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July 27, 1990

90-96

FMB chairman affirms Parks,
announces Lottie Moon plan By Bob Stanley & Donald D. Martin N-7mb

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--The new trustee chairman of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board called R. Keith Parks "God's man for this hour" and said "we as the trustees unanimously and uncompromisingly affirm Keith Parks as our leader of the Foreign Mission Board."

Bill Hancock of Kentucky, chairman since April, gave the affirmation at a missionary appointment service July 26 climaxing a four-day board meeting.

Later he explained that the statement was a spontaneous declaration that he felt led to make by God's Spirit.

Observers felt the statement was a signal that the trustees have no plans to replace Parks as president of the board, despite widespread reports that some conservative trustees had planned to do so.

Forty new missionaries, at least four with ethnic backgrounds, were appointed to work in 18 countries at a special Jericho Week service in Holcomb Auditorium at the Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center. With 11 former missionaries who were reappointed the same day, the additions bring Southern Baptists' total foreign mission force to 3,832.

During a trustee business session a few hours earlier, Hancock announced plans to invite more than 30 of the Southern Baptist Convention's pastors to the FMB trustees' October meeting to help challenge Southern Baptists to meet their goal of \$86 million for the 1990 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

He said the decision was made at a meeting of the chairman's council, which included committee chairmen, Parks, Executive Vice President Don Kammerdiener and himself.

Hancock emphasized he doesn't want the project to compete with the Cooperative Program, the denomination's unified plan of financial support. But he stressed such an emphasis is needed to reach the challenging Lottie Moon goal, a \$5.8 million increase over the \$80.2 million given in 1989.

To be most effective, the project will need to be an ongoing program, Hancock said. The board will seek pastors who have been role models in missions giving, either through the Cooperative Program or the Lottie Moon offering, he said. They also should be people who would have the time and opportunity to return to their states and establish a support network.

Trustee Don Bowen of Virginia agreed that the plan is "potentially one of the most helpful things we have done and can do." But he urged that "we try to find representatives of the different theological issues in the convention."

Hancock said he could assure that theological positions would not be a "primary consideration" but added, "It's impossible for us to do this without bringing people who do have very definite theological positions."

He and others on the board urged trustees to work in their states to help promote both the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

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"Our bread and butter is the Cooperative Program," he said. "It's not a time to be escrowing money from the Cooperative Program," he added to a chorus of "amens."

Some leaders of the moderate faction in the Southern Baptist Convention have said they may withhold money from the Cooperative Program unless the conservatives begin to give them representation on the denomination's 20 boards and agencies. A meeting has been called for Aug. 23-25 in Atlanta to discuss such plans.

Hancock said many people are awaiting word on the Foreign Mission Board's Glorieta meeting. The "devil is not happy with what he has heard and seen here this week . . .," he said. "This has been as positive, open and optimistic a board meeting as I've attended in six years."

The trustee chairman said he and Parks would write an open letter to Southern Baptists reflecting the positive spirit of the week's meetings and appealing to Southern Baptists "not to dismantle what God has put in place and what God has been using over these years."

The letter on behalf of trustees and staff would communicate to the world that "God is alive and the ministry of the Foreign Mission Board is healthy and growing," Hancock said.

In other actions, trustees approved the official opening of mission work in Yugoslavia, where Southern Baptist personnel already have been working quietly for more than a decade. The Eastern European country will be Southern Baptists' 118th mission field. One of the reappointed missionary couples was assigned to Poland, making it the 119th mission field.

Most of the trustee meeting was spent in dialogue sessions. Topics discussed ranged from a new financial support package for missionaries to strategy for reaching the people of "World A," a designation for areas of the world where more than 1.3 billion people have never had the opportunity to hear the message of Jesus Christ.

Trustees approved a staff-developed plan to increase financial support for both career missionaries and missionary associates, effective Jan. 1. The package includes an increase in base salaries, higher U.S. cost-of-living supplements and rent allowances, increased disability coverage and, for some missionaries, higher life insurance. It also provides more help for retired missionaries facing mounting costs of nursing home care.

