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NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #7
Nashville, Tennessee 372
(615) 244-23
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

March 7, 1990

90-34

Coup, violence slow work
in South African homeland

By Craig Bird

N-FMB

EAST LONDON, South Africa (BP)--Rioting and looting after a military coup in the South African homeland of Ciskei left 20 people dead and more than 200 injured. Eight Southern Baptist missionaries assigned there are safe.

No injuries to Ciskei Baptists or damage to churches were reported in the wake of the March coup. However, attempts to contact pastors in two of the hardest-hit areas were unsuccessful as of March 6.

Ciskei army leaders seized control of the homeland, located on the Indian Ocean coast of South Africa, March 4. South African troops sealed off the country March 6 "to protect South African citizens and property," said South African foreign minister Pik Botha.

Missionary Gene Elder of Shepherdsville, Ky., who works with 23 churches in Ciskei, contacted pastors in Zwelitsha, Gومتotown and the Ciskei capital of Bisho. He was told church members apparently stayed away from the rioting, which focused on stores and government offices and homes, and that the situation was much calmer March 6.

Missionary Rue Scott, head of the Baptist seminary in Debe Nek, Ciskei, said trucks and buses loaded with cheering students passed the seminary March 5 and 6, apparently heading to Bisho for rallies celebrating the overthrow of President-for-life Lennox Sebe. Ciskei, designated a homeland in 1981, is not recognized as an independent country by any nation except South Africa.

Police reported 70 factories had been burned, and damage estimates were in the tens of millions of dollars. Hospitals reported a severe blood shortage and admitted scores of youths suffering from trauma resulting from drunkenness. About 18,000 jobs were lost when factories were torched.

Scott said he does not expect classes at the seminary to be affected, although concern exists that food supplies will be disrupted if South African troops do not restore order rapidly.

Elder, who lives on the border of Ciskei in the South African town of East London, said pastors told him troops had sealed off all borders and urged him not to travel in the area for a time. He and his wife, Ellamae, of Greenville, Ala., canceled weekly visits in the area. A scheduled March 8 trip to take 65 mattresses to a tent camp of 1,000 refugees inside Ciskei also was postponed.

Two other Southern Baptist missionary couples work in Ciskei besides Rue and Gwen Scott, of Westbrook, Texas, and Cleveland, Okla., respectively, and the Elders. They are Troy and Marjorie Bennett of Winston-Salem, N.C., and Chagrin Falls, Ohio, respectively; and Gerald and Florence Pinkston of Levelland and Hereford, Texas, respectively.

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Bird was in Ciskei while covering recent events in South Africa when the military coup occurred.

BJC committee to examine
representation formula

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

WASHINGTON (BP)--An ad hoc committee has been appointed to evaluate how member bodies are represented on the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

During its March 5 meeting, the BJC executive committee appointed its officers to serve as a bylaws change committee. That committee is to examine the agency's bylaws and recommend whether changes should be made in the formula used to determine representation on the BJC.

The current plan automatically allows each of the BJC's nine member bodies one representative. Additional representatives are gained by contributing to the BJC operating budget.

The formula provides that for each quarter of a percent of the budget contributed, member bodies gain one representative, up to a total of eight beyond the first representative. Then, for each additional 5 percent of the operating budget contributed, another representative is gained, up to a total of nine beyond the first nine.

Under the current plan, the BJC can have up to 54 representatives.

In establishing the ad hoc committee, executive committee members agreed that any change in the current BJC representation formula should take into consideration four principles:

- The jointness of the BJC should be maintained.
- Although some relationship should exist between financial contributions and the number of each body's representatives, contributions alone should not determine representation.
- No member body's number of representatives should dominate the BJC.
- The number of representatives to the BJC should be kept at a practical size.

Members of the BJC executive committee said an evaluation of the agency's representation formula is appropriate in light of a proposed cut in Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program unified budget funding, as well as increased contributions from groups such as the Southern Baptist Alliance and state Baptist conventions.

Members of the ad hoc committee are John Binder, executive director of the North American Baptist Conference; Landrum P. Leavell, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; Tai D. Shigaki, an American Baptist layperson from St. Paul, Minn.; and Charles G. Adams, a Progressive National Baptist Convention pastor from Detroit.

A change in the BJC's bylaws would require that committee members receive a 30-day notice of the proposed change and then approve it by a simple majority.

The next full meeting of the BJC is scheduled for Oct. 1.

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Seminaries resuming reins
of off-campus programs

By Lee Hollaway

N-CO
(SEED)

Baptist Press
3/7/90

NASHVILLE (BP)--Administration of the seven off-campus programs directed by the Southern Baptist Seminary Studies Department will return to individual seminaries effective Aug. 1.

Roy L. Honeycutt, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., made the announcement on behalf of the seminary presidents' council.

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Master's-level theological studies programs have been operated jointly in New York; Baltimore; Orlando; Nashville; Jackson, Tenn.; Little Rock, Ark.; and Lubbock, Texas, some for as long as 10 years.

