

# (BP)

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August 8, 1990

90-103

Baptist family in Kuwait  
moves to U.S. embassy

By Art Toalston

N-FMB

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait (BP)--A Southern Baptist family in Iraqi-controlled Kuwait has taken shelter in the U.S. Embassy there, according to an Aug. 8 report from the U.S. State Department's Kuwait task force.

The Southern Baptist workers, Maurice and Laurie Graham, had been in the Persian Gulf country less than three months when Iraq invaded Kuwait Aug. 2. Graham is from Shelbyville, Tenn. Mrs. Graham is from Hutchinson, Kan.

A State Department spokesperson, who asked not to be identified, said she did not know how many Americans have taken refuge at the U.S. Embassy. An estimated 3,000 Americans live in Kuwait. Some were reported to be seeking safety at the embassy as conditions in the capital deteriorate and food becomes harder to obtain.

"We do plan to have people leave as soon as it is possible to travel," the spokesperson said. "The airports, land borders and docks are all closed at the moment."

The Grahams were assigned to an evangelical church across the street from Kuwait's national assembly building. The assembly building was among a number of government facilities stormed by Iraqi troops. After several brushes with Iraqi troops who entered their home on the church compound, the Grahams and their two sons, ages 13 and 10, took shelter some days ago in the home of a U.S. Embassy official in the city.

The emerging Middle East crisis "has the potential of bringing a number of countries where we have people assigned ... into the conflict," commented Dale Thorne, who directs Southern Baptist work in the Middle East and North Africa. Thorne was interviewed by telephone Aug. 8 in his office in Nicosia, Cyprus.

"We're encouraging our people to keep very close to their information sources in their countries," Thorne said. "They are free to leave when they feel they need to leave. We can't really tell them (what to do), because who knows what's going to happen?"

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

Liberian rebels detaining  
missionary couple and son

By Donald D. Martin

Baptist Press  
8/8/90

N-FMB

MANO RIVER, Liberia (BP)--Liberian rebels were refusing to let Southern Baptist missionaries Ed and Fran Laughridge evacuate to Sierra Leone Aug. 8, but had eased some restrictions placed on them a few days earlier.

Mrs. Laughridge, of Great Falls, S.C., told missionary Steve Springer in Ivory Coast via radio that she, her husband, of Rock Hill, S.C., and their son, Edward, 20, were refused permission to depart their mission station in Mano River by a rebel commander of the National Patriotic Front.

Mano River is a small mining town on the border of Sierra Leone about 80 miles northwest of Liberia's coastal capital, Monrovia, where much of the fighting is going on.

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The rebel commander earlier had told the family not to leave their home's premises or use their radio to communicate. The Laughridges stopped using the radio for several days.

However, the rebels became more cooperative with the missionaries Aug. 7, Mrs. Laughridge reported. The rebel commander removed restrictions on the family's movements in the town and lifted the ban on radio communications, she said. The Laughridges still want to leave Liberia as soon as possible, but do not feel threatened as they had earlier.

Food and generator fuel supplies are low, and gasoline for the Laughridges' vehicle is down to a few liters, she said.

Mission officials in Ivory Coast have informed the U.S. Embassy there of the Laughridges' situation and have asked the U.S. Embassy in Liberia to assist in evacuating the missionary family, Springer said. The embassy in Monrovia said it will start contacting the Laughridges twice a day by radio.

Embassy personnel and mission officials in Ivory Coast had discussed evacuating the Laughridges by a U.S. Marine helicopter airlift, but an embassy spokesman said this did not appear likely because of political and logistical complications.

Mrs. Laughridge said the rebels' initially friendly attitude toward the missionary family first changed when rumors began spreading of a possible military intervention by a peace-keeping force made up of troops from neighboring countries.

Press reports said leaders of Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Ghana and Gambia agreed Aug. 6 at a meeting in Gambia to send troops and a naval task force to Liberia to end the civil war. The five-nation group did not say how many troops would enter Liberia or when the intervention would begin.

