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AIDS crisis demands that churches
educate, equip, reach out with love

By Linda Lawson

N-SSB

NASHVILLE (BP)--The growing AIDS crisis in the United States presents a challenge to Southern Baptist churches to provide information, equip people for ministry and reach out to hurting people with God's love, according to participants in a two-hour teleconference, "AIDS: Crisis for Church and Family," broadcast live Oct. 8 on the Baptist Telecommunication Network.

The teleconference featured 15 resource people and was jointly sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention Christian Life Commission, Home Mission Board, Woman's Missionary Union and the family ministry, church administration, discipleship training and student ministry departments of the Sunday School Board.

More than 100,000 people in the United States have been diagnosed with AIDS, and more than 50,000 have died, participants said. Also, more than one million Americans are infected with the HIV virus and are at risk for contracting AIDS. There is no medical evidence that people get AIDS from casual contact. AIDS is transmitted almost exclusively through intravenous drug use, through homosexual or heterosexual intercourse with an infected partner or through a transfusion of contaminated blood.

Despite these facts and an increasing level of awareness about AIDS, "there is still a lot of fear about AIDS and a lot of misinformation," said Fred Loper, medical consultant for the Home Mission Board.

Rick Goodgame, a Southern Baptist medical missionary who most recently served in Uganda, said tests were done in that country where people with AIDS were living in homes with 25-30 family members, and only the person with AIDS and that person's sexual partner were infected. "There is good evidence even in situations of poor sanitation and close contact that the AIDS virus is a hard virus to catch," he said.

Education and preparation are needed in developing church policies for preschool care before problems or fears arise, said Mary Holyfield, a member of the Baptist Nursing Fellowship from Jackson, Miss.

"If churches have policies for handling babies so there is no transmission of diarrheal disease or hepatitis A or even respiratory disease, then there is no possibility of the transmission of AIDS," said Goodgame. "All of these other diseases are easily transmitted. If there are barriers to those diseases, then AIDS can't be transmitted."

Morlee Maynard, program and research coordinator in the Sunday School Board's family ministry department, said to prevent the spread of any infectious disease, preschool workers should wash their hands and children's toys with a mixture of one part bleach and 10 parts water. Also, some workers recommend the use of plastic gloves to avoid passing infections from worker to child or vice versa.

In another area, participants agreed teenagers are the age group at highest risk to become involved in activities that could lead to AIDS and that counseling condom use for so-called safe sex is inadequate.

"It seems to me that recommending safe sex -- which basically means recommending condom use among teenagers -- is filled with great danger," said Richard Ross, youth ministry consultant in the Sunday School Board's church administration department. "About all it would take for a teenager to cross over that line (into promiscuity) would be a new belief that church leaders or even parents have given up on them. ... God has the only plan for safe sex, and that is sex within marriage. This may be a time churches can say this better to a society more ready to hear it."

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Youth already involved in sexually promiscuous activities should be helped through Christian counseling, said Ross.

A preventive approach through education with pre-teens and teenagers about the issue of sexuality was advocated by Larry Braidfoot, general counsel for the Christian Life Commission.

"AIDS is forcing us more than ever to find ways to get comfortable with the need to talk about Christian sex education," said Braidfoot.

Joe Stacker, director of the SSB church administration department, said, "Churches are going to have to face the AIDS issue. It will be a high-risk issue" with the potential for division within a congregation regarding redemptive ministry to people with AIDS and with their family members.

Churches that minister to people with AIDS may be charged with being "soft on sin," warned Roy Edgemon, director of the SSB discipleship training department. "However, we must do what Jesus would do, and certainly he would reach out and touch people with his love."

Through multifaceted ministries to people with AIDS and their families, Southern Baptists have a "tremendous opportunity to share in word and deed the love of Christ," said Richard Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission.

Carol Reece, a social worker at Chicago's Cook County Hospital where 22 people have died of AIDS in the past eight weeks, said family members struggle both with the imminent loss of a loved one and the release of family secrets -- that their family member is sick and may be homosexual or a drug user.

"What families are most concerned about is that someone they love is going to die," said Reece. "Most families I deal with are concerned and stick with their family members to the end. I'm very encouraged about that."

However, she noted that many families fear ostracism by their friends and churches. "We are going to be in a lot of trouble if we force families to deal with this individually or alone."