During one of the dialogue sessions, some trustees questioned parts of the Foreign Mission Board's policy on support of English-language churches made up of Americans and other expatriates living overseas. The policy was referred to the trustees' strategy committee for further study.

They also debated the wording of proposed new guidelines that will be used for dismissal of mission personnel.

Twelve reasons for dismissal in the guidelines include "failure to exhibit a Christian lifestyle," "the persistent advocating of doctrinal opinions inconsistent with the Baptist Faith and Message" statement, and "continuing abuse of narcotics, alcohol, tobacco, drugs or other addictive substances."

Several trustees questioned the word "abuse" and suggested that either "use" or "misuse" might be more appropriate. However, staff members noted that "use" would affect some personnel taking prescription drugs and cause a problem in certain overseas churches that believe the Bible requires use of wine for the Lord's Supper, or communion.

Trustees also set up a Stateside Capital Fund to provide for major capital needs in the United States. Funds totaling \$1.25 million were moved into the new fund. The fund enables the board to meet home-office needs and still maintain its current level of budgeting almost 88 percent of its funds for use overseas.

The trustees allocated almost \$1.25 million to meet capital needs in Eastern Europe, where Baptists now can build or expand church facilities. Parks said this appropriation brings total funds made available for Eastern Europe work to about \$3.25 million.

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During the trustees' administrative committee meeting, several trustees raised questions concerning the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland. One asked about a report he had heard that European Baptists may sell the seminary grounds. Others asked whether European Baptists have taken action on a statement of beliefs they were asked to consider when the seminary property was given to European Baptists in May 1989.

Isam Ballenger, vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, said he knows of no immediate plans to sell the valuable seminary property. But he said moving the seminary to a less expensive location might be a possibility that European Baptists will have to consider in the future. He noted that the Foreign Mission Board will begin phasing out its financial subsidy to the seminary over a 15-year period beginning in 1993.

Ballenger said the statement of Baptist principles, one of 10 recommendations made when the property was transferred, has been considered by the seminary trustees, who discussed both the difficulties and possible merit of such a statement. The matter was then referred to the General Council of the European Baptist Federation.

Because of the retirement last year of the federation's general secretary, Knud Wumpelmann, and election of a new executive, Karl-Heinz Walter, the matter has not yet been taken up by the general body, Ballenger explained. But he said he plans to remind the new executive of the FMB trustees' request later this summer.

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Eastern Europeans to get funds
for building, renovating churches

By Art Toalston

F-4MB

Baptist Press
7/27/90

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--In a time of open doors in Eastern Europe, Southern Baptists will help open or reopen the doors of numerous new or renovated churches there.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will invest nearly \$1.25 million in churches and other capital projects in seven Eastern European countries during 1991, according to action taken by trustees during their July 23-26 meeting at the Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Isam Ballenger, vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, estimated the \$1.25 million to be more than six times the board's capital funds expenditure in Eastern Europe this year.

Earlier this year, the board allocated \$1 million for Bibles, gospel films and other resources to help Eastern European Baptists evangelize their nations and strengthen their churches. Another \$1 million, from Southern Baptist hunger relief donations, helped buy seeds and related supplies for needy Romanian farmers. The board also is expanding its full-time work force in Eastern Europe from 10 to nearly 100.

One of the highest-priority capital funds items for the coming year sets aside \$60,000 to help Czechoslovakian Baptists launch their first training center for pastors and other church leaders.

The capital funds expenditure reflects a one-year emphasis on helping Eastern European Baptists with various projects stymied by former communist regimes of the region, Ballenger said. Many hoped-for church construction or renovation projects never got off the ground because of government restrictions, he noted.

Also, in Czechoslovakia, Baptists face the financial strain of providing their pastors' salaries, which were formerly paid by the government, he said.

The board's capital expenditures in Eastern Europe in future years likely will move back toward previous levels, he said. The board will continue its primary focus on locating Southern Baptist personnel in the region to help Baptists with evangelism and church-growth plans.