While the day-to-day direction was handled through the department in Nashville as part of the Southern Baptist Seminary External Education Division, one of the seminaries was designated as "lead seminary" for each of the programs. Under the reorganization, the lead seminaries will assume responsibility for their respective programs.

Southern Seminary will oversee the Baltimore, Nashville and Jackson programs. The Orlando program will come under New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Little Rock will relate to Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. Lubbock will be administered by Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., has been lead seminary for the New York program, but local leaders there and in Baltimore have requested that these locations be made part of the Northeastern Baptist School of Ministry. The School of Ministry is a project jointly sponsored by the seminaries, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, and five Baptist state conventions in the northeastern United States.

Doran C. McCarty directs both the School of Ministry and the Seminary External Education Division.

"Moving these off-campus programs back under the various seminaries will provide a more efficient financial and administrative operation," McCarty said. "We have demonstrated over the past 10 years that effective learning on this level can take place away from the traditional campus. I expect the seminaries to continue to serve students in these locations in much the same way as we have."

The schedule of courses and professors previously announced for the seven locations for 1990-91 will be followed, Honeycutt said.

Kirby L. Clark, who directed the Seminary Studies Department for the past four years, has accepted a position with the continuing education staff of Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas, directing its program in Amarillo, Texas.

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Baptist businessman
expelled from China

N-FMB

Baptist Press
3/7/90

TIANJIN, China (BP)--John Cragin, an American businessman who is Southern Baptist, was expelled from China March 5.

Chinese officials ordered Cragin to leave the country because he allegedly conducted "illegal missionary work," according to a report from the official New China News Agency.

Cragin, of Tahlequah, Okla., heads Management Technologies International, a management training institute formed as a private joint venture with the city of Tianjin.

Public Security Bureau agents in Tianjin seized material Feb. 17 they alleged Cragin was using for missionary work, the report said. Authorities accused Cragin of carrying out the illegal activity under the guise of holding English-language training courses for Chinese.

Missionaries have not worked in China since 1951, although foreign Christians now work there in a variety of educational and technical roles.

Cragin's expulsion is not expected to have negative impact on other American Christians working in China, observers said. He was not sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention but was directing a private joint venture.

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Other personnel in China sponsored by Southern Baptist institutions, such as colleges and universities, have contract relationships with the Chinese institutions they serve and are aware of restrictions, if any, on religious activities in their areas.

Cragin could not be reached for comment.

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Increasing pluralism is religious
mega-trend, interfaith leaders say

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

Baptist Press
3/7/90

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--The mega-trend in American religion for the 1990s will be increasing pluralism, according to leaders of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department.

But the biggest challenge to Christians will come from the New Age movements and Islam, said Gary Leazer, one of the three interfaith witness leaders who conducted conferences on "Theological Trends and Chaplaincy" at the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

The three spoke at the annual chaplains' conferences sponsored by the board's chaplaincy division. A common curriculum for the conference was written by Leazer, director of the HMB interfaith witness department; Maurice Smith, associate interfaith witness director; and James Browning; a former interfaith witness national missionary who now is a Kansas City, Mo., pastor.

Speaking at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., Leazer cited five trends related to the pluralism mega-trend.

First is the decline of denominationalism. "In the future we're going to see less loyalty to a particular denomination and more fuzziness between denominations," he said. "Individuals will increasingly feel free to construct their own worldview from many options present in society rather than being bound by the orthodoxy of their particular faith."

People will take the attitude of "religious consumers" who shop around between denominations and religions, Leazer said, noting, "If one denomination does not offer a particular item, people will go to another faith to find it."

Mega-churches with "full-service" programming are a current indication of this trend, he said. In response, smaller churches will become more narrowly focused on specific people groups, he predicted.

The mega-trend of pluralism will create more membership transfers between denominations, Leazer said. He cited Gallup Poll statistics that only one in 24 Americans left the faith of his or her childhood in 1955, compared to one in three in 1985.

At the same time, Protestant denominations are becoming more alike, as differences in the educational and economic status of members are narrowed, he said.

Also, formerly regional churches continue moving into new areas, Leazer said, noting the growth of Southern Baptists outside the Bible Belt and the growth of Roman Catholics inside the Bible Belt.

The decline of denominationalism means Southern Baptists will be impacted more by para-church organizations, he added, citing personnel, finances, literature and a return to the society approach to funding as crucial concerns.

A second trend is increasing millennial fervor as A.D. 2000 approaches.

"Between 1995 and 2000, there will be an unbelievable number of dates set," he said. But to stay on the safe side, more self-proclaimed prophets will connect their prophecies to major events as they happen rather than predicting dates in advance, he added.

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"If you set a date and it doesn't come true, you lose a lot of your followers," Leazer reasoned. "So rather than setting a date for the future, people will take some event that has just occurred and say, 'Look, this fulfills this prophecy.'"