Jim Hightower, pastoral ministry consultant in the SSB church administration department, said Southern Baptists must be equipped to be caring, listening and willing to walk the journey of death with AIDS patients and their families.

For the future, participants agreed that providing information about AIDS and developing ministries with AIDS patients and family members must be a priority.

A videotape of the teleconference may be purchased for \$49.95 by calling the Sunday School Board's toll-free order number, 1-800-458-BSSB.

The Christian Life Commission on Nov. 1 will release four pamphlets -- "AIDS: the Disease," "People with AIDS," "AIDS: Biblical Insights" and "Ministry to People with AIDS." Copies of the set may be obtained by sending one dollar and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the commission, P.O. Box 25266, Nashville, TN 37202-5266.

A national conference on AIDS ministry will be held Feb. 12-13, 1990, in Nashville. Program information is available by writing to the above address.

A book, "AIDS: A Christian Response" by William M. Tillman Jr., will be released in April 1990 by the Sunday School Board's discipleship training and family ministry departments.

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51 conversions reported during
first soul winning conference

By Joe Westbury

N-HMB

Baptist Press
10/10/89

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Southern Baptists' first National Soul Winning Conference resulted in at least 51 professions of faith following a Friday evening neighborhood visitation.

During the three-day meeting, nearly 500 pastors and lay people shared ideas on how to reach communities with the gospel, heard a dozen inspirational messages, and joined 44 Oklahoma City area churches for evangelistic visitation.

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The meeting at Council Road Baptist Church in Bethany was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, which used the event to develop a prototype for future annual conferences.

The 51 conversions were recorded following two hours of knocking on doors as conference goers were linked up with lay people from area churches.

Howard Ramsey, director of the personal evangelism department, said additional professions of faith may be forthcoming since only 34 of 44 participating churches had reported results.

Larry Lewis, president, said the event made a distinct contribution because of the hands-on witnessing experience. "I doubt any soul winning event is worth the time and effort if it doesn't include a field experience," he said.

The visitation was coordinated with Oklahoma churches, which provided a snack dinner for conference participants and area laity.

Following the meal, 229 teams of two or three each fanned out across the metropolitan area and visited in 3,570 homes. Of those contacts, the gospel was presented 467 times, Ramsey said.

Lewis said he wants the board to "carry this conference across the nation to equip more Southern Baptists to be soul winners. I'm disappointed when I visit in churches, review their calendars for the week and see no time for visitation."

In keeping with that commitment, Ramsey announced the next National Soul Winning Conference has been scheduled Sept. 20-22, 1990, at Roswell Street Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta.

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Baptists need more soul winners,
speakers tell conference goers

By Joe Westbury

N-HMB

Baptist Press
10/10/89

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, urge pastors at the first National Soul Winning Conference to make five visits a day at least five days a week and to train their laity in soul winning.

Nearly 500 pastors and lay people attended the three-day meeting at Council Road Baptist Church in suburban Oklahoma City. Lewis was joined by 11 other program personalities, including evangelists Bailey Smith and Freddie Gage and pastor Tom Elliff.

"It should be an indictment against Southern Baptists that every two years the Democrats and Republicans fan out across the nation and knock on as many doors as they can to get a vote for their candidate, but we lack the same fervor," Lewis said.

"We are not filling the biblical mandate to share the gospel to every creature when we place an ad in the paper or a sign in the church yard that says 'Everybody Welcome'."

Lewis, former pastor, sympathized with the hectic schedule which competes for a minister's time. But he said a balanced ministry will always include time for daily personal soul winning.

"Soul winning is more caught than taught. When members of a church see their pastor out in the community, daily making visits, it will encourage them to do likewise," he said.

Smith, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, charged that pastors are more concerned with being introduced as board members of denominational agencies than being soul winners.

"We've chosen our prominence over his (God's) power. Our job is not to stand for an institution but to stand for God's principles," said Smith, who served as president 1980-82

"We don't need big shots in the denomination, we just need folks being saved by the grace of God."

Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., used the platform to defend Smith, a former pastor of the same church, from criticism he has encountered from Baptist pastors. In evangelistic crusades, Smith has come under fire for causing church members to question their conversions, leading to second baptisms.