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The 1991 expenditure includes allocations for general building funds of Baptist unions in three countries: \$100,000 for Bulgaria, \$35,000 for Hungary and \$20,000 for Yugoslavia. Additionally, roughly \$28,000 has been set aside for Czechoslovakian and Hungarian Baptists to help launch work in strategic areas currently without a Baptist witness. Specific allocations also have been set aside for two Hungarian congregations and five in Czechoslovakia.

In most cases, the board's allocation will cover about a fourth of the cost of a church construction or renovation project, Ballenger said.

One string will be attached to the aid, he added. The board is requesting that its capital funds allocations for churches become part of a loan fund of each Baptist union to be governed by a set of trustees. "This will ensure that our gifts will help to provide for future needs in these countries," he said. "It will perpetuate the assistance."

One additional capital allocation of \$60,000 for Czechoslovakian Baptists will buy an offset press so they may produce their own training literature, tracts and other evangelistic materials. A Southern Baptist volunteer will be sought to train local people to operate the press.

In Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, a former Winter Olympics site, \$150,000 will be used to establish a facility for ministry to the large number of non-Christians in the area.

In Poland, \$80,000 will help continue the construction of the Polish Baptist Seminary near Warsaw. The construction project is a key part of a partnership between Polish and North Carolina Baptists.

In the Soviet Union, \$150,000 will purchase books and materials related to evangelism and discipleship.

In East Germany, \$50,000 will help renovate a conference center used by Baptists for retreats geared to non-Christians. Some \$18,000 will enable the Baptist seminary in Buckow to purchase video equipment for preaching classes and computer equipment for the library and seminary administration.

In Hungary, \$60,000 has been allocated for improvements at two camps that Baptists have used for youth evangelism.

"We do not anticipate that these amounts of money will be spent quickly," Ballenger said. In many cases, Baptists are negotiating with local government officials concerning a project, he said. Even the transfer of money from the United States to these countries may prove to be complicated, he added.

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Missionaries, students begin
relief to quake-stricken area

By Marty Croll

M-FMB

Baptist Press
7/27/90

BAGUIO CITY, Philippines (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries are working with about 75 Philippine Baptist seminary students to provide food in five areas of Baguio City, the earthquake-stricken mountain resort in the Philippines.

Students at the Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary in Baguio City, led by missionaries Nettie Gammage of Dixon, Tenn., and Joyce Viertel of Arp, Texas, have been cooking rice and sauce over open fires and propane burners for hungry earthquake survivors. Church members also are being mobilized.

Missionary Robert Nash, president of the seminary, has been named by the governor of Benguet Province to help coordinate relief as it comes by truck through Clark Air Base to be airlifted into regions of destruction.

Students have distributed food and medicine in refugee camps and in parks where Filipinos have set up tents, fearful of staying indoors where their homes might collapse on them. Missionary Al Gammage Jr. of Miami has helped develop an approach seminary students can use to counsel those to whom they offer food.

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Reports say the July 16 quake that rocked the northern island of Luzon killed more than 1,000 people, according to missionary Weldon Viertel of Albany, Texas, who is coordinating relief work by seminary students.

The Baguio City area is one of five points where Southern Baptist missionaries in the Philippines are concentrating relief. The areas include Cabanatuan, where Lea Garcia, a Philippine Baptist schoolteacher, and others died when the six-story Philippine Christian Academy collapsed.

As relief work got under way, monsoon rains with dense fog moved into the area, making it difficult for airplanes to land with supplies. The quake triggered landslides that sent rocks tumbling onto highways leading into Baguio City.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has sent \$100,000 to buy rice, sardines and some small tarps as temporary shelters for quake victims.

Much of Baguio City is in shambles, said Viertel. Rescue workers and others watched helplessly as repeated aftershocks caused major hotels and other buildings to crumble further on people already trapped from the first quake, he said. Daily life has virtually ground to a halt as the city has been cut off from outside commerce.