"The rebels had totally changed their attitude," Springer said. "Where at first they were very friendly and cordial, then ... the rebels refused to let them cross the border or evacuate by vehicle."

The rebels controlling the Mano River area are loyal to Charles Taylor, leader of the National Patriotic Front, which invaded Liberia on Christmas Eve and has waged a bloody civil war against President Samuel Doe's government. The war has killed more than 5,000 people, mostly civilians.

According to press reports, Taylor called on the Liberian population in a radio broadcast to defend the country and "oppose all foreign intervention."

However, troops loyal to competing rebel faction leader Prince Johnson carried out a threat to arrest foreigners in Liberia to provoke international intervention in the war by seizing 14 or 15 foreign hostages, including one American, Aug. 6. The hostages were taken from a Monrovia hotel to a rebel camp outside the besieged city.

President Bush, prompted by Johnson's threats, ordered U.S. Marines Aug. 5 to secure the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia and begin a helicopter evacuation. So far the Marines have flown 94 people, including Americans and other nationalities, out of Monrovia.

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

Draper says issue settled  
on Dilday 'satanic' comments

Baptist Press  
8/8/90

N-CQ (Dumas)

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--An issue that some observers predicted could result in the firing of Russell Dilday as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, has been settled, according to the chairman of the seminary's board of trustees.

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"As far as I am concerned, the issue is settled," said trustee chairman Jimmy Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, following a three-hour meeting between with Dilday on July 27.

Draper, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, discounted rumors of a called trustee or executive committee meeting to deal with Dilday's public comments during the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans.

Dilday had said in New Orleans that "crass, secular political methodology used in the takeover of the convention these past 12 years has satanic and evil qualities to which I am desperately opposed."

On July 4, Dilday issued a statement of clarification addressed "to persons who misinterpreted my intention in the comments I made" (in New Orleans). In his clarification, Dilday said, "It is obvious to me now that 'satanic and evil' have different connotations to different hearers, and that my choice of words blurred the intent of my statement, leading some to assume I had labeled fellow believers as satanic. That was not my intention, and if my statement was so perceived, I am truly sorry."

Dilday and Draper met on July 27 to discuss the situation, as well as other matters facing the seminary. While their dialogue about the New Orleans incident did not consume the entire meeting's agenda, they spent "a great deal of time" talking about it, according to Draper.

"Basically, I'm a lover and not a fighter," said Draper. "If something is bothering me, I want to talk about it and move on. The president and I have talked, and I'm ready to move on with the business of the seminary."

Draper said he and Dilday had "a very frank and good meeting. I hope we made some giant strides. I guess time will tell. I think both of us want to have a positive impact on the situation, and I feel the meeting was a good start."

Dilday echoed the same tone, saying: "It was a very positive and constructive meeting."

Asked what might happen at the October meeting, Draper said: "I am the perennial optimist. I think there are a lot of trustees who want to visit with Russell about the comments, but I don't think at this point there will be anything more than that."

Although Draper said the issue could come up during the October meeting, he said he had encouraged Dilday to contact trustees personally before the October meeting to answer their questions. "We look forward to working together and I believe his statement of clarification helped," Draper said.

Dilday said he would be in touch with each trustee member individually. "We are going to find ways we can work together for the benefit of the seminary and to find ways to set some examples of how we can work together in the convention."

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(Presnall Wood, editor of the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and Trennis Henderson, managing editor of the Word and Way, newsjournal of the Missouri Baptist Convention, contributed to this story.)

Attorney testifies in support  
of pension simplification bill

By Kathy Palen

N-BQC

Baptist Press  
8/8/90

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Southern Baptist attorney testified during a recent congressional hearing in support of legislation that would simplify employee benefit laws for churches.

Gary S. Nash, general counsel for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, told members of a Senate Finance subcommittee that the Church Retirement Benefits Simplification Act of 1990 would be an important step for churches in dealing with the "constant onslaught of employee benefits legislation," which typically does not take into account the unique needs and characteristics of church retirement and welfare benefit programs.