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"For the past three years my brother-in-law has been criticized because he has challenged Christians to examine their faith. Pastors have complained they are uncomfortable with that because they have to pick up the pieces when the revival is over," Elliff said.

"The reason you have the problem is because most of the people on our church rolls are simply not saved to begin with. They have a simple, cheap believism -- a synthetic gospel -- which they received from other people who were not Christians themselves," he said.

"These people just prayed a prayer and became Christians without any requirements. Following Christ is not just walking down an aisle -- the requirements are rigid.

"The best follow-up program in the world" is for new converts "to be saved to begin with," he added.

Darrell Robinson, vice president of the HMB's evangelism division, said two items are required for a person to be a soul winner -- a love of Jesus and a love of people.

"We need to see everyone we meet as being lost until we are sure of their spiritual condition. Part of our problem is most of us have been saved for so long that we have forgotten what it is like to be lost," he said.

Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga., continued that thought by adding that too many Christians "have gotten over Jesus."

"The reason there is not more rejoicing over souls being saved is because our people are not burdened over lost people going to hell. We have confused reverence with rigormortis in most of our churches.

"A seed in a basket will not produce a harvest. We have the seed of eternal life, but it's in the church. Until we plant it in people's lives we will not reach lost souls in our communities," he said.

Ken Hemphill, pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va., said if Southern Baptists are going to restore life to their Sunday school program, soul winning and evangelism will have to be restored as priorities.

"From 1940 to 1960, when the emphasis was on evangelism, Sunday school grew from 3.5 million to 7 million. But in the past 29 years we have stagnated at 7 million and registered no growth at all.

"Sunday school has ceased to be centered around evangelistic outreach and has become a cerebral experience where people study the Bible but don't do anything with the knowledge. They don't share their faith anymore. As a result, Sunday school -- and our churches and denomination -- is dying from the inside," Hemphill said.

Freddie Gage, longtime Texas evangelist and now director of communications for RAPHA, a Christian drug rehabilitation ministry in Fort Worth, Texas, blamed Baptist state paper editors for taking the denomination's eyes off soul winning.

Gage compared the state papers to the National Enquirer, and repeatedly blasted the publications for dwelling on the denominational controversy at the expense of evangelism.

"You pick up a state paper and it's full of controversy," he said. "That hasn't always been the case.

"If state papers started magnifying soul winning, witnessing and evangelism and people getting saved, it would get our minds off our differences and unify our convention.

"It takes a miracle to get a story about a revival on the front page of a state paper. There are two papers that won't even allow an evangelist to place a paid ad," he charged, without disclosing the names of the papers.

Phil Hunter, state evangelism director for the Missouri Baptist Convention, said one of the biggest mistakes in church architecture was when ministers began preaching from an elevated platform that set them apart from the laity.

That move broadened the division between clergy and lay people that continues to impede the emphasis on soul winning in the 20th century, he added.

"One of the earliest lies by the devil to the church was that only preachers are called to ministry. That lie continues to undermine all we do and prevents us from evangelizing our nation as we should.

"The Reformation supposedly took place a few hundred years ago, but we Protestants still have a lot of Catholicism in us -- we just wear our (clerical) collars on the inside," he charged.

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Cambodia needs healing,
says Baptist aid worker

By Erich Bridges

F-FMB

Baptist Press
10/10/89

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (BP)--The Vietnamese army may be gone, but Khmer Rouge guerrillas still lurk in the shadows of Cambodia's jungles and mountains.

Vietnam withdrew its forces from Cambodia in September -- delivering on its promise to end a decade of military occupation -- despite the collapse of peace talks in Paris aimed at ending the long guerrilla war against Cambodia's Vietnamese-supported government.

Thus began another period of uncertainty for Cambodia's people, who endured genocide, starvation and despair before the fragile recovery of recent days. The uncertainty also affects those who seek to help Cambodia.

"I don't think we'll know what's going to happen in Cambodia until it's too late to do anything about it," said Fred Kauffman, Indochina development specialist for Cooperative Service International, Southern Baptist aid organization. "How strong is the Khmer Rouge? How much will the people resist?"

Observers see two possible scenarios for Cambodia's future. The best: a political settlement of the conflict and a chance for peace after more than 20 years of killing. The worst: bloody civil war and a return to power of the communist Khmer Rouge. The largest of several Cambodian guerrilla factions, the Khmer Rouge was responsible for the deaths of up to 2 million Cambodians by torture, hunger and disease during its 1975-79 reign of terror.