The impact on ministers will be an increasing number of church members who seek counsel, saying, "This person appears to be accurate in his predictions."

"We need to preach what the Bible says about eschatalogy so they will be equipped to deal with these self-proclaimed prophets," he said.

A third trend will be Eastern and occult spirituality becoming mainstream. As these non-Christian religions gain acceptance in society, Christians will feel the influence in their churches, Leazer predicted.

"People will go to a study group on Hinduism on Friday night and then come to church on Sunday and try to interject those ideas into Bible study."

The fourth trend is that New Age movements will come of age. New Age ideas "will continue to influence the way Americans think and do religion," he said.

Leazer said these influences will include attempts to discover community within specialized enclaves rather than through institutional membership, greater inclusion of laity and women in leadership roles, and marketing religion as a product.

A fifth trend is that Islam will join Christianity and Judaism in the nation's religious establishment.

By A.D. 2000, more Muslims will live in America than Jews, Leazer said. Currently the country is home to 4.7 million Muslims and 5.9 million Jews. However, about 4,000 Americans embrace Islam every year. Eight of nine converts are black Americans.

This change is significant because as Muslims gain in number they will demand more rights for their religious practices, which Leazer said could put strains on chaplaincy programs and the policies of public schools.

Southern Baptists could respond to this increasing religious pluralism with anger, fear, confusion, compromise, denial, understanding or cooperation, he said.

"For many Southern Baptists, the challenge to cooperate with people of other religions is one of the most difficult responses to religious pluralism," Leazer said. But he noted, "Baptist chaplains have always been in the forefront of endeavors to work with and to minister alongside people of other religions."

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Interfaith witness still
vital, HMB leader says

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

Baptist Press
3/7/90

NASHVILLE (BP)--Interfaith witness remains a vital concern for Southern Baptists, despite budget and staff cutbacks at their Home Mission Board, the denomination's interfaith witness leader said.

Gary Leazer, director of the HMB interfaith witness department, spoke to state interfaith witness coordinators during their annual meeting in Nashville March 3-6.

"1989 was a roller-coaster ride for us in interfaith witness," he said, explaining that the department lost two staff positions and a percentage of its operating budget as a result of financial cutbacks at the HMB last year.

"I still believe interfaith witness is a much-needed program in our convention," Leazer added. "We're one of the few denominations who have a program to help people understand other religions and how to deal with them."

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Leazer cited increasing religious pluralism in the United States as a primary reason for interfaith witness. He reported that 836 new religions had been started in the United States since 1940, with 710 of those surviving.

"Where we as Southern Baptists are strongest is where other groups find their mission field," he said. "We need to be aware of these people who are all around us and equip our people to witness to them."

To illustrate, he cited statistics on a variety of religious groups, both old and new:

- Roman Catholics now number 53.5 million in the United States and are experiencing significant growth in the Bible Belt.

- America is the largest Jewish nation in the world, with 5.9 million Jews;

- Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the United States with 4.7 million adherents, and will surpass Judaism in number of followers by A.D. 2000.

- Mormonism still is growing in America, with 4 million members, counting infants and children.

- Buddhism and Hinduism are moving into traditional Bible Belt areas such as Nashville, presenting their Eastern doctrines in sermon and Sunday school formats that appeal to Western minds.

- Jehovah's Witnesses are growing at a rate of 3 percent each year, which Leazer noted is not a high growth rate but outpaces Southern Baptists' growth.

Leazer called on interfaith witness coordinators to lead Southern Baptists in understanding false doctrines. "The question Jesus asked of Peter, 'Who do you say that I am?' is still the most important question we can ask," he stressed.

When confronted with other religious groups, Christians should ask, "What does this group believe about Jesus?" he said.

Interfaith witness serves two roles in evangelism, Leazer said. The first is that of pre-evangelism, or building witnessing relationships.

"You cannot demand the right to be heard by people of other faiths," he said. "Interfaith witness allows you to build relationships with people so they will listen to your gospel."

The second role is as a complement to traditional evangelism programs, Leazer said, explaining that conversion of people of different faiths usually is usually the result of months or years of conversation with someone concerned about interfaith witness. Both the watering and the harvesting are important, he said.

Also at the meeting, Roy Edgemon of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board urged participants to reach children for Jesus.

"People who care about children bring them to Jesus," he said, noting the various traumas modern children face in unchurched homes.

Two men received awards for their work in interfaith witness. Cary Worthington, a pastor from Quitman, Miss., was named interfaith witness associate of the year. Don Otwell of the Florida Baptist Convention was named state interfaith witness coordinator of the year.

Cambodia approves visas
for Southern Baptists

By Michael Chute

N-FMB

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (BP)--The Cambodian government agreed in February to grant visas allowing Southern Baptist representatives to live in that country for the first time.

The visa approval and decision to place Southern Baptist personnel in Cambodia came during a survey visit to that country by representatives of Cooperative Services International, the Southern Baptist aid organization. CSI has tried unsuccessfully for three years to obtain residence visas for workers directing aid projects in Cambodia.