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The legislation, introduced by Sen. David Pryor, D-Ark., is designed to achieve three primary goals:

-- To recodify rules applicable to church retirement plans separately under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, thus ensuring that future changes in the Internal Revenue Code would not inadvertently impact retirement plan issues unique to churches.

-- To bring workable consistency to the coverage and related rules that apply to church retirement programs.

-- To resolve other significant problems churches face in administering their retirement and welfare benefit programs under current law.

In his testimony, Nash -- who also serves as secretary of the Church Alliance, a coalition of church pension board executives acting on behalf of church pension and welfare benefit programs -- explained: "S. 2902 creates a new section 401A, applicable only to 'qualified church plans' and modifies section 403(b) for churches. In addition, and most importantly, S. 2902 provides that new section 401A and the portion of section 403(b) that applies to churches will be 'walled off' so that future changes made for non-church employers in section 401(a) and section 403(b) will not apply to church retirement plans unless specifically made applicable thereto. This provision is the cornerstone of S. 2902.

"S. 2902 simplifies and brings workable consistency to the rules applicable to church plans. ... S. 2902 would provide the same treatment under new section 401A for qualified church plans, other than for plans maintained by church hospitals, colleges and universities. S. 2902 would also level the playing field for plans of church hospitals, colleges and universities so that section 403(b) annuity programs and section 401A plans maintained by these organizations will be subject to the same set of coverage rules."

The legislation, Nash said, also would make it clear that ministers who are employed as chaplains in hospitals, halfway houses and government prisons can continue to participate in church retirement and welfare benefit plans.

It also would permit IRA-type qualified voluntary employee contributions to be made to church plans, Nash said, as well as deal with a number of other issues that prove troublesome to church pension boards under current law.

During the hearing, a Treasury Department representative voiced the Bush administration's opposition to the proposed legislation.

Thomas D. Terry, benefits tax counsel for the Treasury Department, testified the administration opposes:

-- Exempting most qualified church retirement plans from current trust and non-discrimination requirements.

-- Extending special rules currently applicable only to qualified church-controlled organizations to all church-controlled or affiliated organizations.

-- Consolidating special rules applicable to qualified church retirement plans in one section of the Internal Revenue Code.

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Virginians discuss proposal  
to cut SBC budget allocation

By Robert H. Dilday

Baptist Press  
8/8/90

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A proposed 1991 Baptist General Association of Virginia budget that would channel \$3 million less to Southern Baptist causes through the Cooperative Program unified budget does not reduce those contributions adequately, said most speakers at a called meeting of the Virginia Baptist general board July 31.

However, the majority of the speakers said they were prepared to support the proposal for the time being.

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An estimated 750 people attended the session, called by BGAV President Ray Spence to give general board members and other Virginia Baptists an opportunity to discuss a draft budget proposed by the BGAV budget committee.

Although the general board does not approve the budget, the board unanimously adopted a motion "affirming" the work of the budget committee. The committee will present a final budget proposal at the BGAV annual meeting Nov. 13-14 in Richmond.

The \$16,300,000 draft budget would allocate \$2,776,100 in undesignated gifts to the SBC Cooperative Program (CP), while designating an additional \$2,776,100 to Southern Baptist and other causes. The remaining amount would fund Virginia ministries.

Because the SBC recognizes undesignated gifts alone as CP contributions, only \$2,776,100 could be considered CP funds from Virginia. This year the state has budgeted \$5,943,200 in undesignated gifts to the CP.

If the budget is adopted, churches will have the option of retaining the current 62-38 percentage division between Virginia and SBC causes, with all the SBC portion being undesignated CP contributions.

They also could withhold funds from selected ministries by utilizing the BGAV's limited participation, or negative designation, provision.

Members of the BGAV denominational crisis committee, which endorsed the proposal, joined the budget committee at the July 31 meeting to answer questions and hear suggested changes.

A number of general board members and about 30 other Virginia Baptists participated in the discussion at Monument Heights Baptist Church in Richmond.