The Baptist seminary sustained less damage than surrounding buildings. Viertel estimated damage to the seminary and houses there at around \$100,000. The concrete beams that form a structure under frame buildings were reinforced by steel rods strong enough to withstand the pressure, he said.

At first, seminary students were immobilized by fear, Viertel said. Some returned home to surrounding provinces. The ones who stayed "got on top of their fear" and went to work excited about the opportunities they had to spiritually touch the thousands of people around them without homes and food, he said.

All Southern Baptist mission personnel in the Philippines are safe and uninjured, said Sam Waldron, administrator of the mission organization there. Waldron said it was "a miracle" no missionaries were hurt in the quake, measuring 7.7 on the Richter scale. Five Southern Baptist workers were stranded along a highway near Baguio City for three days until they were rescued by helicopter July 19.

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Fletcher named chancellor
at Hardin-Simmons

N. C. (Texas)

Baptist Press
7/27/90

ABILENE, Texas (BP)--Jesse C. Fletcher was elected chancellor of Hardin-Simmons University by the university's board of trustees in mid-July.

Fletcher will step down from the presidency which he has held since November 1977.

Citing completion of the Centennial celebration and his 60th birthday as appropriate points to lay aside the presidency, Fletcher indicated his strong desire to return to teaching and writing.

Robert Hitt of Abilene, chairman of the board of trustees, said the board accepted Fletcher's plans with regret, but with appreciation for his contribution and gratitude that he will continue to represent the university as chancellor.

Fletcher will be the university's second chancellor. The first was his predecessor, Elwin L. Skiles, now president emeritus.

In a letter to the HSU faculty and staff, Fletcher said, "With our second century dream beginning to take place and economic recovery underway, I think new leadership will be an invigorating experience for us all. The trustees have a broad based plan to mount a search for our new president and I'm convinced an outstanding person will be named before the school year is over."

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Kenya crusade numbers soar;
discipleship effort launched

By Craig Bird

F-FMS

MOMBASA, Kenya (BP)--The four-week Kenya Coastal Crusade ended July 22 with reports of 56,323 people making commitments of faith in Christ and 84 congregations being organized.

The launching of an innovative follow-up and discipleship program promises even greater results in the coming months as new believers are trained and begin spreading their faith in their home villages and neighborhoods, crusade leaders said.

The mammoth evangelistic effort united some 540 Southern Baptist volunteers from the United States, 60 Southern Baptist missionaries in the African country and scores of Kenyan Baptist pastors and lay workers for a pair of two-week campaigns. They worked in four areas along the Kenyan coast and at one inland location.

During a closing rally and celebration before the second batch of volunteers flew home, joy was supported by twin undercurrents: awe at the spiritual harvest and realization of the task Kenyan Christians and missionaries face in trying to bring the converts to spiritual maturity.

"We've had a hallelujah time -- but the hard work begins when we go home," pointed out Bob Clements, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustee from Austin, Texas. "I lay awake all last night thinking about the almost impossible burden we leave on the missionaries in this country. We'd better be much in prayer for them."

The volunteers voted to be part of the answer to those prayers by pledging \$40 per person to finance a 14-week follow-up program.

The \$50,000 project was developed in the opening days of the coastal crusade by missionaries, Kenyans, Foreign Mission Board officials and Billie Hanks, a Texas-based evangelist and discipleship seminar leader.

"We've got to get on this (follow-up) hot before the ravens swoop in," Hanks said, referring to the tendency of cults to spring up when people are exposed to the gospel but not grounded theologically.

Hanks carried out a one-week pilot project in the Kwale district, south of Mombasa, during the first half of the crusade. He returned to several villages where large numbers of people had prayed to become Christians, "and I was not turned down a single time when I offered them training."

A Kenyan pastor who worked with Hanks noted, "My biggest problem is getting new Christians to walk long distances to church. This time we are going to take the spiritual food to the people rather than immediately asking them to 'come and get it.'"

Hanks added that Muslim women were especially eager to study in their homes instead of incurring the wrath of their families and communities by attending Christian worship immediately after their conversion.