"We're doing all we can from outside the country," said Jack Shelby, CSI's Hong Kong-based administrator. "If we're going to expand our program, we must have people living there to expedite the projects. Now is the time to do that."

CSI representatives Bruce and Gloria Carlton are scheduled to move in April from their base in Hong Kong to Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital. Carlton directs CSI's Cambodia program, which focuses primarily on health-care services. Carlton is from Georgetown, Ky.; Mrs. Carlton is from Elkins, Ark.

The survey team of Shelby, Carlton and development specialist Fred Kauffman found the situation in Cambodia "much more secure than we had anticipated," Shelby reported. "The country's stability has improved tremendously just in the last six months."

Fighting between Cambodian government forces and rebel factions centers along the border with Thailand and in Cambodia's north and northwest regions. Three rebel groups -- the communist Khmer Rouge, the U.S.-supported Khmer People's National Liberation Front and the Sihanoukist National Army -- are battling the Vietnamese-backed government of Hun Sen in those regions. But Shelby called the central region around Phnom Penh and the southeast "very peaceful."

United Nations' Security Council member nations are trying to persuade resistance factions to negotiate a peace settlement. Also, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen is conferring with Cambodia's Prince Norodom Sihanouk about possible solutions to the conflict. One such meeting took place Feb. 23, shortly before the CSI team left Phnom Penh.

Meanwhile, the government has made some moves toward more social freedom, according to observers. One evidence of more openness: in January Cambodian Protestants and Catholics were told they could hold public worship services. Ten small Christian congregations now meet openly in Phnom Penh.

Nearly 30 non-government aid organizations working in Cambodia have offices in Phnom Penh, including religious groups such as the Mennonite Central Committee, Lutheran World Service, Church World Service, World Council of Churches and Australian Catholic Relief Services. Foreign doctors and nurses are now working in rural areas of the country. That was deemed too risky a few months ago because of rebel activity, Shelby noted.

"This government openness told us it was safe to go ahead" with placing personnel, said Shelby. The expatriate community in Cambodia now numbers 126, more than double the number six months ago, he added. "Essentially we're there to serve the needs of the people as effectively as we can in pursuit of CSI's mandate to minister to people in areas where missionaries can't go."

CSI projects in Cambodia concentrate on health care -- one of the nation's greatest needs, especially among children. Cambodia had 665 doctors in 1975 when the Khmer Rouge took power. Just 12 doctors were found alive when Vietnam overthrew the Khmer Rouge regime less than five years later. Only four still practiced medicine.

Since Southern Baptists' first worker in Cambodia -- Marvin Raley -- was a pediatrician, CSI became a partner in the Hun Sen government's fight against malnourishment and inadequate health care for children.

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CSI work in Cambodia now includes:

-- Work with the pediatric department of the government's January 7 Hospital in Phnom Penh. Southern Baptist help provides medicine, nutrition aid and basic medical equipment.

-- Three years ago, CSI helped Cambodia's ministry of industry build the Kbal Thnal RINE Center. Meeting needs of children in rehydration, immunization, nutrition and education -- RINE -- the hospital serves factory workers and their families. Southern Baptist funds provide the hospital's nutrition aid and helped build the facility.

-- CSI will provide \$50,000 to build a hospital in Kompong Cham province, a rural area. The hospital should be finished by June, officials said. The CSI aid funded about 90 percent of construction costs, with the district government providing the remainder.

-- CSI just completed construction of the Prey Veng Nursing School. Located in Prey Veng province's capital city, the school accommodates 125 nurses and midwives in a one-year basic nursing course. The school has petitioned the government to add two more years to its program, but approval has yet to be granted. The project cost \$16,000.

In addition to locating the Carltons in Cambodia, CSI plans to increase provision of pediatric medicines to both the January 7 and Kbal Thnam hospitals. CSI is attempting to assure hospital administrators of a regular supply of medicine, Shelby said. One official told the survey team medical supplies arrive at sporadic intervals "but these shipments are never enough."

CSI also is looking for ways to diversify its projects in Cambodia, probably by moving into agriculture and water development. In recent years CSI also has provided typhoon and drought relief.

Southern Baptists also are being asked to supply a health coordinator and elementary school teacher for Cambodia. The teacher is needed to help start a school for the growing expatriate community.

"The greatest thing that could happen to help Cambodia would be for peace to break out," Shelby concluded. "I came away with the strong conviction that we have to pray for peace in Cambodia."

But peace, if it comes, will bring a tremendous need for health care, social and agricultural relief in Cambodia's northwest, scene of the most intense fighting in the long guerrilla war, Shelby added.

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Winds damage church twice;
congregation strengthened

By Charles Willis

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Baptist Press
3/7/90

OXFORD, Ala. (BP)--"We have a beautiful ceiling today," Pastor Clyde Roberts joked as he escorted guests into the sanctuary at Grace Baptist Church of Oxford, Ala., in late February.

The ceiling, in fact, was part tongue-and-groove wood and part blue sky with fluffy clouds floating eastward. The unusual interior/exterior decor was the result of tornado-like winds that had blasted the worship center several weeks earlier in the early hours of Feb. 9.

Roberts has maintained a philosophical outlook, despite the second disaster to hit the church in less than a year.

The story began April 4, 1989. That is when the first tornado swept through the eastern Alabama town, tearing off the church steeple and picking up the roof. Part of the roof shifted six inches before it fell back on the beams. The steeple landed tip down inside the sanctuary, mashed and wedged in the roof's separation.

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"It looked like a rocket coming into the sanctuary," Roberts recalled.

The 400-member congregation reoccupied the facility three months later, in July, and, Roberts said, everyone was proud of the fresh, clean appearance of the sanctuary following \$100,000 in repairs.

But the memories of Feb. 9, 1990, have far overshadowed those of the first disaster. About 4:30 that morning, Roberts was in bed, listening to the sounds of strong winds moaning between his house and the church.

"I heard a loud noise, and I thought, 'Here we go again,'" he said.

The source of the noise was the recently replaced steeple landing in Roberts' driveway. Flashes of lightning illuminated the church enough that he could see the roof was open to the rain.

"I kept wondering, 'What are the people going to think?'"

Members began gathering at the church by 6:30 that morning, and by noon they were working to load drenched pews onto a flatbed truck for temporary storage in a warehouse. They worked throughout the day, part of the time with rain falling inside and outside the building.

Members shed fewer tears this time, despite the shock and disappointment. While they were "angered," Roberts said, "they took it in stride."

On Sunday morning, the fellowship hall was packed and overflowing into adjacent rooms for worship.

While the members of Grace Baptist Church were experienced in coping with distress and inconvenience, they were not as well prepared to deal with decisions about building repairs.

Since the February damage had split and shifted some of the laminated beams arching the sanctuary, opinions varied on building repair or total replacement. Separation of the exterior brick veneer from the interior walls led some to wonder if total demolition might be required.

If having their sanctuary damaged for the second time were not enough, the high winds also blew some of the congregation's dreams off course.

"We had been working with the (Southern Baptist) Sunday School Board's church architecture department on plans for an educational wing," Roberts said. "After the latest sanctuary damage, I called Gwenn McCormick (director of the architectural service) to ask him to put our plans on hold and to see if he could advise us on the sanctuary. The following Saturday, he was here to meet with us."

McCormick helped the church's properties committee explore options, Roberts said.

"He pointed to obstacles and disadvantages the average church member wouldn't consider. And he helped us consider the future as well as our immediate needs," Roberts continued. "He brought experience to put into focus matters most of us couldn't handle."

Costs of building repairs, the services of a structural engineer and refinishing pews are expected to exceed \$200,000, he said. The architectural consultation is a free service available to all Southern Baptist churches.

"Our goal is to be back in the sanctuary by Easter morning," Roberts asserted. "In a way, the storms have helped. Having the problems to deal with has brought us closer together. I tell our folks God chastises those he loves. He must love us a lot."

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

When disaster strikes churches,
architectural service offers help

By Charles Willis

F -SSB

NASHVILLE (BP)--When Gwenn McCormick answered the call for help from Grace Baptist Church in Oxford, Ala., he was following his department's long-standing commitment to provide emergency service for churches in the throes of disaster.

Tornado-like winds had hit the church's sanctuary for the second time in less than a year, leaving the congregation uncertain of the building's future.

McCormick, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church architecture department, knows churches crippled by a natural disaster cannot afford to "wait in line" for service.

"We do give them priority treatment," he said. "We give them instant turn-around time on any drawings and studies we have to do for them. Whereas normally they would wait five to six weeks for drawings, we can have them available within a week.

"Wherever possible, we adjust travel schedules to give such churches immediate consultation, and there is no charge for that."

In fact, consultative services to churches by the board's church architecture service are free, with the exceptions of intensive consultation, interior design service, and master plan development/landscape services. These exceptions are offered on a cost-recovery basis.

"Our first concern," McCormick said, "is to help the congregation assess the damages and to get professional evaluation of damages to ensure structural integrity of the building."

"Then we try to help them avoid superficial solutions to the problems, and we help them determine if church growth will affect the decision to restore or enlarge a damaged facility."

Seven people, including McCormick, provide field services to Southern Baptist churches.

In the case of meeting emergency architectural needs, McCormick said, the church architecture department staff can:

- Provide preliminary drawings based on program space needs.
- Make available sets of complete working drawings of plans that were developed for congregations of fewer than 250 persons in worship.
- Specify types of local professional help needed.
- Assist the church with sound financial planning.
- Help church leaders evaluate options.
- Provide suggestions on loss management.

"Not all insurance adjusters are committed to the best solution for the client," McCormick said. "A small church usually can't afford a professional loss-management firm, but they often need support to know how to maximize their coverage of the loss. We try to help them know the best way to deal with their insurance company after a disaster strikes."

