clearly when he asked that responsive readings be made longer: "In the last hymnal they were sawed off to almost nothing," he observed.

At the end of a long letter filled with specific suggestions, a music minister acknowledged: "While I know your job in determining the merit of the innumerable suggestions ... will be difficult, I still envy you the task."

"The task" has included countless meetings, as subcommittee members have considered not only letters but also survey forms distributed across the Southern Baptist Convention.

With 17 months remaining until the final product is delivered, the fact 12 large churches have ordered hymnals, sight unseen, indicates anticipation is high.

No doubt many Southern Baptists will find their requests granted when the hymnal debuts in March 1991. Realistically, everyone won't get every wish fulfilled. But as one Southern Baptist concluded a list of preferences: "This is probably more information than you wanted; however, it is just like our U.S. democracy -- at least I have voted."

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Women at Dayspring challenged to  
share faith at home, on the job

By Jennifer Kennedy Dean

Baptist Press  
9/26/89

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptist women attending the Dayspring conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center were challenged to keep the gospel central to their lives as they present a Christian example in the marketplace and the home.

Keynote speaker Anne Graham Lotz, Bible teacher and daughter of evangelist Billy Graham, also urged participants not to let politics or denominational infighting divert their attention from sharing the gospel message.

"If women in the churches would catch fire for the Lord, live in obedience to him and get into his word, they could fan the flame that bursts into a revival fire," Lotz, from Raleigh, N.C., told 1,957 women who attended the national conference.

Stressing the theme of lifestyle evangelism, Lotz encouraged the women to share their faith with individuals they encounter in the workplace, supermarket and neighborhood.

"Evangelism is not something you work up or work at, but the natural overflow of a personal love relationship with God. People should be able to see evidence in our lives of something different and want to know why we live that way," she said.

Her comments in the opening address set the tone for the conference, which was reinforced through a variety of workshops.

Through special-interest conferences and four worship celebrations, the women were trained "to be love in a loveless world and light in a dark place," said Esther Burroughs, conference coordinator and national consultant with women for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

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Dayspring, sponsored by the Home Mission Board, Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, and Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, was designed to "motivate and inspire women to understand their call by God to share their faith in their world," Burroughs said.

Participants attended 55 workshops ranging from how to deal with single parenthood, evangelism with a world view and teamwork in marriage. An additional 20 conference leaders were used throughout the meeting to teach lifestyle witness seminars.

As a result of the seminars, conference planners anticipate the women will have a greater impact on sharing their faith in the upcoming "Here's Hope" simultaneous revivals, Burroughs said. The national revivals, sponsored by the Home Mission Board, will be held March 18-April 29, 1990.

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Build people, not churches,  
SBC building committees told

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
9/26/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--"The church's mission in the world is not to build buildings but to build people into mature, effective disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ," a Southern Baptist leader told participants during the National Church Building Conference Sept. 11-14.

Jimmy D. Edwards, vice president for church programs and services at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, said, "The church building is a tool to help accomplish that purpose."

Edwards, who has been pastor of three churches involved in building programs, said he believes a church building program is "at best a mixed blessing."

"Before launching a building program, I would urge a church to make certain they are making maximum use of the space they have," continued Edwards, who assumes a new position at the board Oct. 1 as vice president for marketing and distribution.

In addition to the positive aspects to building, is "the hard, laborious task of planning" that is only the beginning of work that takes time away from ministry, he said.

"When we speak of building for people, we obviously must consider not only people who are members of the church but people who are prospects," he said. "We must know the new ministries and programs the church plans to implement in the future. Thorough studies should be done to project what the facility needs of the church would be five, 10 or 20 years into the future."

He cited the need to consider age-group and life-situation needs, as well as good stewardship in financing new facilities.

Edwards said positive results of a building program can include:

- The excitement and involvement of people who have been nominally active.
- Significant giving by some who have not contributed regularly to support the ongoing work of the church.
- Enhanced church image and outreach when the community realizes the church is growing.
- Strengthened congregational fellowship.
- Opportunity for emphasis on church doctrine, worship, witnessing and outreach.
- Increased attendance in Sunday school and worship, offerings, baptisms and missions support.

"Let's not kid ourselves," Edwards cautioned. "Simply erecting a building doesn't guarantee any of these things will happen. The building is only a tool that makes it possible to enlarge the scope of our ministry to reach more people for the Lord Jesus Christ."

