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March 1, 1990

90-30

HMB volunteers up in '89;
students needed urgently

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

ATLANTA (BP)--The number of volunteers working through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board increased nearly 20 percent last year.

However, the HMB has a critical need for more student summer missionaries to serve this year.

In 1989, the HMB counted 48,681 volunteers working through its short-term and long-term programs for individuals and groups, an increase of 6,973 from the previous year's total of 41,708.

The largest increases came in programs for adult volunteers, said Don Hammonds, director of the HMB's volunteers division. He credited the increase to better understanding in churches of the needs for volunteers and to strong state partnership programs.

State conventions with volunteer coordinator-consultants appointed through Mission Service Corps showed the greatest increases, he added.

At the end of 1989, the number of Mission Service volunteers assigned was 1,230, up from 1,170 the previous year. Mission Service Corps is the HMB's program for adult volunteers who are willing to serve two-year terms.

Short-term adult volunteers serving through Christian Service Corps increased to 17,204, up from 13,454 in 1988. That total includes 1,025 groups and 1,431 individual assignments.

The number of high school youth groups participating in missions projects also increased significantly. Last year 884 groups with 25,516 individuals were assigned, up from 762 groups and 22,860 individuals in 1988.

Despite these gains, there are still fewer applicants for college student summer missions than there are requests for help this year, Hammonds said.

By mid-February, the number of applications received for student summer missions was running 25 percent behind the same time last year, said Bill Berry, who coordinates the HMB's student missions program.

In addition to individuals sent out by state conventions, the HMB has positions for about 600 students to serve across the United States each summer in evangelism, church starting and ministry activities.

Candidates must have completed the freshman year in college, be active members of a Baptist church and be committed Christians. Transportation to and from the field is provided by the HMB, along with insurance and a \$60 per week stipend. Housing, meals and ground transportation are provided by the local hosts.

Interested students should call the HMB's toll-free volunteer hotline: 1-800-HMB-VOLS or contact their local Baptist Student Union director immediately, Berry said.

Letter writing effort
launched by CLC

By Louis Moore

N-CLC
(CLC)

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has launched a three-pronged letter-writing initiative against recent abortion-related actions by the American Bar Association and the AFL-CIO as well as against proposed pro-abortion legislation in the U.S. Congress.

The letters seek to "bring Southern Baptist influence to bear on all three entities to reevaluate their pro-abortion efforts," said Richard Land, executive director of the CLC, the ethical/moral concerns agency of the Southern Baptist Convention.

On Wednesday, Feb. 28, Land sent letters to various government, union and bar association leaders, including U.S. Attorney General Richard L. Thornburgh, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and all U.S. senators and congressmen, on the abortion issue.

"Over the last 10 years the Southern Baptist Convention has adopted five resolutions at its annual meetings affirming the sanctity of unborn human life and called for federal and state legislation and/or a constitutional amendment to protect unborn human life," Land said. "Most Southern Baptists are strongly in favor of severely restricting the number and types of abortions performed in the United States."

In the letter to Kirkland, Land expressed "great concern over your appointment of a special committee, the Ad Hoc Committee of Reproductive Issues, to consider whether the AFL-CIO should take a position on the issue of abortion rights."

"Many Southern Baptist union members would be gravely concerned to learn about the possibility of the AFL-CIO endorsing abortion rights."

Land said press reports indicate at least nine of the 14 members of the Ad Hoc Committee of Reproductive Issues favor abortion rights. "This ratio greatly skews the true opinions of union members on abortion," he said.

He said the CLC is "especially disturbed that if a pro-abortion resolution is adopted," the AFL-CIO would "unleash your well-funded lobbyists on Capitol Hill and state legislatures to lobby for abortion. Additionally, the AFL-CIO could also actively work against federal and state legislators and other candidates for public office because they are pro-life."

In a letter to L. Stanley Chauvin Jr., president of the American Bar Association, Land said, "I am writing in response to the action taken by the ABA House of Delegates on Feb. 13 endorsing broad abortion rights.

"Now that the ABA has gone on record to endorse abortion on demand, we feel that the (ABA's) Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary will be hopelessly biased against potential federal judges who believe in the sanctity of unborn human life," he wrote.