"If we don't trust these people (the Southern Baptist leadership) with some of our money, why trust them with any of it?" asked Don Proctor, pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church in South Hill.

"I want more cut, but I'll settle for this proposal," Proctor said.

"I think in order to save the Cooperative Program, steps must be taken to keep Virginia Baptists from bailing out of the whole thing," said Eddie Freeman, pastor of Monument Heights Church. Freeman praised the proposal, but nevertheless added: "I would prefer the entire 100 percent (of the SBC portion of the budget) be designated. I think we could have gone further."

Steve Cromer, pastor of Rivermont Avenue Baptist Church in Lynchburg, also supported a move to designate all of the SBC portion to selected causes, predicting "some exciting possibilities" in missions support.

Not all speakers endorsed the proposal. T.C. Pinckney of Alexandria, a leader among conservatives in Virginia and a member of the SBC Executive Committee, warned some churches might withhold funds from Virginia causes in order to replace funds deleted from some Southern Baptist ministries.

Pinckney charged that the draft budget would be a "formula for further disintegration" in the BGAV, would "facilitate factionalism," would "complicate administration of budgetary matters" and would "officially endorse fiscal recalcitrance."

David Hays, a general board member from Powell River Baptist Association, read a statement from that association's executive board asking the general board to reconsider the issue in the "interests of peace and unity."

Others who expressed doubts about the proposal said they nevertheless expected it to be approved in November and suggested changes to make it more palatable for churches which oppose it.

Charles Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, urged that the plan be made optional for churches, while making the current 62-38 percentage division "normative." As the plan stands now, funds sent by churches to the BGAV treasurer without instructions would be allocated according to the proposed guidelines. Churches which opt for one of the alternatives would have to inform the treasurer after a decision had been made by the church.

I personally believe the 62-38 plan should be the plan in place and the others used as options," said Fuller, former chairman of the SBC Peace Committee.

Ken Hemphill, pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, expressed fears the 12-year controversy in the SBC would erupt in local churches as members grapple with which plan to support.

"It will drag the controversy into many churches where it has not been an issue," he warned.

However, Bill Wilson, pastor of Farmville Baptist Church, said he "looked forward to churches making such decisions. There is a ministerial arrogance that says our poor laypeople are incapable of making decisions," he said.

Mary Wilson, budget committee chairperson, said the committee believe the draft proposal best represents the desires of Virginia Baptists."

The committee operated under three guidelines, Wilson explained in introducing the budget:

"Our primary motive was to allow Virginia Baptists to give cooperatively";

"Our concern was a keen sense of responsibility for denominational employees"; and

"Our commitment was to honor the autonomy of the local church."

Neal Jones of Falls Church, chairperson of the crisis committee, said in a committee statement that "the BGAV should provide options to the churches for giving to support world missions through the (Baptist) General Association (of Virginia)."

"We come to you at this special meeting to share our thinking about one area of great concern, said Jones, pastor of Columbia Baptist Church in Falls Church. "In our 1989 report (of the crisis committee), we suggested that the BGAV move "toward a more comprehensive, positive plan of cooperative missions giving. ..."

"We are pleased that the draft budget developed by the BGAV budget committee is in harmony with these proposals," he added.

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Missouri Baptist conservatives  
hold organizational meetings

By Trennis Henderson

N-20  
(MO.)

Baptist Press  
8/8/90

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--Conservative Baptist pastors and laymen are holding a series of seven organizational meetings throughout Missouri and are planning to launch a new monthly newspaper.

The first two sessions were held at Frederick Boulevard Baptist Church in St. Joseph, Mo., and Calvary Baptist Church in Republic, Mo.

According to Kent Cochran, one of the organizers of the meeting, five more gatherings are scheduled in various parts of the state during the next few weeks.

Cochran, a member of Gashland Baptist Church in Kansas City, said conservative Baptists will begin printing their own monthly publication in August, and are planning to nominate a conservative candidate for president of the Missouri Baptist Convention next October in Kansas City.