Kauffman, now based in neighboring Thailand, recently returned from a survey of CSI medical projects in Cambodia, where he lived from 1981-85. He found Cambodians outwardly calm but not optimistic.

"I think people are nervous," he said. "They're carrying on with their daily activities as normal, but there are some very big questions for the next six months and the longer-term future. It's going to be a period of testing. People are glad to see the Vietnamese military go; there's no doubt about that. But now it's up to them to resist the Khmer Rouge."

Aid organizations like CSI also will face big questions if guerrillas widen the conflict. For now most guerrilla raids and clashes with government forces remain limited to areas near the Thai-Cambodian border, where non-communist guerrillas claimed several victories after the Vietnamese pullout.

CSI aided Cambodia with emergency rice shipments in the past, but now concentrates on medical and health-care projects initiated by Kauffman's colleague, Marvin Raley, physician and CSI Indochina coordinator. Several of the projects, called RINE (Rehydration, Immunization, Nutrition and Education) centers, help malnourished children. Medical aid has included:

-- Ongoing help for the pediatric ward of the Seventh of January Hospital in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh, including construction and equipment, medicine, a laboratory, library and sanitation. The ward, the second largest pediatric care unit in the country, treats thousands of children.

-- Major construction assistance for the new Oreang Ou district health center in Kampong Cham province, long a site of Khmer Rouge activity. Once construction is completed, Kauffman said, "we'll see if there's potential for (Southern Baptist) medical personnel to be involved there."

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-- Construction materials, equipment and training for the Prey Veng Nursing School in Prey Veng province. The school once trained nurses in an abandoned pagoda; training equipment consisted of a single blackboard. More than 1,000 "killing fields" -- where the Khmer Rouge murdered victims and left them unburied or in shallow graves -- have been found in Prey Veng alone.

CSI hopes to place resident personnel in Cambodia soon to help coordinate assistance projects. "It's very difficult to try to work in Cambodia without living there," acknowledged Kauffman. "Resident representatives could strengthen our programs greatly."

Despite enormous problems, Cambodia has made some progress, he said. The government has abandoned communist collectivization, and farmers can work their own land. More areas like Oreang Ou, site of the new CSI health center, are normally free of guerrilla activity and safe for development, at least for the moment. Basic education -- and the demand for it -- have spread widely.

"It's much better now than it was during the Khmer Rouge years," Kauffman said. "There's no comparison. It's still a planned, single-party state, but there's real family life. There's real religious life in the Buddhist sector, and at least room for maneuvering for Christians. There's private enterprise and ownership of land. There's more openness to the outside world."

What Cambodia needs most is time -- the one thing contending forces seem unwilling to give.

"Cambodia is a deeply wounded country," Kauffman said. "It needs time to heal. It needs stability and peace and a little breathing space, but it just doesn't look like it's going to happen. What awaits it is likely more and deeper wounds."

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Cambodian Christians
freer but still weak

By Erich Bridges

F-FMB

Baptist Press
10/10/89

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (BP)--The Christian community in Cambodia remains tiny and weak, but is working to gain more religious freedom.

About 400 adults and children meet in 15 places of worship scattered throughout the capital of Phnom Penh and the provinces, according to a statement by Cambodian Christian leaders. In addition, these leaders say, there are "many other brothers and sisters who do not yet dare declare their faith."

The Christians' statement was sent to delegates at the Second International Congress on World Evangelization (Lausanne II), held in July in the Philippines. Nine Cambodian Christian representatives sought permission to attend the congress but were denied exit visas.

Cambodian Christians formed a provisional committee in June and asked government leaders for official recognition and the right to hold public worship. Some 25 new believers reportedly have been baptized in recent months, and Christian weddings and funerals have been held.

The Cambodian church -- never strong -- was decimated during the 1975-79 rule of the communist Khmer Rouge, which tried to eradicate religion in the country. The Khmer Rouge killed many religious believers and tore down worship places stone by stone. The regime was overthrown by Vietnam, which backs the current communist government of Cambodia.

"The Christians who survived were very small in number, but they sought each other out in order to meet together to worship the Lord in houses or outside under trees," said the Cambodian Christians' statement. About 210 believers met in four worship places in the months following the Vietnamese invasion in 1979.