In the letter to Thornburgh, Land said, "The ABA's decision to go on record in favor of wide-ranging abortion rights seriously compromises the objectivity of the ABA's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary.

"Unless the ABA rescinds this egregiously pro-abortion resolution, its Standing Committee will be hopelessly biased against potential jurists who believe in the sanctity of human life."

If the ABA does not rescind its action, it should "no longer enjoy its privileged status as a confidential reviewer of appointees to the federal courts," Land told Thornburgh.

Land wrote the U.S. Senators and Congressmen to protest H.R. 3700/S.1912, popularly known as the Freedom of Choice Act.

"Possibly the most radical pro-abortion bill the United States Congress will ever consider, H.R. 3700/S.1912, is an all-out frontal assault on the sanctity of human life," Land said in the letter.

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"Proponents of the so-called Freedom of Choice Act have represented this bill simply as a codification of the 1973 Supreme Court Roe v. Wade decision," he said. "In fact, H.R. 3700 and S. 1912 would go much further than that erroneous decision.

Land said the Freedom of Choice Act is "quite simply ... a federal mandate on the states for abortion on demand from conception to birth."

"This bill would circumvent the will of many Americans, including most Southern Baptists, who support various restrictions and regulations on the practice of abortion," he wrote.

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Christian medical group
in Romania now meets openly

N-FMB

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CLUJ-NAPOCA, Romania (BP)--The Romanian Christian Medical Association, started five years ago as an underground group, received an official organization permit from the national court system in late February.

Begun with 25 members, the association now numbers 160, said Ionel-Alexandru Dan, a Baptist layman and dentist who helped organize the group and is president. The group held its first public meeting Jan. 3 after the anti-communist revolution swept the country in December.

"For the first time, we could pray together the Lord's Prayer without fear," said Dan, whose brother, Titus, is a Southern Baptist missionary in Australia.

Members include adherents of 10 of the 14 principal religious groups in Romania, including Catholics, Orthodox, Baptists and other evangelicals. Nineteen medical and dental specialties are represented among members.

"The purpose of the association is to emphasize spiritual unity through medicine," Dan said. The association will be a mediator between churches in the United States and Romania for meeting medical needs in Romania.

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Baptist Young Women challenged
to touch hearts, change lives

By Ken Camp N-Texas

Baptist Press
3/1/90

DALLAS (BP)--Baptist Young Women must expand their world vision, roll up their sleeves and embrace the excitement of discovery in order to touch hearts with the life-changing power of the gospel, according to speakers at the first Texas BYW "Exploration" conference.

"Touching Hearts ... Changing Lives" was the theme as more than 400 young women met Feb. 23-24 in Dallas to explore opportunities for missions and ministry as a lifestyle.

"We can't do church like we did in the '50s. We must go outside the four walls of the church to penetrate the world with the gospel and meet human needs," said Esther Burroughs, national evangelism consultant for women at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"We've called it a sanctuary so long, we think it is a place to hide," she said of the church.

The key to reaching a hurting world is to follow the example of Jesus and live as a suffering servant in humility and simplicity, she emphasized: "God has called us to wash feet. He has called us to a servant lifestyle."

The stark contrast between affluent Christians and the unbelieving poor of the world impedes the message of the gospel, Burroughs stressed.

"We are rich Christians in a poor world, and I believe God is going to hold Southern Baptists accountable for our riches," she explained.

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Missions is imperative, not optional, for every Christian, added Mildred McWhorter, director of inner-city missions in Houston.

"Missions shouldn't wait until you're appointed by a mission board. You are a missionary right where you are. You're either a good one or a poor one, but you are a missionary," McWhorter said.

"There is something unique each one of us can do. There is some young person out there who needs your unique touch."

Baptist Young Women in the 1990s must go where no woman has gone before in missions action, missions education and missions support, said Marsha Spradlin, a national WMU education specialist from Birmingham, Ala.

"Exploration is sometimes a painful experience, but true explorers are thrilled with discovery," she said. "Are we willing to roll up our sleeves and embrace the excitement of discovery?"

"Success is never final. Failure is never fatal. It is bravery that counts."

Speaking about her personal bout with a life-threatening illness, Spradlin said, "While pain is part of the human condition, I sincerely believe that misery is an option."