In Mombasa, the 35,515 people who signed spiritual commitment cards will receive letters inviting them to a series of rallies scattered throughout the city in almost 30 neighborhoods. The letter will inform them of free training booklets they will receive at the rally.

The first rally will center around a Bible study on assurance of salvation; the second will focus on maintaining daily fellowship with Jesus Christ. The third weekly rally will introduce new believers to "Who Is Jesus?" -- a 12-week Bible study that introduces the Bible Way correspondence program. Many of the rallies will be held in areas where strong Baptist churches exist in order to tie the new believers to those churches.

Follow-up strategy in rural areas depends on local pastors who served as translators for the volunteers. The pastors personally will contact those who made commitments and lead them in training.

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At least 20 Kenyan Baptists will be employed to go into the villages. They will teach four groups a day, three days a week for 14 weeks at a salary of about \$2.50 a day.

Enos Weswa, who teaches at the Kenya Baptist Theological Seminary, has been given a four-month leave to head the follow-up program. He also will teach pastors to do even more extensive discipleship training of "key laymen" who emerge in the initial 14-week program.

But as departing volunteers committed their prayers and finances to the follow-up effort, their hearts belonged to the celebration of the moment.

They came to Kenya to spread their faith in a predominantly Muslim culture, to continue and accelerate the Christian revival that has been changing the spiritual face of Mombasa for almost five years.

They left singing a medley of the old standard, "Victory in Jesus," and a song composed for the crusade, "God Give Me a Heart for Africa." They left with memories of people asking to become Christians -- and then cutting witchcraft charms from their arms or taking Muslim prayer caps off their heads.

They left with firsthand knowledge of what missionary Ralph Bethea said can happen when "ordinary people decide to sell out to God."

They left behind new Christians and new churches to be strengthened, and older Christians and churches that had been encouraged to do the job.

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

Chapman says Kenya
comments misquoted

By Craig Bird

N-FMS

Baptist Press
7/27/90

MOMBASA, Kenya (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman said positive comments he made about the friendliness of Kenyans were misconstrued in newspaper reports as political statements during the closing days of the Kenya Coastal Crusade.

The public relations director of Kenya Airways, the government-owned airline used by 540 Southern Baptist volunteers to travel to Kenya from London, came to the headquarters hotel of the crusade in Mombasa July 21 and asked to interview Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas.

While waiting for Chapman, the man talked to six or seven other volunteers about their impressions of Kenya and their reaction to news reports of recently proposed legislation in the U.S. Congress to cut off aid to the east African nation. Kenya is scheduled to receive \$46 million in U.S. aid this year.

But the legislation, proposed by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D.-Mass.), would ban U.S. aid to Kenya until democratic reforms are carried out and pro-democracy demonstrators are freed. Calls for a multi-party system in Kenya sparked violence and deaths in July as demonstrators battled police. President Daniel arap Moi's reaction to the demonstrations and his opposition to a multi-party system have caused friction between the Kenyan and U.S. governments. Chapman and former SBC President James T. Draper Jr. met briefly with Moi July 12 during the evangelistic crusade.

According to Chapman, when he joined the group talking to the Kenya Airways official, he expressed his excitement about the spiritual response to the Baptist evangelism efforts and the genial spirit with which the Kenyans they had met had welcomed the American visitors.

The following morning a front-page story in the government-owned Kenya Times declared, "U.S. Baptists rap anti-Kenyanism" and said Chapman would "lodge a strong protest with the U.S. government on the lies being published in the U.S. media about Kenya."

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The story, released through the official Kenya News Agency, also was carried by the independent Kenya Standard. The other independent daily, The Nation, carried a much briefer version of the story a day later.

Chapman denied making the statements reported in the newspaper accounts. He went to the U.S. Consulate in Mombasa and later called the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi to explain the situation. He said he was assured by American officials that the story created no problem with the U.S. government.

"At no time did I make any comments about news media reports about Kenya," Chapman said. "First, I have neither heard nor read any of the reports, so I could not comment on them. Second, I was commenting only on what I experienced in Mombasa and the one day I was in Nairobi."

Much of the misunderstanding may have occurred when the Southern Baptist volunteers reacted to a warning by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker that Americans visiting Kenya should avoid talking to "street people" because of riots. The riots occurred in central and western Kenya. No unrest was reported on the Indian Ocean coast where the American crusade was conducted.

The volunteers, who had spent two weeks preaching and spreading their Christian faith throughout Mombasa, said they had not been in danger at any time -- and in fact had been overwhelmed by the graciousness of the people.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board asks its missionaries to refrain from making political statements or engaging in political activity overseas.

Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church in Euless, Texas, and one of the organizers of the crusade, advised the volunteers to respond to any questions about political unrest in Kenya from reporters by commenting, "I don't know anything about that but let me tell you what Jesus is doing in Mombasa."

During the four weeks of the crusade 56,323 Kenyans indicated a desire to become Christians and 84 Baptist congregations were started.

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Baptist speaker angers, flees
Muslim crowd in South Africa

By Art Toalston

N-7MB

Baptist Press
7/27/90

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (BP)--A Southern Baptist evangelist fled a crowd of angry South African Muslims after a program during which he challenged the validity of Islam's holy book, the Koran.

The evangelist, Anis Shorrosh of Mobile, Ala., sustained bruises and scratches in fighting that broke out July 24 after he spoke on "The Koran and the Bible: Which Is God's Word?" to an estimated 900 people in the civic center of a suburb of Cape Town, South Africa.

One of Shorrosh's supporters suffered a head cut. Hair was yanked from another supporter's head. The back window of an auto in which Shorrosh was leaving the scene was smashed.

Shorrosh's visit to the Cape Town area was sponsored by the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa and was the first stop in a two-week speaking tour of the country.

Shorrosh is an Arab, a native of Palestine, which became part of Israel when the Jewish state was founded in 1948. He has lived in the United States 23 years. He holds degrees from Mississippi College in Clinton, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Fla.

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The evangelist devotes much of his ministry to countering the claims of Islam. He has written a book, "Islam Revealed, a Christian Arab's View of Islam," and he engaged in public debates with a noted Islamic spokesman, Ahmed Deedat, in England in 1985 and 1988. Such confrontations are criticized by some Christian workers who advocate a friendship- or dialogue-based approach to evangelizing Muslims.

In Southern Baptist life, Shorrosh nominated himself as president of the Southern Baptist Convention during the 1985 meeting in Dallas. He received a handful of votes.

The Cape Town incident has prompted the cancellation of three university speaking engagements for Shorrosh, according to a source who reported on the melee after talking to a Christian worker and two Christian students who attended the meeting. The source asked not to be identified.

Islam has gained its strongest South African footholds in Cape Town and Durban, the source said. It is "growing by leaps and bounds" in both cities, he said. "It's no little wimpy cult. It's a big movement."

Shorrosh's appearance had a high profile in Cape Town because it was advertised on posters throughout the city, the source said. As the crowd arrived for the evening program, a group of Muslims distributed three pieces of literature printed by an organization known as "Islam to the World."

One of the fliers displayed a cartoon of American preacher Jimmy Swaggart, depicted naked and holding a "holy book," and a photograph of Shorrosh.

A few minutes after Shorrosh began his scheduled 45-minute talk, heckling began from all parts of the audience, more than half of which was Muslim, the source estimated. Three Muslim leaders then walked onto the stage and sought a 45-minute rebuttal period. The moderator of the program, a leader of the Apostolic Faith Mission, granted the time.

Some of the Muslims urged the hecklers to allow Shorrosh a chance to speak, but at times Shorrosh was shouted down.

During the Muslim rebuttal period, a few isolated outbursts came from Christians in the audience, the source said. "Throughout the whole evening, the parties I've spoken to emphasized, Shorrosh remained calm with poise and exemplary demeanor," the source said.

At the end of the program, a group of about 30 Muslims "stormed the stage and surrounded Shorrosh and began a mass verbal assault, and there was jostling on the stage," the source recounted. Shorrosh and several supporters began shielding themselves from swinging fists. A number of Muslims tried to protect Shorrosh. They tried to exit the building by the back door but found it locked. One of them rammed the door to open it.

The crowd pounded on the auto in which Shorrosh was transported from the scene and smashed its back window. "They literally fled for their lives," the source said.

A Cape Town newspaper reported on the incident the next day with the headline, "Muslims attack Christian speaker." Shorrosh spent the day at an undisclosed location under police protection, the source said. Shorrosh was quoted as saying, "I told the Lord, 'If this is it, I'm ready.' It was the most harrowing event in my life."

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'Messed-up days' highlight
Kenya crusade experiences

By Craig Bird

N-FMB

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MOMBASA, Kenya (BP)--"Messed-up days" are a common topic of prayer -- but not often a cause of gratitude.

However, the crowd celebrating the end of the four-week Kenya Coastal Crusade exploded in agreement when former SBC President James T. Draper Jr. opened their celebration July 22 praying, "We thank you for the messed-up days -- because those were the days you left us in places we had not planned to go and brought us to people we would not have met. Those were the best days."

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The two-part crusade focused on 20 days of intensive evangelism. Each day, an average of four churches were organized and more than 2,800 people led to make commitments to Christ.

Their experiences left visiting Southern Baptist volunteers groping for words as their emotions outran their vocabulary.

"Awesome. Incredible. Unbelievable. Those were the most commonly used words by the volunteers," explained missionary Tom Jones. "Except for 'Bwana asifiwe.'"

That Swahili phrase means "praise God." It was appropriate:

-- Hundreds of volunteers said people they had not even spoken to came up and asked, "How can I be saved?" One of the most poignant moments occurred when a pick-up van was late and a volunteer team went into an "extra" village. An old man there excitedly seized on their opening comments. "Years ago a man came to a village near here and told about Jesus," the old man said. "He said he would come back and tell us too. But he never came back. We have been waiting all this time. The Muslims wanted to build a mosque here but we said no; we would wait to be told about Jesus. We are happy you are here, but what took you so long?"

-- One volunteer team was thrilled when a young blind girl and a blind teen-age boy responded positively to their witness, but worried if they would be able to come to church to learn more. The following Sunday the outdoor worship service had already started when a 3-year-old boy walked into the clearing holding a stick. The blind girl was holding the other end of the stick and the teen-age boy had his hand on her shoulder. A 3-year-old had been their eyes for a two-mile walk through the bush.

-- Fifteen members of a Kenyan dancing and singing troupe became Christians after five young men from the group were told about Christ as they were moving out of their former home to a new village. The new village was only a mile from the hotel where volunteers were staying, so follow-up visits resulted in 10 more conversions.

-- One volunteer, himself a converted Muslim, got government permission to go to a Muslim village, but local authorities restricted him to one spot. He chose to sit on the street corner beside the Muslim mosque. Five Muslims became Christians there.

-- At a joint baptism service in the Indian Ocean, new believers were immersed five at a time as hundreds of onlookers sang, danced and beat drums. Kenyan pastors, missionaries and volunteers spent more than an hour baptizing converts.

-- A planned service in one Mombasa neighborhood had apparently been pre-empted by a political rally. But Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was allowed to bring greetings at the rally, give a short Christian testimony and invite anyone interested in hearing more to meet under a nearby tree. When the rally ended at dark, almost 250 people prayed to receive Christ as Savior after Chapman preached.

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Former migrant worker answers
question with her testimony

By Sarah Zimmerman

F - HMB

Baptist Press
7/27/90

ERWIN, Tenn. (BP)--"How do I get out of this?" is the question most frequently asked of Lucy Aleman.

Her answer includes three points and her testimony.

Aleman, who was raised as one of 18 children in a migrant family, easily relates to the question asked by children in migrant camps in East Tennessee where she is working as a summer missionary.

One of her primary ministries is a day school for children between the ages of 6 and 12 who are too young to work in the fields. Knowing Aleman's background, they frequently ask how they can get out of migrant work.