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Cochran described the efforts as "parallel to what's happened on the national level in the last 12 years." Cochran added that Missouri "is not the only state" where conservatives are holding similar organizational meetings, but did not specify any other states.

He said the first two meetings have drawn about 20 participants each, noting that local pastors have contacted him and other laymen about leading the meetings. Local pastors make most of the arrangements, he added.

Mike Green, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Republic, said his church hosted one of the meetings because "some of my deacons and I felt it was time as a church to speak up."

Green said all of the church's deacons were in favor of hosting the meeting. "We see it as just being involved in the Baptist process of speaking our mind and hopefully contributing something that will further the cause that we feel is important and that is the conservative resurgence." Green insisted he is not a "troublemaker" but was concerned about the issues involved.

Green said that in addition to an interest in an alternate newspaper, "some of my laypeople are very concerned (because) we went to the national convention and voted to give responsibilities of the Baptist Joint Committee to the Christian Life Commission and yet ... there will be an attempt not only in Missouri but several states to try to circumvent that and fund the Baptist Joint Committee on the state level. ... That frankly angered a lot of my laypeople."

Cochran observed that most of these men feel the Missouri Baptist Convention is unresponsive. "They just feel like they have very, very little participation in the Missouri Baptist Convention itself."

Concerning plans for a conservative paper in the state, Cochran said it will be financed by donations from churches and laypeople for the first four months. At the end of November, they will evaluate whether the publication will be continued and how it will be financed.

Cochran said that Curtis Peck, a member of Rock Hill Baptist Church in St. Louis, will be the paper's editor. Cochran said he will handle the business end, printing and distribution.

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150 Missouri pastors, laypeople  
affirm alternate giving options

By Trennis Henderson

N-10  
(MO)

Baptist Press  
8/8/90

COLUMBIA, Mo. (BP)--An unofficial group of 150 Missouri Baptists recommended a "Missouri Plan" for cooperative support of Southern Baptist Convention causes that would exclude financial support of the SBC Executive Committee and SBC Christian Life Commission, but provide support for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The Missouri pastors urged the Missouri Baptist Convention's executive board to recommend financial options other than undesignated giving through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program unified budget.

If the executive board declines to recommend such a plan for consideration by messengers to the Missouri convention in October, moderate pastors and laymen attending the convocation said they would introduce such options from the convention floor in Kansas City.

The convocation was advertised as a meeting for "Missouri Baptists desiring to see trust, fellowship, inclusion and cooperation re-established in the SBC." Bart Tichenor, pastor of Little Bonne Femme Baptist Church which hosted the meeting, was elected as the group's moderator.

In addition to a "Missouri Plan" budget proposal, the group suggested as another option that Missouri Baptist churches consider channeling missions giving through a proposed Cooperating Baptist Missions Fund, which is expected to be established during a national meeting of moderate Baptists in Atlanta, Aug. 23-25.

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Participants also adopted a memorial which calls for individual state conventions to elect representatives to serve on the SBC Executive Committee, the SBC Committee on Nominations and as trustees of SBC institutions. That proposal also will be presented to the MBC executive board, calling for the board to present the memorial for consideration by MBC messengers.

In other action, convocation participants:

-- Adopted a statement deploring the action of the SBC Executive Committee firing Baptist Press director Al Shackelford and news editor Dan Martin, and the committee's use of armed guards to prohibit access to the closed meeting. The convocation also approved a resolution calling for a free Baptist press, and endorsed the concept of exploring the establishment of an Associated Baptist Press as an alternative to the denomination's official news service.

-- Appointed Doyle Sager, pastor of First Baptist Church of Sedalia, Mo., and Harold Mann, a member of Birchwood Baptist Church, Kansas City, as a two-member committee to inquire of Missouri's members of the SBC Executive Committee concerning their votes on the firings of Shackelford and Martin and the reasons for their votes.

-- Authorized Tichenor to appoint a six-member steering committee to determine if a future meeting is needed and, if so, to organize such a meeting.

