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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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November 6, 1989

89-159

Baptist missionary detained  
in Uganda; charges unclear

By Craig Bird

N-FMB

KAMPALA, Uganda (BP)--Confusion surrounds the Nov. 1 arrest of Southern Baptist missionary Roger Hesch by military police in Uganda and his continued detention without formal notice of charges.

Ugandan police say no charges have been filed. Military authorities will only say Hesch "knows the charges." But he does not, according to fellow missionary Paul Eaton, chairman of the Southern Baptist mission organization in Uganda.

Hesch, 32, of Little Falls, Minn., agreed to drive two soldiers who came to his house in Entebbe, Uganda, to Kampala, the capital. He was arrested when he drove into a military headquarters as they requested. His request that the U.S. Embassy or the Baptist mission organization be notified of his whereabouts and the reasons for his arrest was denied. But someone unofficially contacted the Baptist mission.

"No one has been able to determine why Roger was arrested, and the U.S. Embassy said they were unable to intervene because they were told no charges had been filed," said Jim Houser, a Southern Baptist missionary administrator in Nairobi, Kenya. "Mission officials were told Nov. 3 that there would be no charges and he would be released as soon as an official in the Ugandan foreign affairs office and the appropriate army officer made contact."

Hesch still was in jail Nov. 6, however. His wife, Meg, has been allowed to see him several times and bring him meals, and he has been given a sleeping bag. Officials from the Red Cross and U.S. Embassy and fellow missionaries also have seen him and report he is in good spirits.

In the absence of charges, mission officials speculated that Hesch may have been arrested for being in a military installation without authorization.

The evening of Oct. 31, Hesch showed an evangelistic film at a center for handicapped people in Masaka. A soldier who is a member of a local Baptist church was there and asked Hesch for a ride back to his barracks. He suggested Hesch take other passengers home first because they might not be allowed onto the army base.

When Hesch arrived at the army camp, he was admitted at the gate with no difficulty. He spent a few minutes passing out evangelistic tracts, and the Baptist soldier took a box of Bibles to distribute among other soldiers later. Hesch did not stay on the base more than 15 minutes, Houser was told.

Unknown to Hesch, the Baptist soldier reportedly was interrogated most of the night after Hesch left. Efforts by missionaries to find out what has happened to the soldier have been unsuccessful.

The next morning, two soldiers appeared at Hesch's house and asked for a lift to Kampala, not indicating in any way that Hesch was wanted for questioning. He was detained after he drove the two to a military headquarters.

Hesch was transferred Nov. 3 from the military prison to the Uganda Central Police. At that time, mission officials were led to believe Hesch's release was imminent. But they were told if the proper officials could not be located by 5 p.m., Hesch would have to remain in jail over the weekend until government offices reopened Nov. 6. The offices opened and closed Nov. 6, however, with Hesch still in custody.

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Late Nov. 6., Eaton finally succeeded in scheduling a Nov. 7 meeting with the government official who reportedly has the authority to release Hesch. Eaton also was told the case has been turned over to Internal Security, which indicates a formal charge has been lodged. Such cases can result in deportation, officials said, but that would require a formal court hearing.

Eaton mentioned to authorities that Hesch and several other religious leaders had been invited to Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's home several months ago at the conclusion of an evangelistic crusade in Entebbe.

"I wouldn't say that Mr. Hesch and the president are friends," Eaton said. "But the president did commend him for the work he was doing. If this case goes to court, we will request a personal audience with the president."

One official told Eaton: "You've been out here a long time, and you know these things just take time. I don't think it will come to a court case."

Hesch has had so many visitors in jail, Eaton was told, authorities might limit the number allowed in to see him.

"Roger has mixed feelings right now about even getting out," Eaton said. After being refused a Bible at first, Hesch now not only has a Bible but a supply of evangelistic tracts and has held several worship services for other prisoners.

"Outsiders are not allowed in to preach or witness," Eaton said of the jail. "Some folks there say they'd like to see Roger stay awhile to continue his ministry."

Hesch's mission vehicle still was being held by authorities Nov. 6.

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Photo mailed Baptist state papers by Richmond (foreign) bureau of Baptist Press

Court ruling favors  
Nashville churches

By Lonnie Wilkey

N-CO  
(Tenn.)

Baptist Press  
11/6/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--A county court judge has dismissed a lawsuit involving several Nashville Baptist Association churches.

Last December, Nashville's metropolitan government filed a lawsuit seeking a judgment regarding the taxability of church parsonages. The city was seeking to tax 141 tax-exempt properties that it claimed were not used for charitable or religious purposes. About 20 Nashville Baptist churches were among those cited.

In the lawsuit, the government challenged the constitutionality of a 1984 state law that said church parsonages should be tax-exempted as "property used purely and exclusively for religious purposes."

