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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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90-110

Churches alerted to
water cooler recalls

NASHVILLE (BP)--Churches that own Halsey Taylor water coolers manufactured before April 1, 1979, should be aware of possible dangers with these coolers.

Some of the water coolers have lead-lined water storage tanks. Studies have shown that ingestion of lead can be dangerous, especially to young children.

Halsey Taylor is conducting a replacement/refund program for those water coolers which have the lead-lined storage tanks. The program is required under a Consent Order Agreement with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission pursuant to the provisions of the Lead Contamination Control Act.

This notice is being given circulation so that Southern Baptist churches will check water coolers in their facilities.

Churches that own a Halsey Taylor tank-style water cooler manufactured before the 1979 date, are encouraged to contact Halsey Taylor's toll-free telephone number 1-800-635-2358. The Halsey Taylor company has said it is anxious to replace present coolers or refund money to affected churches and schools for those water coolers.

The Baptist Program, a monthly Southern Baptist magazine mailed to pastors and other church staff personnel, will carry a notice of this replacement/refund program in its October 1990 issue. Baptist state convention leadership is being informed of the notice in order that they may help in making all churches aware of this health concern.

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Board asks judge to set aside
jury's \$1.56 million verdict

By Art Toalston

NFM

Baptist Press
8/21/90

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Motions to dismiss a \$1.56 million verdict against the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board were argued in Richmond Circuit Court Aug. 20.

Foreign Mission Board attorney Lewis T. Booker of Richmond asked that a seven-person jury's July 13 verdict be set aside in a suit brought by a former missionary to Africa, Diana Sue Wade, on behalf of her four children.

During the trial, Mrs. Wade contended her children suffered trauma because board officials learned that her husband, G. Thomas Wade Jr., was sexually abusing their oldest daughter but did not disclose it to her, the mother, so she could halt the molestation. Mrs. Wade contended her husband continued to abuse the daughter as well as a second adopted daughter and began abusing a third daughter.

Booker argued during the trial that board officials who handled the family's case acted reasonably under the circumstances by telling Wade to inform his wife of the abuse and obtain professional counseling, which he did not do. Officials then ordered Wade to return to the United States with his family for counseling. He later was arrested and imprisoned for child abuse. The Wades are now divorced.

During the Aug. 20 hearing the board's motions to dismiss the verdict were heard by Judge T.J. Markow, who presided during the five-day trial in July.

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Markow could issue a ruling in a week, a month or six months, Booker said after the Aug. 20 hearing. If Markow denies the motions, the Foreign Mission Board will have 30 days to file a notice of appeal with the Virginia Supreme Court and three months to file its formal petition.

The board's primary argument for overturning the verdict is its practice of not entering into contracts with missionaries it places overseas. In finding for the Wade children, the jury in essence ruled that the family and the board nevertheless had a contractual arrangement.

At the hearing Booker argued that Virginia law requires any contract covering more than a one-year period to be in writing to be legally enforceable. The board enters into no such written contracts, Booker said.

Mrs. Wade's attorney, John C. Lowe of Charlottesville, Va., argued that Mrs. Wade's certificate of missionary appointment in 1976, her years of service with the board and the board's "Manual for Missionaries" are sufficient grounds for the existence of a contract. Mrs. Wade testified that she was assured during the missionary appointment process that board officials would do as much as possible to guard the family's health, welfare and safety.

Among other issues raised during the hearing, Booker contended that the statute of limitations had expired when the lawsuit was filed in 1988, and that a portion of the instructions to the jury prior to its deliberations was improper for the legal issues germane to the case. Booker and Lowe cited an array of Virginia court rulings -- sometimes the same rulings -- to buttress their respective arguments.

Mrs. Wade, 40, of Anchorage, Alaska, had sought \$141 million when she filed suit in April 1988 in Virginia, where the board is located.

She and her former husband, an agriculturist, were appointed as missionaries in 1976 and worked in Kenya and then Botswana. They returned from Africa in April 1984 on a furlough and then went on leave of absence. Wade, now 49, was arrested for sexual abuse of his daughters in June 1985 and is serving a 12-year sentence in an Alaskan correctional center.