Prior to the various actions, Adrian Lamkin, director of the Partee Center for Baptist Historical Studies, provided an historical view of Missouri Baptists' missions funding efforts. He explained that Missouri Baptists had a "Missouri Plan" from 1889 until 1919 which allowed the MBC board to distribute mission funds either to Northern Baptists or to Southern Baptists.

The Missouri Plan was discontinued in 1919 when the MBC sought alignment only with the SBC. "Missouri Baptists have not been afraid to travel a different road if it needed to be," Lamkin said.

In a convocation message, Tichenor charged that the so-called "Pressler/Patterson takeover" has torn "our denominational ship ... from its moorings. It (the SBC) has been pushed by the strong winds of a radical independent-fundamental mentality and power structure away from the mainstream to the far right bank."

Tichenor said he did not want to see "the winds of reaction push our ship to the far left bank," but rather sought "a return to the mainstream."

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Unofficial Arkansas group  
explores responses to SBC

By Everett Sneed

Baptist Press  
8/8/90

*N-60  
(Ark)*

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--An unofficial group of 56 people from about 20 Arkansas Baptist churches established a committee to recommend responses to "recent tragic events" in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Purpose of the 16-member committee is to recommend appropriate responses, review ideas discussed during the Little Rock meeting, make recommendations for action, set a date for a future meeting, and establish avenues for dialogue among diverse groups in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and Southern Baptist Convention.

Emil Williams, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jonesboro, Ark., moderated the meeting held at Second Baptist in Little Rock.

Williams said the group did not select a name, but identified themselves as "a group of Southern Baptists from across Arkansas who are concerned with the damage that is being done within our denomination."

Williams described the meeting as "therapeutic" for those who expressed their anguish over recent events in the SBC.

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He referred to the firing of Al Shackelford and Dan Martin, director and news editor of the Baptist Press news service, by the SBC Executive Committee during a closed executive session on July 17.

Williams emphasized the purpose of the meeting was not to discuss the election of any person or to put anyone in a bad light. "We did, however, discuss our role in protecting many who are under extreme pressure throughout our beloved convention."

The group also agreed Arkansas Baptist churches need some way to redirect contributions to Southern Baptist Convention causes. "No one suggested that we withhold funds," Williams said. "Everyone felt that there should be some redirecting of funds."

The group recommended that every church elect a denominational affairs committee to consider seriously the way that funding should be allocated, and to educate church members on what is happening in the SBC.

George Pritle, pastor of Dermott Baptist Church, said there is a need for serious dialogue. "We don't need another political group in our state. We want to seek a common ground and we don't want it to be one group against another," he said.

The 16-member committee was asked to assume responsibility for scheduling a dialogue, but there was no indication when the dialogue would be held or who would participate.

Williams said some participants expressed fears their meeting would be misunderstood. "Unfortunately we are divided between 'conservatives' and 'moderates.' We wish we could avoid having a label of any kind, but in the present climate this is impossible."

Four Arkansas Baptist pastors were named to a selection committee to appoint the 16-member denominational affairs committee composed of a pastor/church staff member and a lay person from eight districts in Arkansas.

The selection committee is composed of Layne Smith, pastor of Rolling Hills Baptist Church, Fayetteville; Billy White, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Little Rock; John McClanahan, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pine Bluff; and Don Nall, pastor of First Baptist Church, Batesville.

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Progressive Convention leader  
opens door to Southern Baptists

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press  
8/8/90

F-(9 Ky.)

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--The president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention has invited disillusioned members of the primarily white Southern Baptist Convention to join his predominantly black convention.

Fred C. Lofton extended the invitation during a news conference Aug. 6, on the eve of his convention's annual session in Louisville, Ky.

"We have met here this week, not to argue about biblical inerrancy, but to put into practice the mandates of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, one in which he states, '... I have come to set the captives free,'" said Lofton, senior pastor of Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn.

"As such, we invite those who are disillusioned with the fundamentalist posture to come and join with us as we journey with our Lord in search of the 'beloved community.'