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Some churches experience a letdown after a new building is completed as though the congregation feels "it's time to take a break," he observed. "They have struggled and labored together, given sacrificially to erect a new building; thus they have achieved their goal.

"But commencement is not the end of anything. It is the beginning."

The National Church Building Conference was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church architecture department, for pastors and lay leaders.

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State university in Missouri plans  
to halt Bible-teaching agreement

By Trennis Henderson

(cc)  
N- mo

Baptist Press  
9/26/89

WARRENSBURG, Mo. (BP)--A threatened lawsuit by the American Civil Liberties Union apparently has prompted officials at Central Missouri State University to abandon a 40-year relationship with the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Since 1949, the convention has paid the salary for a professor to teach religion classes for university credit at the Baptist Student Center near the campus in Warrensburg. At the invitation of college officials, the classes were moved to the university two years ago.

ACLU officials charged that the new relationship violates the principle of church-state separation. They threatened the university with legal action if the relationship continued, according to Associated Press reports.

A recent report indicated that the ACLU files an average of only one out of every 200 suits it threatens to file.

Following the ACLU's charges, university officials announced that religion courses offered through the arrangement would be moved back to the Baptist Student Center. They also indicated the entire relationship with the convention would be severed following the current school year.

The longstanding relationship with the university is one of four such programs conducted under the direction of the convention's student ministries department.

"Our arrangements with our universities on other campuses are different than they are at Warrensburg," said department Director Shirey Williams.

Similar programs at Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, and the University of Missouri in Columbia all feature official contractual agreements, she said: "We don't have a formal written agreement at Warrensburg. It's just been a 40-year tradition that we've done it this way."

David May, the Missouri Baptist Bible teacher at Warrensburg, has held that position for two years. Courses he teaches for university credit include New Testament History and Literature, Old Testament History and Literature, The Life of Christ, The Life and Writings of Paul, The Life and Letters of John, The Hebrew Prophets and Special Projects in Religion. He is teaching four of those seven courses during the current semester.

"The courses are taught from a survey perspective of the subject matter," May explained. "We are careful to make sure we are not teaching religion but are teaching about religion."

The elective courses generally attract about 50 students each semester, he said, noting, he has received no complaints from students that their civil liberties had been violated or that church-state barriers had been crossed as a result of the courses.

"I think in any college or university setting it is important to have courses about religion and the Bible," he emphasized. "It is an important part of our culture and who we are."

As the only professor on campus who teaches religion courses, May noted the program has allowed Missouri Baptists "to provide something that was being provided in no other way."

The courses he is teaching this semester already have been moved to the Baptist Student Center, May said. "The courses will be taught exactly the same," he added, pointing out the only difference will be the classroom location.

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Prior to the decision to relocate the classes and plans to end the current relationship, university officials released a statement regarding the situation.

"Certain questions have been raised about Central Missouri State University's approach to the granting of credit for courses about religion," the statement noted. "Central Missouri State has initiated a careful, methodic review of these courses in accordance to established university procedures. Once the review process is complete, changes deemed appropriate will be made to remove any question of the propriety of the university's approach to granting credit for the study of this important aspect of human civilization."

The following day, a headline in the Kansas City Star declared, "University ends tie with Baptist classes: ACLU argued for separation of church, state." The article quoted university President Ed Elliott as saying: "The question has been raised and answered. I don't want to be known as a college president who stretches the limits."

Williams said she is scheduled to meet with university officials this week to discuss options for the future. Voicing appreciation for "the opportunity the university has given us over the years to make a contribution to religion classes by providing professors," she added, "We're there at their invitation; we're their guests."

Noting that the current decision "is clearly a university action," Williams said: "We have not initiated anything. The convention has never been contacted by the ACLU" concerning the teaching arrangement.

Missouri Baptist Executive Director Don Wideman agreed that the convention has had "an excellent relationship with CMSU and has maintained a good program for a number of years." He added, however, that he is "disappointed that the university has chosen to take this action at this time."

Disagreeing with the perspective of ACLU officials concerning church-state violations, Wideman continued: "We are simply providing a service for those who want to take advantage of it. No one was compelled to take the courses. We're not asking for special privilege or for the establishment of religion."