Virginia law permits Mrs. Wade to file another suit on her own behalf within a year of the start of the children's trial.

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Independent missionary killed
in Liberia by government troops

N-FMB

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MONROVIA, Liberia (BP)--Liberian government soldiers fatally shot an independent Baptist missionary after arresting him Aug. 16, according to press reports.

The missionary, Clark Alan Jacobsen, 41, was from Brooks, Ore., and Sterling, Alaska. He had stayed in Monrovia, the Liberian capital, to guard church grounds that had been burned and looted, said press reports.

A spokeswoman at the U.S. State Department did not know the name of the Monrovia church or Jacobsen's mission group affiliation. Jacobsen's body was handed over to the U.S. Embassy Aug. 18. The State Department has lodged a formal protest with the Liberian government.

All Southern Baptist missionaries have left Liberia. However, Earl and Jane Williams have returned several times from Ivory Coast, carrying food and medical supplies to refugees in Yekepa, where the couple formerly was stationed. Williams is from West Monroe, La. Mrs. Williams is from Knoxville, Tenn.

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Brazil student ministry
partnership finalized

By Frank Wm. White

F-00
(21)

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--A partnership between Southern Baptists and Brazilian Baptists to develop student ministry in Brazil is now being implemented after two years of planning.

An agreement for the partnership signed in July will allow Brazilian Baptists to translate and adapt Southern Baptist student ministry materials, allow Southern Baptist student ministry leaders to provide training for Brazilian Baptists, and allow the two groups to exchange articles for student publications.

The idea for the partnership began with the U.S.-Brazil Student Missions Encounter in January 1988 when 150 Southern Baptist and 100 Brazilian Baptist students participated in joint mission projects throughout Brazil, according to Jimmy Joseph, a Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil.

"Brazilian Baptists got a vision for what could be done through student ministry from what they saw in the project," Joseph said.

Although Brazilian Baptists had tried twice to develop a student ministry program, they did not have a model until they saw the Southern Baptist program at work through the student missions project in 1988, Joseph said.

"Now, they are having some successes. Students are becoming involved, and it is having an effect on their lives. Some students also have been saved," Joseph said.

College students represent a significant segment of people in a country where 75 percent of the population is under age 25, Joseph said.

Joseph returned to the United States in July and will be on furlough through January 1991. He and his wife, Anita, were missionaries-in-residence during the Ridgecrest Student Conference.

The student ministry department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and the state student programs "have a wealth of things to offer us," Joseph said. "We are in the process of trying to figure out how we can use what is available."

During furlough, Joseph will work with Southern Baptist student ministry leaders to begin implementation of the partnership.

"Joseph's furlough will help us move rapidly in the early stages "of the partnership," said Brad Gray, consultant for world missions in the student ministry department and coordinator for the partnership.

The training aspect of the partnership will allow Brazilian Baptists to train "a new generation of leaders in student work," Joseph said.

Brazilian state conventions likely will plan annual training sessions and invite Southern Baptist student ministry leaders to lead training, he said.

Some limited opportunities for student exchanges will develop, Joseph predicted. Student work is just beginning in some areas of Brazil, and leadership is needed for additional development, he said.

In Minas Gerais, the state where Joseph serves, work has developed in six cities. However, the state has about 124 universities with as many as 200,000 students, he said.

Work also has started in four other southern Brazil states, with work planned for two additional states. Student work has not developed in Equatorial Brazil or North Brazil, he said.

Two Southern Baptist missionaries have primary responsibility, and one is assigned part time to student ministry in Brazil, Joseph said.

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A few Brazilian Baptists are beginning to work in student ministry. Until Brazilian leaders are trained, the missionaries have the experience and understanding to lead the work, Joseph explained.

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Summer missions in Big Apple
takes bite out of prejudice

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
8/21/90

F-NMB

NEW YORK (BP)--Walls of prejudice and apathy came tumbling down this summer for 26 college students immersed in metropolitan New York City for 10 weeks of ministry.

