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More than 450 converted  
during Kenya mission trip

By Ken Camp

*N E O  
(Texas)*

DALLAS (BP)--Southern Baptist volunteers built three churches, brought lifesaving medical care to countless East Africans and saw more than 450 professions of faith in Christ during a recent 16-day mission trip to Kenya.

The mission trip was the first of several planned by Texas Baptist Men as a follow-up to the Kenya Coastal Crusade in which more than 56,000 commitments to Christ were recorded and 84 congregations were organized.

"From start to finish, it was the activity of God," said John LaNoue, mission team leader and director of Texas Baptist Young Men and High School BYM. "It was Acts chapter 29, verse number next."

Prayers were answered and obstacles overcome before the mission team ever left Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, LaNoue said.

When problems arose and travel plans with Pan Am Airlines fell through, it appeared the team would have to take the only other available flight on Zambia Airlines and cut its mission project short by three days.

However, in a last ditch effort, LaNoue called a supervisor at Pan Am and explained the team's urgent desire to build churches and perform vital medical missions in Kenya.

After learning about the disaster relief work of Baptist Men, including the Brotherhood Commission's ministry in the Caribbean following Hurricane Hugo, the Jamaican-born airlines supervisor said, "I'm either going to get promoted or fired for this, but I'm going to do everything I can for you."

Two days later, after the normally imposed deadline for changes in international travel, the mission team was booked on a Pan Am flight to Mombasa, Kenya.

High School Baptist Young Men and other volunteers constructed three church buildings in and near Mombasa for Pindua, Victory and Nguuni Baptist churches.

Plans to build Victory Baptist Church in a predominantly Moslem neighborhood almost were jettisoned following repeated threats by Moslem extremists and the church's decision to find a new home. But that decision was reversed after a local Moslem civic leader saw Dr. B.B. Westbrook of Beaumont, Texas, operating a medical clinic at Victory Church's temporary meeting place.

"Our God wants these people to be healthy," a Baptist volunteer told the Moslem leader. After learning that the medical services were provided without charge to all persons in need--including Moslems--the leader allowed his wife to receive treatment at the clinic.

"You serve a good God," the leader said. "He deserves a house here. I'll pay half of the price of the land for a building site."

Twenty-seven Mombasa residents made professions of faith when Southern Baptist missionary Ralph Bethea led the Texas High School Baptist Young Men in one-to-one personal evangelism at a ferry landing in the city. Another time, after a high school basketball tournament in Mombasa, 13 young men accepted Christ.

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God especially seemed to work through the medical missions efforts of the Texas volunteers, according to LaNoue. More than a month before the mission volunteers arrived in Kenya, a runner from the Masai reservation had come to Bethea requesting a medical clinic for his people.

Car trouble caused Westbrook and the other volunteers to be a day late for what they thought was a scheduled appointment at the reservation, but they actually were right on time according to God's timetable, LaNoue said.

When the mission team reached the area near where the Masai herdsmen were camped, they were met by a Kenyan national evangelist whom Bethea had met several years before. When Bethea apologized for the team's tardiness, the evangelist said the tribe never had received word about the mission team's planned arrival.

Bethea asked the evangelist why he was sitting alone waiting to greet the mission team if he did not know the Texans were coming. The Kenyan replied that God had assured him during his morning devotions that a medical mission team would come to help his people, and he needed to go meet them.

Using the tailgate of a pickup truck as an examining table, Westbrook treated nearly 100 Masai that day, and 13 made professions of faith in Christ.

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Arizona cuts budget 5.65%;  
trims seven from state staff

By Elizabeth Young

N. CO  
(Ariz.)

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PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--A pared-down budget for 1991 that cuts seven positions from the staff and trims \$315,000 from the 1990 budget has been adopted by the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention Executive Board.

Three of the seven positions are currently filled by missionaries jointly employed by the Arizona Convention and the SBC Home Mission Board. The positions will be funded until the end of 1990.

The \$4,942,159 budget will be presented for approval at the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention when it meets in November. The 1991 budget represents a 5.65 percent decrease from the 1990 budget.

During 1990, Cooperative Program unified receipts have not kept pace with the budget adopted last November, and in May the 1990 budget was reduced by \$315,000. ASBC Business Operations Manager Craig Jones attributed the decline to the economy and to "slowly-increasing income and rapidly-increasing expenses."

If adjusted projections are correct, the convention expects to receive \$2,250,000 in Cooperative Program contributions from Arizona Southern Baptist churches in both 1990 and 1991.

Other income sources for 1991 include \$1,195,768 from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, \$41,100 from the SBC Sunday School Board, and \$765,000 in designated contributions for state, home and foreign missions.

For the first time, the proposed budget provides \$300,000 to pay interest owed to investors by the Arizona Baptist Loan Fund, which is a direct part of the state convention.

The proposed 1991 budget will eliminate seven positions from the state convention staff, including five from the evangelism/missions division and two from the church growth and development division. Further savings will come in other areas of the convention through attrition, as positions that have become vacant remain unfilled.

Positions being eliminated will result in the termination of Trudy Johnson, director of missions ministries in Phoenix; Jackie McClung, director of church and community ministries in Mesa; and David Garza, church planter/catalytic missionary in Tucson.

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Positions currently vacant that will not be funded in 1991 include a church and community ministries position at Rio Vista Baptist Center in Phoenix, and a church planter position in Catalina Association (Tucson area).

Bob Warren, evangelism/missions division director, told the Executive Board he had talked with the three missionaries and assured them the elimination of their positions was not a reflection on the quality of their work. He said the convention will work with the Home Mission Board to help the missionaries find other ministry positions in other states.

Warren said the terminations were made in consultation with Home Mission Board leaders. Under a cooperative agreement with the state convention, the Home Mission Board provides 80 percent of the funding for joint mission endeavors in Arizona, and the state convention pays the remaining 20 percent.

Warren and two other Arizona convention leaders met with key staff members of the Home Mission Board on May 22 to discuss staffing priorities in the state.

As a result of that meeting, Warren said the Home Mission Board agreed to pay 100 percent of three positions in Arizona, but did not have the budget funds available to fund the three positions that were terminated.

The three positions that the HMB will fund at 100 percent level include two church planters and one resort missionary. Warren pointed out that no promises were made about continuing the 100 percent funding arrangement beyond 1991.

In the church growth and development division, one program director and one secretary were terminated, effective Dec. 31, 1990.

Frank Foutch, state Sunday School program director, had previously resigned effective Aug. 31, to join the staff of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. His position will be deleted and responsibilities absorbed by the remaining staff, according to Bill May, church growth and development division director. The secretarial position eliminated is currently held by Sharon Buell.

Several other vacant secretarial and support positions will not be filled, will be cut to part-time jobs, or assigned to existing personnel.

Additional budget savings in 1991 will come through a \$20,000 cut in program funds for the evangelism/missions division, and a \$14,000 reduction in program funds for the church growth and development division.

More cuts may come in the 1992 budget. Arizona Convention President Harvey Kimbler told the Executive Board there is a possibility that "there may be more crunch on the 1992 budget than there is on the 1991 (budget)."

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Baptists differ on evangelistic  
implications of Equal Access law

By Ken Camp

*N. (G. Dallas)*

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DALLAS (BP)--The recent Supreme Court ruling affirming "equal access" for religious clubs in public secondary schools offers Christian young people an unprecedented opportunity to bring the gospel to their campuses, according to a Texas Baptist youth Sunday School consultant.

However, on-campus religious groups must be truly student-initiated and not a covert means of proselyting by adult outsiders, warned an attorney with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D.C. Ruling on Westside Community Schools v. Mergens, the Supreme Court in early June upheld the constitutionality of the Equal Access Act. The 1984 act makes it unlawful for any public secondary school which receives federal funds and has a "limited open forum" to discriminate against student-initiated religious groups.

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"Equal access is an open door, and we must run through it," said Chris Liebrum, youth Sunday School consultant, Baptist General Convention of Texas. "If our young people don't seize the opportunity for Christ, others will enter with some kind of tainted gospel."

Larry Tucker, superintendent of the Leonard Independent School District in north Texas and a member of First Baptist Church, Leonard, Texas, said he expected the Supreme Court ruling on equal access to have little impact on smaller, rural schools.

Tucker said a Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter has been meeting at Leonard High School for about eight years and that it has never been a source of controversy.

Essentially, the Supreme Court simply affirmed the policy already in place in many small schools throughout the South, he indicated.

That is not necessarily the case in larger, urban districts, however. On Aug. 6, the school board in Irving, Texas, rejected the proposed creation of a limited open forum in Irving Independent School District high schools.

The issue in Irving originally centered around the on-campus presence of a Christian student-led group, "First Priority," according to Jerry Christian, personnel director for the Irving ISD and a member of Plymouth Park Baptist Church, Irving.

Following the complaint of a parent last year, the Irving School Board decided to prohibit any noncurriculum related student groups from meeting on campus pending the outcome of the Mergens decision, Christian explained.

In July, the school board reintroduced consideration of a policy permitting noncurriculum related, student-led organizations on high school campuses. However, the policy change failed 5-2 on second reading at the board's August meeting.

Voting with the majority in rejecting creation of a limited open forum was vice president of the board, Paul Dunn, a member of Las Colinas Baptist Church, Irving.

"To provide a limited open forum would afford an avenue for undesirable groups to meet on campus," said Dunn, "and it would place an excessive burden on already overloaded staff on campus."

Creating a limited open forum could create a means of campus penetration for groups ranging from the Ku Klux Klan to the Satanic cults, according to Dunn.

He noted that religious groups can use Irving school facilities for meetings in the evenings, but they cannot meet immediately before or after school hours.

"The campus needs to remain neutral in religious matters," he said.

"I feel very strongly that the burden of a child's religious education lies with parents and with our churches," added Dunn, who teaches a youth Sunday School class at Las Colinas Baptist Church.

According to the Equal Access Act, if a school allows "noncurriculum related student groups" such as political, recreational or service clubs to meet on school premises during noninstructional time, then it has a "limited open forum" and must grant student-led religious clubs the same privilege of assembly.

"The school or local policy-making body has the exclusive authority to determine whether it will create or maintain a limited open forum. If a school has a limited open forum, it may not discriminate against a student group because of the content of its speech," according to equal access guidelines developed by representatives of educational, public policy and religious groups, including the BJC.

"If a school does not have a limited open forum, the request of a single student group to organize a meeting or a club which is not directly related to the school curriculum requires the school to determine whether it wants to create such a forum."

The guidelines further stipulate that:

--Students themselves must seek permission to meet, and they must direct the meetings;

--Teachers may attend the meetings of religious clubs, but only in a "nonparticipatory" capacity;

--Outsiders may attend a religious group meeting occasionally if invited by students. However, the school may adopt a policy barring nonschool personnel or limiting their attendance to a set number of times per year; and

--The local school retains the authority to establish time, place and disciplinary regulations for its limited open forum, but regulations must be uniform and nondiscriminatory.

Equal access affords Southern Baptist youth the opportunity to put into practice on their campuses the leadership skills they have been learning at church, Liebrum said.

"The beauty of the Equal Access Act is that it requires the youth to take leadership roles," he said.

"This means a massive involvement of our young people in organizing and developing Bible studies, and it means calling out mature student leaders."

Although youth ministers are prohibited from initiating and leading religious group activities on school premises, they do have an important role as encourager and facilitator for student leaders, Liebrum said.

Youth ministers need to help train leaders, develop study plans and assist in publicizing student-led, on-campus Bible studies, he noted.

"The youth minister could help the teenagers come up with a catchy, non-threatening, non-religious name for the organization. It needs to be something the kids can identify with," he said.

While youth ministers cannot participate in the day-to-day leadership of on-campus religious clubs, it is imperative that they maintain close contact with them, Liebrum said.

"Leaders need to consider ways of connecting with a local church and referring to churches for follow-up and discipleship those students who are reached through the on-campus club," he said.

However, J. Brent Walker, associate general counsel with the BJC, warned against youth ministers practicing "remote control" of on-campus religious group meetings.

"It is important for youth ministers to live up to the spirit, as well as the letter, of the Equal Access Act," said Walker.

"The 'spirit' of the act is to protect students' right to speech and assembly and to draw a distinction between protected "student speech" on religious matters and prohibited 'state speech,'" he said.

"Students, not adult leaders, should take the lead in approaching school officials to schedule the time and place of meetings," Walker said.

Outside influence should be kept to a minimum, he added, and the on-campus religious group should not become "the overt evangelistic arm of any particular church."

On the other hand, there is nothing in the Equal Access Act prohibiting students from inviting other students to on-campus Bible studies or leading them to faith in Christ as a result of the religious group meetings, he noted.

Also, there is nothing to prevent a particular on-campus religious group from being clearly identified with a specific church or denomination, but the group could not exclude persons of other denominations from its membership, according to Walker.

Smith: pray for end  
to SBC 'preacher fight'

By Mike Creswell

*N. JMB*

SEOUL, South Korea (BP)--The president of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission is calling on Southern Baptist lay people to pray for spiritual renewal within their convention to end political strife.

James Smith made the plea Aug. 13 in a report to the Fifth World Conference of Baptist Men. The men's meeting was being held in conjunction with the 16th Baptist World Congress of the Baptist World Alliance Aug. 14-18 in Seoul, South Korea.

Smith characterized the Southern Baptist Convention conflict as "a preacher fight" and claimed most lay Southern Baptists do not even know of the conflict. "Many of the people who are members of our churches are not aware of even the dimensions or the significance of what is going on," he said.

Smith said he has been urging lay Southern Baptists "to pray and go on praying for a great spiritual awakening within our midst, a great movement of God that will turn brother back to brother and church to church and help Southern Baptists make a great impact ... for the evangelization of our world before the return of Jesus."

The Brotherhood leader said he does not think the fight can be won on a political basis. "I do not think that is God's way," he said.

The task of evangelizing the world, Smith said, "is too big for the preachers to do," explaining that "world evangelization was not in God's plan to be a preachers' movement. It's going to take this great task force of the laity."

After his speech, Smith told a reporter that the political strife currently crippling the Southern Baptist Convention is "primarily a spiritual problem and secondarily a preacher problem."

Increasingly, he added, Southern Baptist laymen are involved in performing ministry and "doing things" rather than merely attending meetings.

Smith reviewed for the delegates recent highlights in the mission ministries of almost 600,000 Southern Baptist men and boys. These included construction of some 300 church buildings in the United States last year, saving some \$20 million in construction costs, and putting roofs on more than 50 hurricane-damaged houses on the Caribbean island of St. Croix. Also, in South Carolina, Baptist men provided 350,000 meals and did extensive reconstruction and cleanup work for weeks after Hurricane Hugo last year.

This year, he said, volunteers have helped with evangelistic campaigns in Kenya that have led more than 50,000 people to make commitments to Jesus Christ.

In South Korea, where Christianity has spread rapidly in recent years, the Brotherhood Commission is paying the salary of a full-time professor teaching lay ministry at the Baptist seminary. The course, required for all students, will help students go out with "more of a vision to utilize the ministries of the laymen," Smith said.