Over the years, the board's church architecture department has provided priority service to congregations whose churches have been damaged by hurricane, tornado, flood and fire.

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Inquiries about architectural services for Southern Baptist churches may be made by writing Church Architecture Department, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234 or by calling (615) 251-2466.

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Spanish evangelicals,
Jews win new rights

By Linda Fisher

N-FMB

Baptist Press
3/7/90

MADRID, Spain (BP)--Evangelical Christians and Jews gained new legal recognition and rights as the Spanish government signed a first-ever agreement with non-Roman Catholic religious groups Feb. 21, according to a report in the daily newspaper El Pais.

The agreement provides legal recognition of Jewish and evangelical marriages, offers religious instruction in different faiths in public schools when parents desire it and opens the way for non-Catholic clergy to enroll in the social security system. Catholicism has dominated Spain for centuries.

The document was signed by Enrique Mugica, the justice minister; Jose Cardona, a Baptist pastor and general secretary of the Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities, representing 13 evangelical and Protestant faiths; and Samuel Toledano, representing the Spanish Jewish community.

The accord also provides an income tax deduction plan for church contributions. The evangelical and Jewish groups turned down an offer to share in the proceeds of the current "religious tax," in which taxpayers designate a portion of their annual income taxes to a specific religious or social service entity. The offer to share in the religious tax revenue was controversial among evangelicals, who refused it on the grounds that it would create dependence of religious groups on the state.

"The state ... should value the religious aspect, but not subsidize it," said Cardona. "Protestants, who are finally self-supporting, cannot approve a state which designates the funds of all its citizens to finance confessions that are against the beliefs of those citizens. ... Every church which receives money from the state is compromised with the state."

Mugica declared the accord a "triumph for ... Spain" and indicated the government plans to extend the same privileges to Muslims.

"The agreement closes an age of 498 years, since the Royal Decree of 1492 expelled Jews, and brings an end to an intolerant system," a spokesman for the Jewish community stated.

During the years of the Franco dictatorship, many Protestants and evangelicals also suffered "an oppression in which the spiritual unity of the country was considered patriotism," Cardona added.

The 13 groups comprising the Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities count 1,300 places of worship, 1,100 pastors and about 60,000 active members. Jews in Spain have 14 communities with about 15,000 active members.

Cardona, 70, a lawyer as well as a pastor, has been at the forefront of the drive to establish the rights and recognition of non-Catholic faiths granted in the new accords. Since 1959 he has been general secretary of the evangelical federation, formerly the Evangelical Defense Commission, established to arbitrate questions of religious discrimination or persecution.

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Fisher is press representative for Southern Baptist representatives in Spain.

CORRECTION: The last paragraph of the 2/27/90 Baptist Press article titled "Sharing faith in Christ adventure for Mitchell" should begin:

"It's not a matter of ...

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Dallas Baptist University
repays loan 2 years early

By Orville Scott

N-Texas

DALLAS (BP)--The executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas voted March 6 to accept repayment of Dallas Baptist University's \$2.5 million loan from the convention two years early.

The 10-year interest-free emergency loan and a \$500,000 gift were approved by the 193-member executive board in 1982 to help DBU meet accumulated deficits and pay off outstanding bonds.

Jerry Dawson, director of the Texas Baptist Christian education coordinating board, said interest on the loan at 8 percent quarterly would have amounted to more than \$2.2 million in eight years.

Funds to repay the convention came through the estate of the late Dorothy Bush, who gave more than \$6 million to DBU over the years, said Gary Cook, the school's president since April 1988.

"God has kept us alive for a purpose. In two or three years, we should be where Texas Baptists would like us to be," Cook said.

DBU steadily has increased its enrollment for several years, ranking third in total students among the eight Texas Baptist universities.

In 1990, DBU had the largest enrollment growth among the schools, increasing from 2,029 students last spring to 2,254 students this spring, Cook said.

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Baptists must repent,
Blackaby tells Texans

By Orville Scott

N-Texas

Baptist Press
3/7/90

DALLAS (BP)--One of the greatest tragedies for Southern Baptists would be to have moderate success with "Here's Hope" simultaneous revivals but to never repent, Henry Blackaby warned Texas Baptist directors of missions and prayer coordinators in Dallas.

Blackaby, prayer and spiritual awakening consultant with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, helped lead a three-day session training associational leaders in developing a coordinated prayer effort in the churches.

Participants prayed and wept together in repentance and intercessory prayer for their associations, churches and individuals. Prayer continued throughout the night.

"It seems that maybe 25 years ago, God took down the hedges from Southern Baptists," said Blackaby. "Since then, it seems that every time we've gone against the enemy, we've lost."

For 25 years, Blackaby said, pornography and filth has gone unchecked. Gambling wins more and more across the nation, he added.

"If we are the light, and there is increasing darkness, what would you say about the light? he asked. "Is there a connection between our sin and our nation?"

"If we misread the remedial judgment of God and do not call people to repent, he will hold us accountable."

Blackaby recalled his agony after hearing an authority say that he didn't know of any large denomination in history that ever turned around when it started to go down.

"I must have wept for a week," Blackaby said, "until I heard God saying: 'That was the opinion of a man. If my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.'" (II Chr. 7:14)

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Blackaby said he asked, "How do you turn a nation around?" and heard God saying, "You don't; I do."

"How do you contact all the leaders?" Blackaby asked God.

"You don't; I do," God responded, Blackaby said.

"We wept and shared our hearts with all the major leaders of Southern Baptist agencies, as well as elected leaders, in two months," said Blackaby. "Only God could do that."

If America is to survive, revival must come from the leadership to the people, Blackaby said, noting that revivals from the top down are strong and long.

"Southern Baptists have started more mission churches out of splits but have not repented," he said.

God's solution for corporate sin is a solemn calling of the people together by the leaders, Blackaby noted.

The "Solemn Assembly" is culminating in revival in many places across the country, he said.

"America, there's hope, because the people of God are coming back to him and repenting," Blackaby said.

In Cameron, Texas, he said, "the whole town -- six denominations -- came together, confessed their sins, and God has moved mightily."

Warning that other denominations are looking to Southern Baptists for leadership, Blackaby said: "There is a deep moving of God from North Dakota to Wyoming to Illinois to the Northwest. I believe with all my heart that we're in one of the greatest movings of God in history."

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Hungarian Baptists may recover
properties seized by government

By Mike Creswell

N-FMB

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BUDAPEST, Hungary (BP)--Hungarian Baptists expect to recover 11 key buildings and plots of land seized by the government during the early 1950s, including several bought with Southern Baptist help.

In some cases Baptists will not get back the actual properties taken but may receive other buildings and properties as compensation, said Janos Viczian, president of the Baptist Union of Hungary.

The total value of the properties likely will be hundreds of thousands of dollars, Viczian said.

A recent Hungarian television news story on the government move showed a letter from the Baptist union listing the properties Baptists are asking to be returned.

The return of buildings and land to churches is resulting from a package of laws dealing with "freedom of conscience and religion and on the churches" introduced in the Hungarian Parliament in January by Kalman Kulcsar, the government's minister of justice.

Under the new laws, the government promises not to interfere in the affairs of churches but assures churches they can play a more significant role in national religious life as well as in educational, cultural, social and health affairs.

A greater role for Hungarian churches "will have a positive effect on society as a whole and on its moral standards," Kulcsar told a Budapest newspaper.

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The change in the Hungarian government's position on religion in society is one of many that has swept the country after the domination of the Communist Party ended last year. In January, Hungary became the second East European country to re-establish ties with the Vatican; Poland did so last July.

Baptists aren't the only religious group regaining property. A seminary in the city of Esztergom has been returned to the Roman Catholic Church. "It has 200 rooms and includes a church building," Viczian explained. "But it needs refurbishing and the church cannot afford to fix it up. Baptists will have a similar problem. How will we renovate them? ... But establishing ownership is the most important thing."

Properties Baptists want returned include several in the heart of Budapest. One of the most valuable is a three-story building once used as a seminary. It is located a few blocks from the famous landmark Heroes' Square. The building was purchased with help from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1946. It once housed 18 seminary students and five teachers. Now it is used as the embassy of North Korea.

Another property was the first seminary built by the Foreign Mission Board in Hungary, in 1926. The building was rendered unusable by bombing in World War II. The land now is Bem Square, a public park located directly across the Danube River from the Hungarian Parliament building. "There is no way to estimate the value of this land," said Viczian.

Other sites include an orphanage and adjoining church building in Budapest and more than five acres of land in the town of Bekes near the Romanian border, which Baptists had purchased to build a camp.

In the most unusual case, the government confiscated a Budapest church and Baptists had to pay \$4,000 annually as rent to use their own building between 1950 and 1985. The church constructed a new building in 1985 and now is the second-largest Baptist congregation in Budapest. The original building is empty.

Some of the confiscated buildings still are seen by Hungarian Baptists as reminders of the help they received from Southern Baptists through the 1920s, '30s and '40s, Viczian said. Beginning in 1950, the government severely limited mission work. The Foreign Mission Board continues to work with Hungarian Baptists and has helped fund renovation of church buildings in recent months.

Baptists and other Christians are enjoying their new liberty, Viczian said, noting, "The freedom in Hungary is unbelievable."

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Revival breaks out
before 'Here's Hope' meeting

By Mark Wingfield

F-HMB

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OAKLAND, Calif. (BP)--A California church has been forced to postpone its "Here's Hope" revival because advance outreach already has brought in 1,250 new converts, filling the church's sanctuary to overflowing.