State law allows each church to claim an exemption for only one residence as a parsonage. Metro Tax Assessor Jim Ed Clary claimed the purpose of parsonages is residential and that they are not used "purely and solely" for religious purposes.

Clary told the Baptist and Reflector, Tennessee Baptists' weekly newsjournal, that parsonages are built to "provide a service which every individual must have" and noted that residents of church parsonages receive without cost the same government services -- such as fire and police protection -- that their neighbors purchase through property taxes.

In a memorandum indicating his decision, Judge Irvin H. Kilcrease Jr. wrote that state law "does not create a per se property tax exemption for parsonages nor does this statute foreclose inquiry as to the actual use of parsonages."

"Tax exemptions in favor of religious, scientific, literary, and educational institutions are liberally construed, rather than strictly," he said.

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"A parsonage is the home of a full-time regular minister of a local church. The 'purely and exclusively' use test for property to be tax exempt is met where the use is 'directly incidental to or an integral part of' one of the recognized purposes of an exempt institution."

Kilcrease concluded the state legislature intended to "exempt from property tax parsonages used 'purely and exclusively' for religious purposes."

Attorney Bob Taylor, who represented several of the Nashville churches, said he was delighted that the judge upheld the constitutionality of the 1984 statute. A negative decision would have impacted churches across Tennessee, he said, predicting "a lot of tax assessors" across the state were awaiting the outcome of the decision.

Nashville pastors contended that church parsonages always have been considered a part of a church's total ministry to the community and should be treated as other church property and not be taxed.

Churches perform "benevolent services to the community that offsets the property tax we would pay," said Kenneth Castleberry, pastor of Dalewood Baptist Church.

The churches have "won round one," Taylor said, but the government may appeal the ruling.

Clary told a reporter from The Tennessean, Nashville's morning newspaper, that he is "not ready to throw in the towel." He must get advice from the government's legal department about whether to appeal Kilcrease's decision, he said.

Nashville churches have spent several thousand dollars in legal fees and would like to aver further legal activity, Castleberry said, noting, "I would hope that Metro attorneys will review it (Kilcrease's ruling) and say, 'Let's stop it right here.'"

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West Virginians adopt\*  
\$1.5 million budget\*

N-CO  
(W.Va.)

Baptist Press  
11/6/89

PRINCETON, W.V. (BP)--West Virginia Southern Baptist adopted a \$1,495,960 annual budget and elected a new president during the annual meeting at Immanuel Baptist Church in Princeton Nov. 3-4.

The 150 churches and missions of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists are to contribute \$719,499, or 48.1 percent, of the new budget. Most of the balance of the budget is to be provided by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Other revenue is expected from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and other sources.

The convention will send 26.5 percent of its receipts from churches on to national and international causes through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget. That percentage is a 0.5 percent increase over the previous budget and is expected to total \$190,667.

The 1990 budget is 3.44 percent less than the current \$1,549,264 budget.

Messengers elected by acclamation Eddie Gandy, pastor of Westmoreland Baptist church in Huntington, to a one-year term as convention president. Odell Clay, pastor of East Williamson Baptist Church was eligible for a second term but declined to be nominated, noting he will retire and move out of the state with the next year.

Other officers, all elected by acclamation, are John Davis, pastor of Rosedale Baptist Church in Oak Hill, first vice president; James Hendricks, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Princeton, second vice president; and Robert Keown, a salesman and member of Riverwood Baptist Church in St. Albans, recording secretary.

The convention did not deal with any resolutions and did not discuss any doctrinal or theological issues.

The convention's 1990 annual meeting will be held at Grace Baptist Church in Parkersburg Nov. 2-3.

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Nevada Baptists set budget,  
re-elect Norvell president

By Michael B. McCullough

N- (O)  
(Nev.)

RENO, Nev. (BP)--Messengers from across Nevada gathered at First Southern Baptist Church of Reno Oct. 24-25 and in unison elected Bob Norvell president of the Nevada Baptist Convention for his second term. They also adopted a record \$1,643,553 budget.

Despite cold, rain and wind, 163 messengers registered for the meeting, with at least 70 visitors attending, making the event one of the largest convention meetings in northern Nevada.

The theme for the annual meeting, the convention's 11th, was "Bold Mission Nevada ... Building His Family." It focused on the passage from I Peter 2:5.

Norvell, pastor of College Park Baptist Church in Las Vegas, has been president of the convention since December 1988, when then-President Terry Arnold resigned to take a staff position with the convention.

Norvell was elected without opposition. Michael Rochelle, pastor of West Oakey Baptist Church in Las Vegas, was elected first vice president, and Jim Meek, pastor of Steamboat Baptist Church in Reno, was elected second vice president.

Nevada Baptist churches are expected to contribute \$425,000, or 25.8 percent, of the new budget. They contributed \$409,000 -- \$9,000 over budget -- to the just-completed annual budget.