Through her own painful pilgrimage, Spradlin said, she was "transformed one winter" as she discovered that her worth was based not on outward circumstances, but on her relationship as a child of God.

"Never associate what you do, who you are with, what you have or where you are with who you are, because if those things no longer remain constant, you're no longer any good," she said.

"Transforming faith calms the angry waves and conquers the dragons of time, fear, doubt, pain and unrest."

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Baptist water project
pumps up new believers

By Charlotte Cearley F - FMB

Baptist Press
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CHAMBUTA, Zimbabwe (BP)--A water system for a new refugee camp in Zimbabwe already has produced 35 Christians and a church -- even before the refugees started arriving.

The government of Zimbabwe asked Baptists to fund and build a system to supply clean drinking water to the new camp for Mozambican refugees in southeastern Zimbabwe. The Baptists agreed -- with one eye on humanitarian needs and another on opportunities for evangelism.

Richard Cockrum, a Southern Baptist volunteer from Afton, Tenn., headed up the 30-month project. Last November, Southern Baptist missionaries in Zimbabwe turned over the system to the government. It included more than 10 miles of pipe, 24 well points in a riverbed for a year-round supply of water and a 500-cubic-meter reservoir tank for a filtered water supply.

Each refugee homestead in the camp -- which will have a projected population of 20,000 -- now has access to clean drinking water.

That's a good deal for \$300,000 in Southern Baptist aid, missionaries said. But the better deal had nothing to do with economics. Some missionaries described it as moving from water pipes to "living water."

A local Baptist pastor, Daniel Muzenda, began visiting the construction camp with Cockrum and some Baptist employees who wanted to share their Christian faith.

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As they spoke of the gospel, the contract laborers listened, although only one man publicly declared his new faith in Christ during the first round of visits. But in the following weeks, other men became believers and began asking if they could meet on Sundays for worship.

When Muzenda arrived for the first service, he found the men had brought their families with them. Others not employed on the project began to notice the impact of the gospel on the families. For example, one community leader in the area listened to the Christian message without response -- but two of his wives accepted Christ as savior.

The new Christians already have begun seeking government permission for a plot of land on which to construct a permanent church building.

And 35 people have been baptized in the very river where they dug wells.

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Gearley is press representative for Southern Baptist missionaries in Zimbabwe.

Crossroads restaurant
feeds body and soul

By Charles Willis

F-SSB

Baptist Press
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WYTHEVILLE, Va. (BP)--A family-owned restaurant in the crossroads town of Wytheville, Va., is offering road-weary travelers refreshment for the soul alongside country ham and vegetables.

For 40 years, Durham's Restaurant has offered home-style cooking. And for almost 11 of those years, patrons have had the opportunity, at no additional charge, to select from among 50 tracts addressing a variety of life needs from a Christian perspective.

Customers have helped themselves to about 100,000 copies of "Choice Creations" tracts at the restaurant.

Durham's Restaurant, an institution for long-time local residents, also is a favored meal stop for frequent travelers of Interstate highways 77 and 81, which intersect in Wytheville. The restaurant owners, brothers Bill and Chimer Durham, estimate their establishment is within an eight-hour drive of two-thirds of the U.S. population.

The Durham brothers were reared in a Christian home, and their father, Otis L. Durham, "lived the kind of life compatible with his beliefs," Bill Durham recalled. "He taught us, 'If it's written in the Bible, you go by it.'"

So it seemed natural, said Bill Durham, to dedicate their business to God.

"He blessed us with the restaurant and the location, and he has helped us through hard times," Bill Durham reflected. "My purpose here is to be a witness."

When the brothers -- Bill, a Presbyterian, and Chimer, a Methodist -- decided to offer tracts to their customers, they sought the advice of their friend and customer Wesley "Binky" Huff, then pastor of Wytheville Baptist Church.

A regular at the "round table," an informal breakfast group of lawyers, doctors and businessmen, Huff introduced the brothers to the tract line produced by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church media library department.

Chimer Durham liked the samples he read because they "stick to the gospel without trying to drag you into a particular church." And speaking of church, Chimer Durham is convinced Durham's Restaurant is a much better place to distribute tracts than in the foyer of a church. After all, he reasoned, why offer them to the people who are already in church?