True Vine Baptist Church in Oakland, will host its "Here's Hope" revival in September rather than April. That will allow the church to secure a meeting hall large enough to seat the crowds that already are too large for Sunday services, Pastor Newton Carey Jr. says.

Meanwhile, church members continue to share their faith through door-to-door distribution of "Here's Hope" New Testaments throughout Oakland. The church has nearly depleted its supply of 12,000 marked testaments.

True Vine is one of thousands of Southern Baptist churches nationwide preparing for the "Here's Hope. Jesus cares for you." simultaneous revivals sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Most revivals are planned for March and April.

The 500-member True Vine Church has experienced revival before the scheduled meeting, Carey said. "How could you have a better revival than 1,250 people already saved?" he asks.

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The church will host a revival meeting during the time scheduled for its "Here's Hope" revival in April but will focus on a larger "Here's Hope" meeting now scheduled for September.

"They're winning people to Christ so fast they can't even keep up with the records," says home missionary Bill Simms, who is assisting in the outreach.

Despite the addition of a Friday night worship service, the response has caused overflow conditions in the church's tiny sanctuary. At the 11 a.m. Sunday morning service, visitors fill the aisles, sit on the platform and stand outside the doors.

"I tell people, 'If you're not here at 10:30, don't come; there's no room,'" Carey says.

About 75 people started attending the Friday night service, but those pews were filled the next Sunday, the pastor says, noting, "We never saw the vacant seats."

Carey credits two human factors as instrumental in the revival: Continuing Witness Training and the "Here's Hope" New Testaments. CWT is a program of personal evangelism supported by the Home Mission Board's evangelism section. The marked, paperback New Testaments were produced by the Holman publishing division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. The testaments and other "Here's Hope" materials are available by calling the "Here's Hope" toll-free number, (800) 346-1990.

Since November, members of True Vine have given one Saturday per month to door-to-door visitation throughout Oakland. The members knock on doors, present residents with "Here's Hope" New Testaments and offer to point out a few key Scriptures.

If the recipient is open, the lay evangelists go through the plan of Christian salvation that is outlined in the marked New Testament.

True Vine is a predominantly black congregation, situated in a poor neighborhood of Oakland. The city is best known for its high drug-related crime rate and for being the site of the double-decker freeway collapse during last fall's World Series Earthquake.

Just around the corner from the small stucco church building is the Acorn Housing Project, 750 apartments the government reserves strictly for single black women with children.

"'Here's Hope' has been more appropriate than anything Southern Baptists could have done for us," explains Sallie Carey, the pastor's wife and church evangelism director. "When you see a family whose 14-year-old child has been killed in an accident, babies on crack, and you go to those families and say 'Here's Hope,' wouldn't that catch your eye?" she says, holding up one of the blue-and-gold New Testaments with the "Here's Hope" logo.

"This church has taken 'Here's Hope' to the N-th degree," says Simms. "It's just tailored to this church. I'd say it's the biggest thing that ever hit Oakland.

"This town is on the verge of a dynamic revival. Something is going to happen here."

True Vine got a head start on "Here's Hope" outreach by starting a CWT program two years ago. Mrs. Carey received a CWT manual in the mail and began teaching it in the church. She had trained 100 people with the personal evangelism tool before being certified as a CWT trainer herself.

Armed with nothing but the gospel, the church determined to claim the Acorn Housing Project for Christ, she says. At that time, the buildings in the housing project were riddled with bullet holes, and drug deals transpired openly on the streets.

"The police didn't even come in here at night," Carey says. "But we used Jesus and went on over."

Mrs. Carey and a handful of True Vine members marched around the project seven times, stopping at strategic points to pray and claim the neighborhood for Christ. But nothing happened.

So they marched around seven more times, praying for a miracle. Soon afterward, the church held a block party for the project's residents, and things began to change.

"The walls of Jericho didn't fall down because they marched," the pastor explained, drawing upon Joshua's similar march around the biblical city. "They fell because the people believed."

The block party opened the door for True Vine to use a community room at the Acorn Project for a twice-weekly ministry to children. On Thursday and Friday nights, about 80 children ages 5-18 come for food and Bible study.

The housing project is now "a different place," Simms reports.

"We're teaching them how to love," Mrs. Carey explains. "They really didn't know how to love."

"We let them know that if no one else cares for them, God cares."

"If you could just see the children's faces when they know someone cares for them. If you could see where they came from and where they are now -- it's like a 100 percent change."

Carey has been pastor at True Vine for 15 years, persevering through more than a decade of lean times before reaping the current harvest. "It has to be God," he exclaims. "We couldn't have done this."

Now other pastors are knocking on his door, asking what he is doing differently. He starts by telling them about Southern Baptist Sunday school literature and CWT.

"We were never able to get evangelism off the ground," he says. "But after my wife first taught CWT, it put 30 people out on the streets witnessing."

The "Here's Hope" emphasis added momentum to that fire, Mrs. Carey said: "We're not going to let this die. From now on, we're going to make the theme of our church 'Here's Hope.'"

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