The Khmer Rouge and several non-communist guerrilla groups continued to fight the new government. In 1982 many public meetings, including worship services, were banned to "preserve social order," according to the statement. "The activities of the church were brought to a halt. It was forbidden to believe in Christianity, even to the extent of seizing Bibles Meetings were only held in small groups in the houses of some of the Christians."

Conditions improved in 1988, and "the Lord of heaven opened the way for us to worship more freely than before," the Christian leaders said. "Since then the church is still gathering for worship in families, but we dare to gather in larger groups than before.

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"At the present time, even though we have not yet received rights according to the law and have no church building, we may build on the changes in the new constitution of the State of Cambodia, which speaks of a right to religious freedom and a right to meet."

Cambodian Christians also lack Bibles and hymnals, musical instruments and "knowledge of the Word of God for lack of teachers," the statement said.

The leaders asked world Christians to pray that Cambodian believers will be courageous and faithful, that peace will come to Cambodia, and that "the Lord will soften the heart of the government towards us" so officials will grant more religious rights and permission to build churches.

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Doctor won't recover
from Cambodia years

By Erich Bridges

F-FMB

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PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (BP)--Southern Baptist doctor Marvin Raley heals others, but he will never recover from his own experience in Cambodia.

In fact, he does not want to recover. When a person has witnessed the aftermath of hell on earth, memory is a wound. Remembering becomes a responsibility.

The 41-year-old pediatrician from Houston spent three years (1980-83) helping organize and run a children's hospital in Cambodia after the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime. He now coordinates medical and aid projects throughout Indochina for Cooperative Services International the Southern Baptist organization that assists nations where missionaries do not work.

During its 1975-79 rule, Pol Pot's fanatical Khmer Rouge killed as many as 2 million of Cambodia's people and nearly destroyed the psyche of those who survived. With the recent withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge again threatens Cambodia's future.

Few, besides those who experienced it, can imagine the human tragedy Raley and his emaciate Cambodian hospital co-workers faced during those first years after the Vietnamese drove the Khmer Rouge back to the jungles:

-- A child blinded by the explosion that killed her sister after both were forced to be human minesweepers -- a favorite Khmer Rouge use for small children.

-- A 13-year-old boy who weighed 28 pounds.

-- An orphan found on the street, malnourished, anemic, parasite-ridden and holding his intestines in his hands.

"In the first two weeks more than 2,500 patients came," Raley wrote after the hospital opened. "There were the orphans, abysmally malnourished, apathetic, so emotionally deprived as to be vegetative and uncaring of their fate. A familiar litany of medieval plagues came forth: beriberi, tuberculosis, malaria, tetanus, diphtheria, sepsis, hemorrhagic fever, and on and on.

"Even the haunting faces of leprosy came forth in two children in the first week," he continued. "We had been told there was no more leprosy in Cambodia. Pol Pot had an amazingly effective leprosy eradication program. He simply burned the leprosariums and leprosy hospitals to the ground -- with the patients locked within."

Raley watched the suffering of all the survivors especially the children, and did all he could to relieve it. But he had the luxury of being a witness, not a victim -- "just another tourist," he called himself.

He eventually realized the ministry he performed, intense as it was, ultimately proved less effective than the more comprehensive health and development work he now encourages in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

"You can save a child's life, but you have to save it again tomorrow and the day after that if it's hungry," he said, although he admitted his current efforts are more impersonal and often lonely.

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Raley now shuttles between the three Indochinese nations from a base in the Philippines, where he lives with his wife, Judy, and three children. He negotiates with government officials, checks up on projects in progress, visits potential sites for new assistance and continually searches for all-important "counterparts" -- the Vietnamese, Laotian and Khmer colleagues without whom effective work cannot be carried out.

He longs to return to medicine alone, the simple fulfillment of healing children, but not until the right people volunteer to walk through the doors for development work he has opened in Indochina.

"What we need is people with long-term commitments, willing to live in these countries, learn the language, and be a source of friendship and encouragement," he said. "There is a sense of urgency, because we don't know what the political landscape will look like next year. We know we have the opportunity now."

Few people back in Houston picked Raley to pioneer work in Asia, to or become a doctor, or even to reach college. Reared in the tough working-class world of the city's Fifth Ward, he learned hard work and determination from his father, an ex-boxer and construction worker who ran a repair shop.

He learned about Jesus Christ, too, and offered his life to Christ at age 9. He also decided to study medicine and "help people" after seeing a poor child suffering from an untreated, infected open sore. Both commitments were challenged and buffeted often over the years, but he abandoned neither.

Raley married Judy Clark, the daughter of missionaries to Venezuela, while at Houston Baptist University. He competed with "smarter and richer" kids at the University of Texas medical school and completed his pediatric residency at the University of Alabama Children's Hospital in Birmingham. Then he began a rapid career rise at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, becoming one of the youngest assistant professors on record. Material rewards followed.

But Raley began to feel a "deadness of spirit" that approached despair. "Everything turned to gold, but I was terribly unhappy," he recalled. "I was doing all this good work, but it was so dead."

In 1979, a medical colleague walked into Raley's office one day and tossed a newspaper on his desk. The front page showed the ravaged faces of Cambodian war refugees emerging from the jungles on the Thai-Cambodian border. Raley stared at the faces. At that moment his life changed forever, although it took him a while to realize it.

He accompanied a Southern Baptist medical relief team to the border refugee camps and treated desperately ill Cambodians. Despite abysmal conditions, "Why does this feel so right?" he wrote back to Judy. She replied, "Why do I feel the same way?"

When he returned home, Raley became obsessed with images of Khmer children, and with the idea of living in Cambodia itself and doing medical work there. The problem: the Vietnamese-backed government wouldn't allow the Russian Red Cross into Cambodia at the time, much less an American doctor. But he couldn't escape the images. "The accepted theory at USC was that I had a piece of shrapnel in my head" from the relief trip, Raley joked.

Then he learned that the evangelical relief organization World Vision had received permission to help build a children's hospital in Phnom Penh. He got on the phone and within minutes had verbally signed on as a staff physician. The Raleys sold many of their recently accumulated possessions. "I never felt freer," he remembered. Within months he was in Cambodia.

Of the 655 Cambodian doctors who practiced before the Khmer Rouge took over, fewer than 45 were still alive, and some of those were physically or mentally disabled by the terror of life under Pol Pot. A few doctors were struggling to reorganize the health care system. One of them became Raley's colleague at the children's hospital.

Together they trained a staff of other survivors -- inexperienced Cambodian workers still in shock from their own personal tragedies.

Communication barriers were immense to the point of being comic, as Raley described them. He couldn't speak a word of Khmer, and talking was dangerous anyway for an American in a powder-keg political environment. "I couldn't say, 'I like you.' I couldn't say, 'I care about kids.' I couldn't say, 'I'm a Christian.' But those things were said in a more powerful way," Raley affirmed. "The Holy Spirit doesn't need our big mouths. He is quite capable of communicating, even when we cannot utter a word."

By the time he left in 1983, the hospital had treated 8,000 critically ill inpatients and some 350,000 outpatients. He had helped train five Cambodian doctors, eight pediatric nurse practitioners and 130 medical students. He had watched many children recover -- and 625 children die. Two years back home in the United States helped the Raleys recover their emotional equilibrium, and mourn the deaths, most of which could have been prevented with earlier care.

In 1986 they returned to Indochina, and Raley began pioneering the medical and agricultural aid projects in Cambodia -- and later in Vietnam and Laos -- which are now supported by Southern Baptists through Cooperative Services International.

The projects have increased in number and effectiveness in the years since. For that hopeful development, Southern Baptists can be thankful for the rapid changes now sweeping parts of the communist world, the reopening of Indochina, and a wounded doctor who could not turn away from human suffering.

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

HMB offers toll free help
on abortion alternatives

N-HMB

Baptist Press
10/10/89

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has established a toll-free number for churches and individuals to call for assistance in offering abortion alternatives in their communities.

The toll-free number, 1-800-962-0851, went into operation October 1.

Sylvia Boothe, coordinator of alternatives to abortion ministries for the Home Mission Board, said the new service is directed to churches and individuals who are concerned about abortion but do not know what to do or what resources are available.

Pregnant women and girls who are struggling with the abortion question can also call the toll-free number, Boothe said. "We want to refer them to local churches and contact persons for counseling, rather than trying to do the counseling on the telephone. Our experience is that counseling is best done on the local level where the resources of a local church can be made available."

Boothe is developing a computerized data base listing available resources nationwide for alternatives to abortion. When the data base is complete, people who call the toll free number can be referred to local resources they might not otherwise know about.

The toll-free number also will enable churches and individuals interested in establishing a crisis pregnancy center to seek assistance from the Home Mission Board in setting up such centers, Boothe added.

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Tentmaker program departs
from traditional missions

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
10/10/89

TAIPA, Macao (BP)--On the tiny Portuguese island of Taipa in Macao, off the coast of China, Mark and Barbara Brock are testing a different way to do missions.

During the next several years the Brocks will discover whether they can be effectively employed by the Macao government and at the same time work side by side with Southern Baptist missionaries.

The Brocks are tentmakers not appointed missionaries. They represent what could become an increasingly common approach to helping career missionaries spread the gospel.

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As tentmakers, they will sign a covenant pledging support of -- and agreement to -- the way Southern Baptist missionaries work in Macao. Tentmakers are committed lay persons who use vocational skills overseas.

Macao, a Portuguese colony bordering mainland China, has a population of more than half a million people. Because the Baptist community is small and tightly knit, missionaries say the Brocks' official title as tentmakers won't really set them apart from missionaries in the minds of local people.

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board administrators who designed the tentmaker program realize they must overcome the perception that tentmakers are employed as missionaries. They stress the strength of the tentmaking role rests in the fact tentmakers are not missionaries who receive a salary. And they are not professional ministers.

The Brocks, of Athens and Knoxville, Tenn., respectively, are excited to work alongside missionaries. "We feel like we can be a part of the mission strategy," said Brock, 31. He teaches English as a second language at the University of East Asia on Taipa.

"I think the main thing we feel right now is a sense of anticipation that we're here for more than just my work," he added. "God has something more for us to do here, something real special and something good."

Although they have been in Macao only weeks, the Brocks already have begun to acquaint themselves with the student work of Southern Baptist missionary Steve Baker. Like Baker, they hope to form friendships with students searching for what the gospel of Jesus Christ has to offer. The couple also could play a key role during Baker's upcoming furlough in maintaining student programs he has begun.

Mrs. Brock, 32, joined an international women's group in Macao and found out about language classes in Cantonese, the Chinese dialect most people speak. As a nurse, she hopes to become fluent enough in Cantonese to work in her field while they are in Macao.

The "tentmaker" label dates back to the Apostle Paul, who supported himself by making tents while he started churches.

Throughout Christian history, people employing their trades in distant lands have played key roles in missions. The first Baptist efforts in Norway, for example, were carried out by a trio of laymen -- a Swedish blacksmith and two Scandinavian sailors converted in the United States.

In April, Foreign Mission Board trustees decided to start the tentmaker category for those who want to enter into a formal relationship with missionaries. The action represented an attempt to mobilize more Southern Baptists to accomplish Bold Mission Thrust, the denomination's plan to help reach the whole world with the gospel by the year 2000.

The Brocks saw an article about the board's new program in a Baptist state newspaper last spring. "It sounded like the perfect thing for us," he recalled. He had interviewed for the Macao teaching position during the summer of 1988 when he visited nearby Hong Kong, where he worked as a journeyman for the Foreign Mission Board from 1980 to 1982.

"For a couple of years I felt we would be going to Macao," said Mrs. Brock, who worked as a journeyman in Brazil, where she learned Portuguese, a language also spoken in Macao. "My (knowledge of) Portuguese made it a little less strange than the rest of the Orient," she said.

The Brocks are the first tentmakers assigned to an area where Southern Baptists do traditional mission work. Two other couples work in nations where Southern Baptists have no missionaries.

Because of the nature of their employment, tentmakers potentially can pioneer mission work where traditional missionaries cannot go. But they also can be a vital force in places like Macao where Baptist work is established, said Mike Barnett, transnational advisor for the Foreign Mission Board. A former businessman, Barnett came to the board May 1 to enlist tentmakers.

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Barnett stresses tentmakers go only when and where mission strategists have a place for them. "Our department does not decide whether to enter into a relationship with a tentmaker," he says. "We just find them. We need a formal request from the field before the board enters into a covenant relationship with a tentmaker."