"We especially invite those Southern Baptists who are disillusioned with the far right in the Southern Baptist Convention to come and join us as representatives of the New South, with an agenda for a new region with new possibilities and potentialities for the Christian church to become an inclusive community of faith, hope and love."

A Baptist church can become a member of the Progressive National Baptist Convention if it contributes 1 percent of its budget to the convention, said PNBC General Secretary Tyrone Pitts.

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The convention was organized in 1961. It has 1.8 million members in more than 1,700 churches in 46 states and four foreign countries.

Lofton called the Southern Baptist theological/political controversy "pathetic and sad."

"They are not dealing with the issues of our day, especially biblical inerrancy," Lofton claimed. "Jesus did not say, 'Worship the Bible.' He said, 'Worship me.'"

Southern Baptist churches could join with Progressive Baptists through dual alignment with both conventions, Lofton noted: "As some of our churches are part of their convention, we are inviting them to become part of us. We have no litmus test -- just believe in brotherhood and sisterhood; believe in our Lord, Jesus Christ."

Southern Baptists can help Progressives "support black colleges and seminaries that ... have helped to train for over 100 years brilliant black leaders," Lofton said, citing 13 schools in the South.

He also urged Southern Baptists to join in his convention's economic development program. He asked them to join in the boycott of McDonald's, whose franchises, he said, pay workers in predominantly black urban areas an average of \$1 per hour less than workers in predominantly white suburban areas.

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William Estep has guided students  
to find their Baptist roots

By Chip Alford

F-60  
(Texas)

Baptist Press  
8/8/90

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--When William Estep retired from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, July 31, his 36 years at the school were more than history.

For the thousands of students Estep has taught, his tenure at Southwestern is itself historical. The distinguished professor of church history has been helping those students develop their self-identity as Baptists.

"It is so important for students to have a knowledge of church history to help them understand who they are, religiously speaking," Estep said.

"If students don't know who they are as Baptists, through the historical development of the Baptist faith, they're not going to be able to help anybody with their faith," Estep said. "They will be confused themselves and a confused person is never able to help anyone."

Religious liberty always has been at the heart of Baptist beliefs, said Estep, adding his latest book, *Revolution within the Revolution*, may be his most important work. "I think it is important because it deals with the institutional separation of church and state in this country. Southern Baptists appear to be wavering somewhat on this point and I feel betrayed. I feel that this is an attempt to sabotage religious liberty itself."

Before Estep's birth in Williamsburg, Ky., his mother dedicated his life "to preach the gospel." Her positive, Christian influence continued throughout his childhood and was especially helpful during his hospitalization at age 5 because of congenital problems.

"I almost died," Estep remembered, "but I still remember my mother at my bedside telling me about the love of God. She was a woman of prayer and great faith."

Those early seeds planted by his mother came to fruition when Estep accepted Christ as a 10-year-old at Fifth Avenue Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tenn. Only two years later, though, tragedy struck. After moving to Louisville, Ky., where his father had found employment with an insurance company, Estep's mother became ill and died during a flu epidemic.

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"My father couldn't handle the situation," said Estep. "He began to drink rather heavily and one morning he suggested it would be best for all of us if he put us in an orphans' home."

Instead, Estep and his two brothers were sent back to Williamsburg to live with relatives. Estep lived on a farm with two great aunts so he could help with chores.

"I don't recall that I had any particular trauma," Estep said. "I felt very much loved. I believe it was providential because I began to learn lessons I probably would not have learned as early if my mother had lived."

Estep experienced a call to ministry as a 16-year-old attending a revival at First Baptist Church of Williamsburg.

To help prepare for the task he earned a bachelor's degree from Berea College, a master's in theology from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and a doctorate in theology from Southwestern Seminary.

He has also studied at the University of Basel and University of Zurich, Switzerland; and Oxford University England.

He was pastor of churches in Kentucky, Oklahoma and Texas before accepting a teaching post at Southwestern.

"I not only wanted to teach church history," he explained, "but to invest my life in students. And where could I invest my life with more dividends than at Southwestern?"

Estep has been interim pastor of several churches during his tenure at the seminary, including University Heights Church, the first Baptist church to integrate in the state of Oklahoma. He also spent time writing 15 books and more than 100 articles and book reviews for denominational periodicals and professional journals. Among his most famous books are: The Anabaptist Story, and Renaissance and Reformation.

"The seminary has undergirded my work as a church historian and has extended the influence of Southern Baptists in circles which we virtually had no influence before," he said.

In addition to his work at Southwestern, Estep has taught at Baptist seminaries in California, Kentucky, Columbia, Switzerland, Spain, and Peru. He has also lectured at numerous institutions in Latin America, Europe, England, Asia, and the United States.

Estep lives in Fort Worth with his wife, Edna Alice. They have four children. After his retirement he will continue teaching as an adjunct professor at Southwestern and give lectures at colleges and universities across the United States.

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Students see German town  
much like Plainview

By Bobby Hall

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(Texas)

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PLAINVIEW, Texas (BP)--During the early weeks of summer, 17 Wayland Baptist University students and three sponsors traveled to a town not much different than Plainview, Texas.

Not much different if you discount the fact that the town, Ingelheim, was halfway around the globe in West Germany, and that while Texans sweltered in 100-plus degree heat, Wayland's group of missionaries worked in temperatures forty degrees cooler.

The Partnership Mission Trip, sponsored jointly by the Baptist Student Union and Wayland's division of music, involved two sub-groups. A work team of BSU students, sponsored by Wayland BSU director, Nick Howard and his wife Susan, joined forces with the music group Spirit, under the direction of Cindy Sheppard, in sharing their faith with Baptists in West Germany.

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"Despite the distance, there were many similarities between Ingelheim and Plainview," recalled Howard. "Both have a population of around 22,000 and both have a very important agricultural industry.

"There were many differences, as well. We went to help the small Baptist congregation in Ingelheim begin work on their building site. It is the only Baptist church in the entire town and it consists of about 25 members, far different than the large Baptist congregations we see in the States."

The BSU team worked daily at the building site, while Spirit sang daily concerts across the city and in Hamburg in conjunction with the English-speaking International Baptist Church. On the last night of their stay in Ingelheim, Spirit performed in the "Burg Kirche," or city church, which is more than 1,200 years old.

"One of the biggest obstacles Baptists in Europe must overcome was illustrated by one woman who spoke to the pastor after a concert," said Howard. "She had moved to Ingelheim three years earlier, but until that day had not known how to find the Baptist church, which currently has no building.

"Manfred Beutel, the regional director of Baptist work in that part of Germany, said this was one reason the church was undertaking such a large task. He said that Baptists there are working entirely on faith, that a building similar to the one being built would cost about \$600,000 if the work was being done by a contractor."

The trip was the culmination of more than two years of work and planning by the group. Partnership Missions is an effort by the Baptist General Convention of Texas to pair Texas Baptists with a foreign mission area.

"In the past we have been paired with Brazil, Mexico and Australia," said Howard. "We are now in partnership with European Baptists and moving towards a renewed partnership with Brazil."

The student group and sponsors spent much of the two-year planning period raising funds. "Without the hard work of the students and the generous support of churches and individuals, the trip would not have been possible. All who contributed share in the success."

In addition to the construction work and concerts, there were many opportunities for much-needed exposure for the church, including two newspaper stories printed during the visit. The group also encountered German citizens ranging from their co-workers to the Deputy Mayor of Ingelheim.

"When you tell people that you are trying to take a mission trip to Germany, their first inclination is to laugh or ask how you can take that kind of mission trip," added Howard. "But there is such a great need. This church had been planning for an entire year to begin work on their building around our coming.

"It was such a feeling of accomplishment to look at the building site at the end of our time there and see the work which had been done. We worked hard, but it was well worth the work and expense. Now I want to go back when the building is finished."

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Hall is director of university relations at Wayland Baptist University.