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Aleman first tells them how to accept Jesus Christ as Savior. Aleman says she heard the gospel several times as a child from Christian groups which ministered in migrant camps. But she says, "I couldn't comprehend that he could be my Savior because I couldn't believe that he could love someone like me."

Aleman's second point is that the children must study and stay in school. The transient nature of migrant families and their work schedule make it difficult for children to keep up their class work.

When Aleman was in the seventh grade, she functioned at a third grade level. At age 15, she was ready to drop out of school, then she met an English teacher and a Baptist pastor who saw her potential.

"All they did was believe in me," Aleman says, but that was enough to change her life's direction.

Rather than dropping out, she graduated from Vernon High School in Vernon, Texas, and earned her bachelor's degree from Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas. This spring she completed her first year at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., where she is working toward her master's degree in social work and divinity.

Aleman's third piece of advice to migrant children is to "know you have a choice."

"Migrants are good people -- some have been doing this for years. Most of them don't want to be migrants," Aleman says, but typically their lack of English and trade skills lock them into their lifestyle. She tells the children: "You don't need to be migrant workers unless you choose to be."

Aleman also works with adults in the migrant camp. This summer about 250 adults are participating in an evening program to learn to drive. One man, Aleman recalls, used a Spanish dictionary and spent three hours taking the 1-page, written license exam, but he passed.

Such activities are essential in creating witnessing opportunities among migrants. Aleman reports that all of the 16 children who attend the day school have made professions of faith in Jesus Christ, and 14 others made professions of faith during a revival.

Though most migrants have a Catholic background, Aleman says they are open to knowing how to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ "if we share the gospel with credibility and prove that we are not out to exploit them."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist papers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press

Spiritual errors cause
sickness in churches

Baptist Press
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RIDGECREST, N.C.(BP)--Many Southern Baptist churches need to be hospitalized because they are sick due to errors of relationship with God, Harold Bryson said during the Bible Preaching/Administration Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Bryson, professor of preaching at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, led a study of the book of Colossians. He said Christians constantly are confronted with the secular mindset where human philosophies are mingled with thoughts about God.

Errors which confront the church come from both outside and inside, Bryson said.

"A common error which has crept into the church today is that some people think the demands of Jesus and the demands of Christian living are not absolute," he continued. "Jesus never gave permission to sin two percent of the time.

"The New Testament is to help people start the pilgrimage to take up the slack from where they are to where God wants them to be," he said. "When error threatens you, you need more than humanism; you need a word from God."

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From inside the church, several errors confront Christians when legalism is emphasized over the examples of Christ, said Bryson.

Also, Christians are wrong when they read horoscopes for direction in daily living instead of looking to Christ, he said.

"Paul, in the letter to the Colossians, spent little time on the errors, but instead offered positive affirmation of Christ and his work," Bryson said. "Many churches today focus on error and exposing it rather than concentrating on Christ."

"Churches need to be hospitalized because the errors are a sickness," he said. "Christ is the head of his body, the church, and the head directs the body. When the body won't execute the orders of the head, there is sickness.

Bryson said many pastors make a mistake when they think they know all about the Bible in terms of facts, statistics, grammar and construction.

"Be careful when you think you know what a text says," he warned pastors. "There is always more. A text that spoke to me once, can speak to me again and again.

"The Bible is always beyond us," he said. "It is not enough to know the Bible cognitively, but you must also know it experientially -- that God lives in your heart.

"All doctrine should be gauged on Jesus Christ," he said. "If a doctrine doesn't glorify Jesus Christ, it is in error. Some people are more interested in the doctrine than the person it represents.

"The antidote for errors includes prayer for those who are being confronted by the errors," he explained.

"Another antidote is to present a positive statement of Christianity," he added. "However you cut it, Christianity is Christ.

"Enhance your relationship to Jesus Christ," Bryson encouraged Baptists. "In reading the Bible, you should encounter Christ, because the Christ of the Bible is alive."