The board plans to send tentmakers to South Korea. Missionaries there want English teachers to work at a school in Kwangju but use off-hours to work in missions. Another opportunity, in the Near East, involves primitive living conditions and extreme climate, said Barnett. But already he has identified six qualified and willing Southern Baptists. More than 20 applied.

Barnett believes the tentmaker approach offers Southern Baptist lay persons an opportunity they have never had before. And he sees them responding to the challenge. "I think the people are out there," he said.

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BTN begins sixth year
of training Baptists

N-SRB

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE (BP)--Building the Baptist Telecommunication Network into an education and training resource for local church ministries has been both rewarding and expensive, according to Joe Denney, who has led the five-year denominational effort.

Denney, manager of the telecommunications department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, said accomplishments of the network have strengthened ministries in local churches by using up-to-the-minute technology to deliver training materials and special events.

Since 1981, the Board has invested \$19.2 million in establishing BTN as a national Southern Baptist network, Denney said. The number of subscribers has increased steadily, but the network still is not self-supporting.

As of Aug. 31, 1989, a total of 1,567 churches, associations and denominational agencies were subscribing to BTN. Denney estimates that BTN needs approximately 3,500 subscribers to reach a financial break-even point.

A problem in recent months has been with churches which are not willing to pay to use the material because the satellite signal is not scrambled, Denney said.

Sunday School Board trustees instructed the administration of the board to send information to churches advising them of the legal and moral ramifications of taping programs from satellite broadcasts without paying subscription costs. Costs for taping programs, maintaining the studio, uplink and equipment all are expensive, requiring continuing financial support.

Material telecast over a satellite is copyrighted just like printed material, according to attorneys in a Washington, D.C., law firm retained by the board. It is a violation to reproduce tapes from a satellite telecast without a subscription agreement because it represents a loss of income for the owner.

In a report to trustees of the Sunday School Board in their semi-annual meeting in August at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, Denney said some subscribers have called to cancel contracts because they can now get the signal unscrambled.

Other church leaders have written and called, disturbed over the fact they know a nearby church is taking the signal and not paying," Denney said. "They wonder why they have to pay when others are not.

"We are trying to inform churches about the legal responsibilities as well as the ethical and moral implications of receiving and taping programs via satellite and not paying," Denney added. "It is unsettling that there are churches who ignore the moral and legal responsibility of paying for the programs."

Most legal experts agree that the copyright violations are incurred if a program is taped for later showing.

He told trustees that cancellations of subscriptions and a simultaneous increase in the number of requests for the program guide from non-subscribers have led BTN officials to believe some groups are choosing to illegally record and use the material.

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"Satellite communication is being used more and more in communications," Denney said. "Churches on the cutting edge want better ways to minister."

BTN subscribers are part of a denominational network which includes 1,330 churches, 200 associations, five colleges, five seminaries, four agencies and 27 state conventions.

The cost for a church with 300 resident members is \$45 per month or \$541 for the year. Subscription agreements for three years provide the subscriber with free satellite receiving equipment.

Denney said access to national leaders, missions information and improved ministry techniques and materials are listed by church leaders as the most valued contributions from BTN. Church leaders in pioneer areas cite identification with the denomination as a key reason for their participation.

Steve Curtis, pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Franklin, Ky., said BTN programs are very effective to train new converts in Baptist doctrine as preparation for teaching responsibilities. This training is particularly good for people who join growing Baptist churches from other denominations without any knowledge of Baptist heritage.

Live transmission of the annual Southern Baptist Convention in Las Vegas was the fifth consecutive telecast of the meeting to local churches, Denney said. This breakthrough has allowed more people to see the annual meeting on BTN than have been able to attend in person.

Live teleconferences related to family ministry, youth ministry, prayer, MasterLife, discipleship and Sunday school growth have been offered during the past year to give local church leaders direct access to program leaders for personalized advice.

"BTN is a collection of Southern Baptist teaching and training opportunities which includes current issues, missions awareness programs, and sermon series by Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and John Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church of Houston. Sunday school lesson preparation tapes are available in all curriculum lines for adult and youth and for workers with children," explained Denney. "Last year programs were provided by 14 Southern Baptist entities, and our hope is that eventually all denominational agencies and commissions will contribute."