Nevada Baptists are to send 24.5 percent of the convention's undesignated receipts to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget. That is a 0.5 percent increase over the previous budget. The contribution is expected to be \$104,125, up from \$96,000.

The convention receives 57.7 percent of its budget from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. It receives 2.9 percent from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, 2.0 percent from its state missions offering, and contributions from the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions and other sources.

Messengers adopted a resolution commending President George Bush for his veto of federal funding of abortions and for his "moral fortitude to wage an all-out effort against crime, drugs and pornography." The resolution, which passed without discussion, also called for the convention to communicate the action to the president and to "pledge prayerful support in defeating these evils that are disrupting our nation."

Messengers also approved a motion by Jim McLeroy, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Las Vegas, to write a letter of commendation and support to Lloyd Elder, president of the Sunday School Board. After a suspension of rules, which was required because the motion was made during the last session of the annual meeting, the motion passed.

Several people, including Barry Campbell, pastor of South Reno Baptist Church and Nevada's trustee on the Sunday School Board, explained that the letter was appropriate following recent discussion by Sunday School Board trustees of a motion to fire Elder. The motion was withdrawn before trustees voted.

Also during the meeting, Don Mulkey, director of cooperative missions for the Nevada Baptist Convention, received an honorary doctorate from Grand Canyon College in Phoenix, Ariz. Mulkey was honored for his years of service in Southern Baptist new-work areas.

Nevada Baptists will gather for their 12th annual meeting Oct. 23-24, 1990, at First Baptist Church of Las Vegas.

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N-SSB

Money management, financial planning  
needed at retirement, seniors learn

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press  
11/6/89

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Senior adults never will reach an age when they can withdraw from learning more about money management, and churches should invest time in helping them continue to do it, a conference leader told seminar participants at a senior-adult Chautauqua at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

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"It's not too late to plan how to manage our money, and the church has a stake in helping people better manage their lives and financial situations," said Horace Kerr, retired manager of the single- and senior-adult section of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's family ministry department.

About 50 senior adults attending one of 14 Chautauquas sponsored this fall by the Sunday School Board participated in a money management seminar sponsored jointly by the board and American Express.

In pilot projects with Southern Baptists and three other denominations, personnel from American Express have been teaching money management to senior adults to determine their specific needs, said Meredith Fernstrom, senior vice president for public responsibility at American Express.

Other groups included the United Church of Christ, American Baptists and Episcopalians.

"We decided to work with religious organizations because a large number of senior adults are church goers, and they look to the church to meet a wide range of needs, not just spiritual," said Fernstrom, a Southern Baptist who was reared near Ridgecrest.

Jay Johnston, a senior-adult consultant at the board, said the information gathered from the four pilot projects will be consolidated and adapted into a money management resource for churches to teach their senior adults.

The resource will be produced by the board's family ministry department and released in late 1991, reported Doug Anderson, director of the family ministry department. Before the product is completed, the material will be field tested in several churches in 1990, he said.

Kerr, who has been working on the project since its inception about two years ago, said the changing lifestyles of senior adults require knowledge of life planning as well as financial planning.

"As we look forward to the new phases in our lives, we have to begin planning for these changes," he said. "The objective is to plan for the rest of life by learning the options that we have and by thinking creatively and honestly."

In the two-part seminar, life planning and financial planning, Kerr told senior adults they should be prepared for the transitions and changes that come with aging and retirement.

"We have to understand our personal perception of aging and feel good about it," he said.

Some of the changes that accompany retirement, said Kerr, who retired earlier this year, include more discretionary time, more opportunities for volunteerism, feelings of not being needed and relief from work pressures.

Retired people must work to maintain their spiritual life, their social relationships and their physical and mental well-being, he said.

They must plan how to spend their leisure time, and they must decide on housing "by exploring characteristics of their ideal living space," he noted. "We need to look at all these things as we plan for the rest of our lives. In almost all of these areas, you are talking about spending money."

To spend and save money properly, senior adults need to know what's available for them, said Bill Steinke, regional director for IDS Financial Services, a subsidiary of American Express.

"Financial planning is crucial all through life," said Steinke, who led the second part of the seminar. "It takes money to make us mentally and physically well, and there are plenty of options and opportunities for managing your money during retirement."

Steinke encouraged senior adults to take a wellness approach to managing money by planning for the future.

"Financial planning is a comprehensive term. You need to know where you want to be two, three, five years from now," Steinke said. "Just like a good building, you need a good plan."

Steinke listed 10 steps of a good retirement plan:

- Assess current financial situation.
- Define retirement lifestyle goals.
- Evaluate current housing and related needs.
- Identify and estimate all potential income sources.
- Understand the pension plan.
- Evaluate insurance policies.
- Determine the best health insurance program for retirement.
- Determine eligibility for an IRA or other type of retirement savings plan.
- Identify gaps between income and expenses at different stages of retirement.
- Invest in knowledge.