"My attitude about issues like the homeless really changed," said Kevin Stringham, a Samford University sophomore from Fayetteville, Ga. "When you get here and see it and have to smell the smells, you start to have a genuine concern."

Stringham was among 26 summer missionaries assigned to Metropolitan New York Baptist Association, which encompasses the city's five boroughs and suburban New Jersey.

In all, 1,369 Southern Baptist college students served as summer missionaries this year. Of that number, 676 were appointed by the Home Mission Board for service across the nation, 310 were appointed by Baptist Student Unions for work within their state conventions and 383 were appointed by BSUs for work outside their state conventions.

Although every summer missionary faced a change in culture, the 26 who ventured from mostly small Southern towns to the nation's largest city took a quantum leap.

"I expected the absolute worst," said Karen Edmondson, an East Texas State University senior from Fort Worth. "Anything bad, I thought it. I expected to be bouncing bullets. I expected to be living in a shelter with homeless people."

Those fears began to fade as the missionaries met new friends and put faces with the impersonal masses of the big city. But even then, they faced the shock of Baptist life outside the deep South.

"When I was taken out of the Bible Belt and put here, where you don't have a church on every corner and Baptist churches have to fight for survival, it opened my eyes," said Russell Gill, a Belmont College student from Waverly, Tenn.

Upon seeing the tiny facilities of Graffiti Baptist Center where summer missionaries held day camps, fed the homeless and led worship, the Tennessean said, "We've got Sunday school rooms bigger than this at home."

Spending a summer in New York City helps students gain a "global awareness of needs," said Mike Chance, who coordinates the summer missions program for the association.

"New York is a slice of the world," he noted. "You can hit the streets and hear 50 or 60 dialects. It dramatically impacts the life of every summer missionary."

Chance knows firsthand what a summer in New York City can do. "I would not be here today were it not for my experience as a summer missionary in 1971," he explained. "It was because of that experience that New York got hold of me."

The association assigns summer missionaries to a variety of places, ranging from traditional churches to mission points to ministry centers. Some serve by themselves, while others serve in groups of two to six. They assist home missionaries in tasks such as Vacation Bible Schools, day camps, visitation, food and clothing distribution.

Through their work, the students must deal with prejudices of race, culture, religion and economics.

"I never thought I was prejudiced before," said Bethany Shackelford, a Samford University sophomore from Woodstock, Ga. "But coming here I realized I was prejudiced in some ways. It was a shock to be in the minority."

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Shackleford, who is from a predominantly white, middle-class community, spent the summer working with low-income black children at Trinity Chapel in LeFrak City, a cluster of high-rise apartment buildings in Queens.

April Batson, a Winthrop College junior from Liberty, S.C., worked mostly with Jamaican children at Wake Eden Baptist Church in Bronx. Although she previously had talked about being opposed to racism, this summer she "had to put it into practice. I had to love all the children the same," she said.

Before coming to New York City, she was certain what happened in her "little corner of the world" was all that was happening, Batson said. "I think I'll be more open to other places now. Just because it doesn't happen in my hometown doesn't mean it doesn't happen."

The summer workers -- who mainly had read about and prayed for missionaries before -- learned what it takes to hit the streets in hands-on ministry.

"It's really easy to go to church and do the ritual stuff. It's easy to pray for people," said Lara Robbins, a Southwest Baptist University senior from Elsberry, Mo. "It's harder to get out there and do something with them, to get down and dirty."

On the other hand, the summer missionaries learned the importance of prayer to enable their mission action.

"I'm learning that everybody has a part in missions," Stringham said. "A lot of times you feel like you don't have the strength within you. It helps to know other people are praying for us."

Through prayer, the summer missionaries said they drew strength to do things they never thought they could do.

"You're out on the line and you have to totally depend upon God for your guidance," said Charlie Jackson, a Copiah Lincoln Community College sophomore from Roxie, Miss.

"All the things I'm doing I've never done before," added Yili Wang, a Baylor University senior from Fort Worth, Texas. "My life is always smooth. This time I'm having to experience God myself. It's a new experience how close God can be when you really need him."

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