"We were inspired to do it," Chimer said of the decision to set up a tract rack near the cash register. "We decided if the Lord's behind them and he's moving them, people are going to pick them up."

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Huff, now manager of Eagle Eyrie Baptist Assembly in Lynchburg, Va., said he had been impressed with the Durhams as "Christians in today's society, running a restaurant without serving alcohol."

He recommended the Southern Baptist-produced tracts to the brothers and, he recalled, the Durhams never hesitated to spend their money for the give-away items.

Offering tracts along with home cooking is a natural extension of two sincere men who want to share Christ, Huff noted.

"I can honestly say I have never seen them showcase their religion," he said. "It's just them."

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BP photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press

Develop 'spiritual eyes'
for church planting: Chaney

By Mark Wingfield

N-17 MB

Baptist Press
3/1/90

LOS ANGELES (BP)--Southern Baptists must overcome a "new anti-missionism" and develop spiritual eyes for church starting, Charles Chaney told state church extension leaders.

Chaney, vice president for extension with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, told participants at the board's annual extension leadership conference in Los Angeles, "Though we have an enviable record in starting new churches, ... we float around in an atmosphere shot through with what I have labeled the new anti-missionism."

Chaney said pastors and churches, when challenged to sponsor a congregation, offer a variety of responses:

-- "We have plenty of Southern Baptist churches here. In fact we'd be better off if we could merge some of them."

Chaney agreed too many churches might be competing for the same members in a few locations, but he said that is not true for most U.S. communities.

Churches compete for members when they seek out only middle-class believers moving into their communities, he said. While competing for the "prestige transfer growth," these churches don't compete for non-Christians.

"When churches compete, it is seldom in their efforts to reach men and women who are yet unevangelized," he said.

-- "We don't need any more new churches until we get some of the ones we already have functioning properly."

In response, Chaney noted, "We already spend far more on the development and growth of existing churches than we do for new churches. Plateaued and declining churches, except in a minor number of cases, do not have money problems; they have idea problems. We do have hundreds of dying churches, and nothing can be done for them if they will not change."

-- "Those (ethnic) people are ruining our neighborhood. Those of us who paid for this building are not about to have them come in and ruin our church. After all, these buildings are dedicated to the glory of God."

Churches must be aware of changes in the makeup of their communities and use their resources to all people with the gospel, Chaney noted. "New churches must be planted to address new groups, no matter what language they speak or what their dominant racial stock," he said.

-- "We're building a metropolitan church here. I believe we can minister to the whole city."

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Multiple small congregations may be better able to evangelize a city than a few large churches because of the diverse ethnic and social classes found there, Chaney countered: "Churches do not offer the gospel equally to all groups. They are not able to make all people feel at home and comfortable. This is true no matter how good the intentions or how hard the effort. New groups, different groups of people require new churches."

Chaney commended the vision of Christians who believe they can single-handedly reach everyone in their church fields. But he added, "If you believe you can reach all those people with one church program, you're either dishonest or engaging in a vacuum that has no relation to reality."

The strength of Southern Baptists in the past century has come from planting multiple churches in one community, he explained.

People may oppose church starting for a variety of reasons, Chaney said. One reason might be a concern for small, struggling churches. "The new anti-missionism sometimes arises from a compassion for pastors who serve weak churches without a living wage," he explained.

"It sometimes arises from the deep sorrow and panic that comes with the decline of once great churches now in transition. We feel those churches and their properties must be preserved at all costs."

Despite the earnestness of those who hold such beliefs, "we must not let sincere and sometimes widely held opinions deter us from a strong church-planting strategy," he said.

Southern Baptists must be visionary for the future, Chaney said: "Most of the new work we have begun in this century can be credited to someone's vision of the future. This vision for the future has developed from the powers of observation."

The primary way to develop this visionary spirit is through intercessory prayer, he explained. "I'm not suggesting we abandon hard research and careful analysis. I'm suggesting that we seek divine leadership and supernatural intervention," he noted.

Chaney posed several questions:

Are there cultural and racial barriers standing in the way of new churches? Are strongholds of demonic or carnal opposition to the planting of the church? Are hindrances from the control systems of governmental, business and education establishments?

"These barriers are broken down with spiritual warfare, not political and worldly warfare," he responded. "Ultimately, our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers and authorities of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil."