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90-147

Chapman holds session
for 'conservatives'

By Greg Warner and Toby Druin

N-CO(2X)

DALLAS (BP)--Twenty-five Southern Baptist pastors met privately with SBC president Morris Chapman Oct. 18-19 to discuss SBC leadership and missions opportunities.

Chapman said he invited 36 pastors he described as "theological conservatives" to the two-day meeting at a hotel at Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport. The meeting was not political, he said, but reporters were not allowed in because, while the meeting was not secret, it was private.

Participants did include former SBC presidents James Draper of Euless, Texas, and Adrian Rogers of Memphis, Tenn. Also present were Texas pastors Joel Gregory and John Bisagno, both of whom endorsed Chapman for president under the banner of broadening SBC leadership. Former Peace Committee chairman Charles Fuller was invited but did not attend.

Chapman said he sought input from participants on "enlarging the tent," his pledge to include in leadership those who have not been involved in denominational politics.

He said his appointment of Baptists to key SBC committees "is not the only process by which persons can participate in Southern Baptist life." He said he has considered naming a task force or ad hoc committee to emphasize other avenues of service, such as missions, evangelism and Cooperative Program support.

While "some have a tendency to define 'enlarging the tent' for me," Chapman said, his standards for SBC leadership have not changed. Leaders must be cooperating Southern Baptists who are committed to "the perpetuation of allegiance to God's perfect Word" through SBC institutions and who subscribe to the four examples of inerrancy cited by the SBC Peace Committee.

"While I want to include the larger family of Southern Baptists, there are those who by their own conviction are outside the tent," he added.

Chapman said he disagrees with the term "taxation without representation" to describe the predicament of moderate-conservatives who support the SBC financially but who are excluded from leadership. "Any person has the opportunity to participate in Southern Baptist life if he is a member of a Southern Baptist church," he said.

Chapman said he limited his invitations to "theological conservatives" as "a first step." He said he plans other meetings but added he is not ready to decide whether to invite moderate-conservatives.

Draper, who hosted a similar but smaller meeting of SBC leaders Sept. 7 in Dallas, said he and other "conservatives" are uncertain about including moderate-conservatives because of threats some have made to the Cooperative Program, the SBC's unified-giving plan.

Including Southern Baptists who have threatened to cut or divert their financial support of the Cooperative Program would be "tantamount to submitting to an economic boycott," Draper said. "We are struggling with whether or not to let someone blackmail us into some sort of detente."

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Draper was himself accused of proposing an economic boycott in 1985 when he said thousands of churches might withhold CP support if Atlanta pastor Charles Stanley was not re-elected SBC president. But he said that proposal differs from recently announced alternate-funding plans.

While Draper's suggestion in 1985 was to place CP gifts in escrow until a solution could be found, he said, the latest plans will divert CP money to other causes, creating a "cleavage of support" for denominational missions efforts.

While appointments and CP support were topics at the recent Dallas meeting, Chapman said most of the discussion focused on the "windows of opportunity" opening for SBC missions and evangelism efforts around the world, particularly in Eastern Europe. He described the session as "a terrific, tremendous time of dialogue and prayer."

"I came away from that meeting last weekend excited about the future of Southern Baptists," he said.

Chapman did not list the pastors attending the meeting, but the group was known to include Stan Coffey, San Jacinto Baptist Church, Amarillo, Texas; Curt Dodd, Metropolitan Baptist Church, Houston; Jack Graham, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas; David

Hankins, Trinity Baptist Church, Lake Charles, La.; Jerry Sutton, Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn.; Fred Wolfe, Cottage Hill Church, Mobile, Ala.

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Missouri Baptists Meet
For 156th Annual Meeting

By Philip Poole

N-CO(MO)

Baptist Press
10/26/90

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Despite several attempts to adjust allocations, Missouri Baptists adopted a record Cooperative Program budget during the 1991 annual meeting Oct. 22-24.

The \$15.2 million budget is about 1 percent over the 1990 budget and includes 35.75 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes and 64.25 to be used in Missouri. The percentage for SBC causes also is a slight increase over 1990.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' unified budget formula.

An amendment to add a \$15,000 allocation for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs failed 711 to 500 on a ballot vote.

Another amendment requested that no budget funds be used for Associated Baptist Press. ABP is an alternative Southern Baptist-related news service that began last summer following the firing of the director and news editor of Baptist Press, the Southern Baptist news service based in Nashville.

The motion was referred to the governing body of the state Baptist paper for consideration at a later date.

Messengers subsequently adopted a recommendation that maintains current funding percentages through the 1993 budget year.

After considerable debate, messengers also voted to expand a committee that had been appointed earlier to study funding issues that would affect the convention's budgeting process. The special study committee originally was a subcommittee of the Executive Board's administrative committee.

Ervin Benz of Highlandville had presented a motion that the committee be expanded to include one person from each of the convention's 12 regional divisions within the state. The additional members were not to be Executive Board members, according to Benz's motion.

Debate centered on whether the committee could be balanced in viewpoints, regardless of number of members.

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Benz said he sought to give a "broader base" which would provide input from "all Missouri Baptists. Voting for this motion would not divide us. I do not intend for it to do so."

Wallace E. Jones of St. Louis, chairman of the administrative committee and a subcommittee member, said the geographical zoning would not accomplish a balance of viewpoints. "We would trade one imbalance for another," Jones told messengers in urging defeat of the motion.

Another motion asked that the convention return to use of the name Cooperative Program as the designation for its unified budget. In 1989, annual meeting messengers had adopted the name "Cooperative Missions Program" as the theme of a multi-year emphasis on Cooperative Program. The thematic name had been recommended by a statewide task force.

In making the motion, Nancy Callahan of Warrensburg said she understood the name would be used only for educational purposes. She said it appeared to "diminish the appearance of unity between the Missouri Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention."

Callahan also noted that a group of Southern Baptists meeting in Atlanta last August had adopted the name "Baptist Cooperative Missions Program, Inc." for an alternative missions funding plan for Southern Baptists.

John Gilbert of Poplar Bluff, task force chairman, noted that the task force had discussed the similarity in names but decided not to make any changes since the Missouri emphasis had only been used for one year and that "it would take some time to determine the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the name change. The committee will remain sensitive to the response of people, but they still believe that the word 'missions' captures the essence of what the Cooperative Program is all about."

Others explained that the theme was not intended as an official name change and would not have any affect on official convention documents.

On a ballot vote, messengers voted to retain the Cooperative Missions Program theme by a narrow margin.

Messengers approved a variety of non-binding resolutions, including ones related to the Cooperative Program, priesthood of the believer, autonomy and church-state issues.

All eight resolutions passed, although not unanimously.

The resolution on priesthood of the believer drew the most debate from messengers.

The resolution affirmed "the soul's competency before God, freedom in religion and the priesthood of the believer," a Southern Baptist doctrine that each person relates directly to God.

Jim Cross of Forsyth, Mo. opposed the resolution, saying, "I have some concerns about extracting this doctrine out of a whole system of theology. I have a concern that this great doctrine has been used as a banner to rally people around."

Others, speaking in favor of the resolution, cited actions by Southern Baptist Convention meetings regarding the priesthood of the believer.

Lee Saunders of Thayer, Mo. said, "In light of what's happening in the SBC and the abuse of the doctrine by people who want to dictate to us what we can and cannot believe and how we can or cannot interpret the scripture, I think it's a timely resolution."

Messengers also debated at length a resolution on Baptist autonomy which "specifically recognizes the inherent right of both a local church and the state convention to determine its method, manner and amount of contributions."

Another resolution affirmed that "Christian unity and peace is possible in a climate of diversity." The resolution passed with no debate and little opposition.

Camdenton, Mo. pastor Richard L. Wakefield was elected president over Gerald Davidson, pastor, First Baptist Church, Arnold. Wakefield, who had served as first vice president in 1990, received 906 votes to 505 for Davidson.

Davidson later was elected first vice president in a run-off with Kansas City pastor H. Wade Paris, who was elected second vice president.

Paris is pastor of Swope Park Baptist Church.

Paula Jackson, a lay member of First Baptist Church, Farmington, Mo. was elected secretary over two other candidates.

A total of 2,525 persons registered for the 156th annual meeting, including 1,830 messengers and 695 visitors.

The 1991 meeting will be held Oct. 28-30 in Springfield.

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Baptist killed, seminary
damaged in Beirut fighting

By Mike Creswell

N-FMB

Baptist Press
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BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)--A Lebanese Baptist man was killed and the Baptist seminary endured heavy shelling when Syrian troops took over eastern Beirut in mid-October.

Farid Bassous, a Lebanese Baptist lay leader, was killed when an artillery shell struck his house in the Mansourieh area east of Beirut. Bassous had taken shelter in the basement with his family, but went upstairs during a lull in a bombing attack to change clothes. While he was on the upper floor, the shell struck the house and exploded. A piece of shrapnel hit Bassous.

Family members braved the continuing rain of shells in an effort to get Bassous to a hospital, but they were unable to do so because roads in the area were blocked by the battle.

Bassous was a member of the Mansourieh Baptist Church and represented Lebanese Baptists on the board that operates international Baptist institutions for the Middle East and North Africa. He is survived by his wife, Janet, a graduate of Beirut Baptist School, and two teen-age daughters.

Reports from Baptists in Lebanon have been slow in getting out because international telephone lines in the country are down. Southern Baptist representatives in Cyprus who monitor Baptist ministry in Lebanon have had to rely on heavily used radio telephones in recent weeks, reported Southern Baptist representative Jim Ragland.

Ragland described Bassous as a close friend to Southern Baptists who continue to relate to work in Lebanon. "He was a good man, a quiet man, a good Baptist. He'll be missed," said Ragland.

The shell that killed Bassous was part of the heavy shelling in the area around the Baptist seminary preceding the arrival of Syrian troops to depose Christian General Michel Aoun, who had controlled that part of east Beirut. Many of the gun emplacements the Syrians tried to knock out were located near the Baptist seminary complex.

Twelve shells struck the Baptist complex during the barrage, including one that made a direct hit on the International Ministries Building and damaged an area used by Baptist Publications. Baptist Publications employee Atiyeh Haddad had left a room in the building just before the shell struck it.

The force of the blast broke doors and blew out windows throughout the two-story office building, which also houses book storage and mass communication areas, radio and television studios and a bomb shelter for the seminary campus.

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Nobody on the complex was killed or injured during the attack. Although 10 families were staying in the bomb shelter on campus, few students were there at the time. The start of seminary classes had been delayed because of a gasoline shortage.

Other shells hit near the seminary's administration building, damaging the kitchen and dining room. All the buildings sustained shrapnel damage. One shell landed a few feet from the home of Adel Issa, a Baptist seminary employee, and blew glass fragments on Michline, his teen-age daughter, but she was unhurt. The family was huddled in the furnace room of the basement at the time.

Despite extensive damage to windows, doors and other light sections of the buildings, Ragland said walls and ceilings remain intact, so repairs probably will not be extensive.

Another close call was reported by Rosette Lahoud, secretary of the Baptist seminary. She was with her husband, Samuel, and their infant son at their home in Beit Meri during the shelling. The home was not damaged in the attack, although many neighboring homes were hit.

Fearing they would be mistaken as enemies and shot by Syrian troops, the Lahouds fled in their car with neighbors toward the city's center.

They got only a short distance when Syrian soldiers in the area stopped them, ordered them out of the car and held them at gunpoint against a wall. The civilians were threatened with death when they tried to talk or explain who they were.

Lahoud heard a Lebanese army tank approaching and shouted that they were all in danger. The Syrians saw the tank coming and took defensive positions near the Lahoud car. The family quickly got into their car. Unable to go forward because of the Syrians, Lahoud drove quickly backwards just as the Lebanese tank rounded a corner. The tank immediately fired a shell at the Syrian troops. The Lahouds were shaken but unharmed, and made their way to a safer part of the city.

A rash of killings and robberies followed the Syrian incursion that was almost as frightening for residents as the attack itself, Ragland said.

Meanwhile, classes at Beirut Baptist School in West Beirut have continued normally since the school reopened for the fall semester in early October, he said.

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Volunteers press mission board
for Eastern Europe opportunities

By Art Toalston

N-FMB

Baptist Press
10/26/90

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Eastern European Baptists are not ready for large numbers of Southern Baptist volunteers, according to R. Keith Parks, Foreign Mission Board president.

And many Southern Baptists, Parks acknowledged, are frustrated by lack of opportunity to participate in board-approved evangelism or church construction and renovation projects in the wake of communism's demise in Eastern Europe.

Leaders of the Baptist General Convention of Texas say they have asked the Foreign Mission Board for volunteer opportunities in Eastern Europe since the Berlin Wall fell last November. The convention's executive board has even created a task force to work with the FMB to find volunteer opportunities as soon as possible and stands ready to send volunteers with a variety of skills.

Parks said Foreign Mission Board personnel assigned to Eastern Europe "have been working diligently" with Baptist leaders there to initiate appropriate volunteer opportunities.

To date, the FMB has scheduled three major volunteer efforts in Eastern Europe. It has sent teams to Hungary since 1988 to help construct a seminary building, helped North Carolina Baptists and Polish Baptists establish a partnership and sent Baptist students to Leningrad to help renovate a church.

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Otherwise, Eastern European Baptist leaders have been hesitant about -- even wary of -- volunteer projects, Parks said. Their reasons range from a lack of manpower to handle an influx of volunteers to concern that volunteers may import the theological controversy that has divided Southern Baptists.

However, Ed Schmeltekopf, associate executive director of Texas Baptists, said Texans hear two different messages about volunteer work in Eastern Europe -- and "the messages do not coincide."

While the Foreign Mission Board urges caution, some Baptists and some parachurch groups tell of successful efforts in Eastern Europe, Schmeltekopf said. "At least that's the report they're giving," he said.

Parks acknowledged that it is relatively easy for a group from the United States to venture to Eastern Europe and persuade one or more individual churches to form some sort of partnership.

"I don't question anybody's motives in this," Parks commented. "I think it's all an effort to be of help, but if our honest efforts end up splintering or fragmenting Eastern European Baptists, all of us will regret that."

Volunteer efforts and other aid for a few congregations can cause strife when they undercut cooperative work of churches through their national organizations (called unions), Parks said. Eastern European churches, through union deliberations, are targeting the most crucial evangelistic, Bible distribution and church development needs, he said. Southern Baptists should plan in cooperation with them "to feed into the churches, to multiply and strengthen them," he added.

Parks said the FMB is in the process of assigning personnel to every Eastern European country except Albania, which continues to restrict Christian work. "As we get people in place, we feel we'll be able to cultivate trust and help them see how volunteers could strengthen what they're trying to do."

Parks acknowledged that the board's approach "will take a little longer" and "probably won't satisfy frustrations that Baptists in this country have of wanting immediate, hands-on involvement." But he said the board also must maintain a working relationship with Eastern European Baptists long after the world's current fascination with the region subsides.

Schmeltekopf anticipates the Texas convention's task force on volunteers will hear out the board's concerns. And the task force will hear from those who have gone to Eastern Europe and found opportunities for ministry, he said.

Texas Baptists have traditionally worked with the Foreign Mission Board, he said. "I don't think we should be another Foreign Mission Board," he qualified. "But it's the conviction of a lot of our people that we need to go over there on our own and make contacts and do what we can," Schmeltekopf said. The Texas convention must hear Texas Baptists "who say effective ministry is being done and we ought to be a part of it," he said.

Curt Dodd, pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Houston, made the motion to create the task force. It was approved in September. Schmeltekopf said task force members are still being named, noting the process has been delayed because Texas Baptist leaders have had to focus attention on efforts by Baylor University in Waco to remove itself from Texas convention control.

Dodd and his church have been involved in volunteer efforts in Poland twice during the past year, with the aid of evangelist Michael Gott, a member of the church who has focused on Eastern Europe ministry. Last November, Dodd and Gott met with leaders of the Polish Baptist Union and preached in several churches and a prison. Last July the church sent 15 members to West Germany and Poland to help with children's and youth camps.

Metropolitan Baptist also has provided financial aid to Polish pastors and churches. During the coming year, it has budgeted \$100,000 for projects in Eastern Europe beyond regular giving to Southern Baptist causes, Dodd said.

Dodd said churches intent on aiding Eastern European Baptists should work through the Foreign Mission Board to coordinate and maximize their efforts. But if that proves impossible, he said, churches should move ahead on their own while opportunities are ripe in Eastern Europe.

In his "baby-boomer" church, Dodd said, direct involvement is necessary "to develop a missions awareness and commitment." More than half of the members come from non-Southern Baptist backgrounds, he said. When one new member heard about Southern Baptists' Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, she asked, "Are we supporting a cult? This Lottie Moon -- is that Sun Myung Moon's wife?"

Keith Parker, director of Foreign Mission Board work in Europe, amplifying the various reasons for Eastern European Baptists' hesitance toward volunteers, confirmed that many groups are "coming in -- uninvited ... and Baptist leaders in Eastern Europe have their hands full" with offers of visiting Christians and other assistance.

Most unions in Eastern Europe do not have enough Baptists fluent in English to translate for large volunteer groups or adequate manpower for all the advance work needed for major campaigns, Parker said.

To this point, Eastern Europeans have said a quick "yes" to every offer of aid, Parker said. Under communism, he explained, they expected so few government promises to be kept that they assume the flood of Christian visitors from the West also is making mostly empty promises of help.

The controversy that has divided the Southern Baptist Convention since 1979 is another factor behind the Eastern European Baptists' hesitance to schedule U.S. volunteers, according to Parker.

"They're quite aware of the struggles in our own convention," Parker said. The strife in the Southern Baptist Convention was reported in the communist press, he said. Communists tried to tarnish and undercut Baptist movements by reporting on controversies such as the one among Southern Baptists.

"We try to assure Eastern European Baptists that no volunteers would bring those issues in," Parker said. "But they're still concerned."

Baptists in some Eastern European countries are uneasy over their countries' political situations, Parker noted. They believe that undaunted communists remain in power, with only their political machine's name changed.

Many Baptists clearly remember times when they or others were imprisoned, accused of being agents of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency simply because they interacted with Christians in the West, Parker said.

"It's a little too soon" for these Baptists to feel comfortable about U.S. volunteers working in their countries, he said.

In several Baptist unions, the leaders are uncertain whether they will be re-elected to their posts in upcoming votes, Parker added. Thus they're very cautious about making commitments binding on new leaders for such matters as a major project involving U.S. volunteers.

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New missionary requests up;
evangelism still tops job list By Donald M. Martin

N-FMB

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist foreign missionaries worldwide want 454 new co-workers in 1991, a 22 percent increase over 1990 requests.

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For 1991, overseas mission administrators have asked the Foreign Mission Board to appoint 342 missionaries -- or 75 percent of new missionaries requested -- for evangelism and church-starting assignments. They requested that 112 of next year's new missionaries fill specialist roles in fields such as medicine, education and agriculture.

"We will always do a variety of things on the field," said Lloyd Atkinson, director of the board's personnel selection department. "But it's not surprising that three-fourths of our requests are for seminary-trained individuals who'll work in church planting and development -- that's the main goal of the Foreign Mission Board."

Mission area directors and regional vice presidents recently compiled a list of the top 30 missionary needs for 1991. A pastor for an international church who will also work as a church planter in Karachi, Pakistan, leads the list. A staff surgeon for Jibla Baptist Hospital in Jibla, Yemen, is second.

Sixteen top needs call for evangelists and church developers. Also, five nonresidential missionary requests appear on the list -- three for Asia and two for North Africa or the Middle East. Nonresidential missionaries target unevangelized people groups in highly restricted areas from bases outside those areas.

Also in Asia, mission administrators are calling for a church planter to work in Bangladesh. The new missionary would plant churches in rural areas, train church leaders and assist in community development programs.

Southern Africa needs church developers. The top need in Uganda is for a church developer to help plant rural churches near the city of Lira. Nigeria's top need is for a church consultant to evangelize two nomadic people groups -- the Hausa and Fulfulde people.

While personnel requests have increased, the ratio of requests for evangelists and specialists has not significantly changed in nine years, said Atkinson.

"When you look at the variety of assignments and the requirements for each position, you see it doesn't match up with some of the perceptions about who the Foreign Mission Board seeks to appoint," he said.

Atkinson said a common misconception has emerged that the board only wants seminary-trained evangelists, although all missionaries, regardless of vocational expertise and assignment, go overseas to spread the gospel.

In 1982, overseas mission organizations requested 817 new missionaries; 73 percent of the requests called for workers in direct evangelism, such as church planters and developers. The remaining 27 percent were requests for specialists, such as educational, medical, agricultural or media workers.

Although personnel requests dropped more than 50 percent from 1982 to 1988, the ratio of evangelists to specialists held steady at about a 75-to-25 percent mix, Atkinson said. Total requests for new missionaries steadily declined in these years, from 817 in 1982 to 333 in 1988, because missionaries were asked to prioritize requests and focus on top needs.

Since 1988 missionary requests have increased each year. Atkinson said he believes requests will continue to increase, although not to the early-1980s level, because mission administrators are expanding their priority lists.

Another misconception Atkinson said he regularly encounters is the notion that the board rarely appoints singles, especially single women. However, in its last appointment service, the board appointed four single women.

"There's a realization that there's a growing pool of singles studying in the seminaries that God may be calling as career missionaries," he said.

Currently 37 percent of those applying to become a career or associate missionary are single.

A breakdown of requests from overseas also should dispel the belief that only a few slots are open to single women, Atkinson said. Included in the 1991 requests for 342 evangelism-related missionaries are 107 positions open to singles, with 46 open to single females.

So far in 1990, the board has appointed or reappointed 193 career and associate missionaries, already passing last year's total of 185. It also has sent 162 long-term mission workers overseas through the International Service Corps, compared to 125 in 1989. The 1990 total stands at 355, with a projected total of more than 400 by the end of the year.

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Japanese Baptists ask
for 60 volunteer teams

F-FMB

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Japan Baptist Convention has asked the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to send 60 volunteer teams to participate in one of the largest evangelistic crusades ever planned by Japanese Baptists.

Scheduled for May 20-June 3, 1991, the crusade is an outgrowth of Japanese Baptists' goal to increase their churches from 238 to 500 and the number of Baptist believers from 28,000 to 50,000 by the year 2000.

The planned effort also goes hand-in-hand with Southern Baptist missionaries' new drive to start churches in pioneer areas and leave established churches and institutions in the hands of Japanese.

Each U.S. volunteer team will include a preacher and two or three lay people. They will work with churches throughout Japan and Okinawa.

Interested people can contact Bill Peacock at the Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230, or call 804-353-0151.

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Italian Baptists suffer
second property disaster

By Stanley Crabb

F-FMB

Baptist Press
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ROME (BP)--Italian Baptists have been hit with their second calamity in less than a month.

Sometime during the night of Oct. 21, thieves used blowtorches to penetrate a "chief-proof" door of the Italian Baptist union's Audio-Visual Production Service (SPAV) in Rome. Working undisturbed in the mostly empty building, they stole more than \$150,000 worth of video recording equipment.

The theft followed the Oct. 2 burning of a Baptist printing operation in southern Italy. Arsonists with suspected Mafia links entered the ground floor of Altamura Baptist Church and set fire to the cooperative printing establishment there. Damages have been estimated at more than \$220,000.

Because of the importance of SPAV's production service to Baptist and other Italian evangelical radio and TV ministries, the latest incident is just as serious. "In 20 years of Christian recording activity we've never had anything like this," said Domenico Bemportato, SPAV's chief recording engineer.

Bemportato, one of SPAV's five employees, discovered the loss Oct. 22 when he arrived to pick up recording equipment he had prepared to use in shooting video footage in Mottola for a Protestant broadcast series.

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"The robbers didn't even have to gather the equipment from our control rooms; it was all ready for them," he said. "We're all still in shock. It's a disaster for us, but we can still be thankful the burglars left all the new studio recorders we had purchased just months ago."

Unlike the Altamura printing cooperative, SPAV's equipment was insured. "However, our insurance will pay only 60 to 70 percent of the used value of the equipment. The most we could hope to receive will probably be less than a fourth of the combined replacement value," said Bemporato.

SPAV was established in 1981. It grew out of an earlier Baptist audio recording ministry. When video recording was added in 1982, SPAV soon established itself as Italy's principal non-Catholic religious recording facility. It fulfills most of the Italian evangelical community's audio and video needs. For example, SPAV produces "Protestantism," a fortnightly television broadcast of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy. Baptists, Methodists, Waldensians and many others collaborate in the TV ministry.

"This theft came at a time when everything was going so well for us," said Ettore Zerbinati, a Roman Baptist layman, who directs SPAV. "We were working intensely for the Baptist union, Protestant federation and many others in the evangelical world and were developing new (clients). In spite of this terrible setback, we'll keep going and consider it yet another challenge for us."

Zerbinati strongly criticized the police investigation of the incident, charging their "work was inconsequential and ridiculous."

"They didn't even take fingerprints," he said. "And when I went to the police station, I was strongly advised by them not to push too much any investigation, lest our insurance companies refuse to repay anything at all until the investigations would be completed." In Italy, that could take years.

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Task force to provide ministry
ideas for missionary homemakers

By Mary E. Speidel

F-FMB

Baptist Press
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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Beth Wilson bakes cakes in a clay pot over an open fire.

Wilson, a Southern Baptist missionary in Tabligbo, Togo, teaches cooking classes for women in an African kitchen she designed in her backyard. She also shows Togolese how to raise animals, improve their diets and earn some cash by selling eggs or animals.

At the same time, she tells them about Jesus Christ.

Wilson, from Norman, Okla., is one example of how Southern Baptist missionary homemakers use their talents in evangelism and church planting, according to Shirley Bruce, chairman of a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board task force on "church and home" workers.

The task force was assigned by the board's Global Strategy Group to study ways to enhance the role of the missionary homemaker in evangelism and church planting, Bruce said. Bruce and a group of 10 missionary homemakers have worked on the project for about two years.

The task force surveyed a representative sample of more than 100 Southern Baptist women missionaries worldwide to learn how they used their home and skills in evangelism and church planting. A total of 1,463 "church and home" workers are among the board's 3,578 career and associate missionaries, according to FMB officials.

Most married women missionaries have the "church and home" label but some have specific job titles, depending on their assignments, Bruce explained. The "church and home" label is "a rather broad title but it allows women a measure of freedom to find, under the Lord's direction, ways they can minister outside and through the home while taking care of their families," she said.

Bruce, from Clarendon, Ark., was a church and home missionary in Central America for 16 years. She and her husband, Joe, who now directs Southern Baptist mission work in Middle America and Canada, live in Guatemala City. He is from Clarkton, Mo.

In the survey, church and home workers were asked about such issues as how they work with their husbands in ministry, whether or not husbands and wives have separate ministries, what resources they use and how their children are involved. They also were asked to give suggestions for new missionary homemakers who sometimes struggle to find their ministry niche.

"We wanted to know not only how they began ministry but especially what had been effective for them," Bruce said. "One thing we wanted to do was to be able to share these resources with other missionaries."

The task force used the survey results to compile guidelines and ministry models for church and home workers.

The ministry models contributed by missionaries show "how creative women can be in using their homes and the gifts that God has given them to minister effectively on the foreign mission field," said Bruce.

Missionary Jeanie Wood, from Durant, Okla., described a model for using quilting classes to start a church on the island of Mauritius. During the classes, she played Christian music and used a Bible to answer questions that came up during conversations about Christianity.

"I tried in every way to exemplify God's love," wrote Wood.

Her efforts paid off. The quilting classes eventually led to organization of a church. In addition, class members helped introduce islanders to Baptists by inviting people to attend a showing of their finished quilts.

Ministry models such as Wood's will be in a missionary homemakers' manual to be published in 1991, Bruce said. Women carried out the entire project.

In addition to providing ministry ideas for women, the manual will address ways wives and husbands can complement each other in both ministry and homemaking roles, Bruce said.

The project results also will help missionary homemaker better define the church and home worker role, said task force member Helen Hardeman, a missionary in Guatemala. "This task force will help women see that (church and home) isn't a put-down title. It gives a large amount of freedom to program our work according to our needs," said Hardeman, of Baldwin, Ga.

"It helps give some specific ideas on ministry so I think it will help women get a handle on what they can do -- the possibilities," she said.

Bruce encouraged task force members to try out some of the models while they were working on the project. At the time, Hardeman was searching for a ministry she could do close to home, since her husband's ministry required him to travel more often without the family.

Hardeman selected a church starting model developed by a woman missionary in Brazil. Along the way, Hardeman made changes needed because of differences in culture, climate and lifestyle in the city where she lives, Quezaltenango, Guatemala. Starting in January 1989, she helped plant a mission church that now has a lay pastor, Sunday School and women's organization.

Having such a model for ministry would have been helpful when she first began as a church and home worker almost 20 years ago, Hardeman said.

"I hope both new and veteran missionaries will take time to read this," she said of the manual. "It will help them see how other women view priorities, problems and opportunities."

Dallas church sees ecology
as stewardship of creation

By Ken Camp

N-2400

DALLAS (BP)--Ecology is too important to be left to tree-hugging secularists and goddess-worshipping New Agers, according to George Mason, pastor of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas.

"We decided that we would not allow environmental issues to be co-opted by the secular or religious left. Our church is doing what it is doing not because we worship Mother Nature but because we are stewards of God's creation," he said.

Following a series of sermons on stewardship last year, including one directly related to stewardship of creation, Wilshire Baptist Church established an environmental stewardship committee.

As one of its first projects, the 11-person committee did a comprehensive analysis of Wilshire's current practices related to kitchen procedures, office policies, waste disposal and maintenance of grounds. The report included specific recommendations concerning the use of recyclable and recycled materials and the use of pesticides on the church lawn.

"We felt it was important for us to assess our own practices and look at our own facilities before going out to change the world," said Claudia Barner, chairman of Wilshire's environmental stewardship committee.

The committee also surveyed the congregation to determine levels of interest and commitment to recycling and other environmental concerns.

Of the more than 250 households responding to the survey, about two-thirds indicated they were recycling some items, and a clear majority noted that they would like to see an on-site recycling collection center at the church facility.

Based on those findings, the environmental stewardship committee submitted a proposal to Wilshire's budget committee to include the cost of a recycling collection center in next year's church budget. The budget committee currently is studying that proposal.

In its most ambitious project to date, the environmental stewardship committee led Wilshire to sponsor a community environmental fair in the church parking lot on Oct. 13.

An aluminum and newspaper recycling collection point was the centerpiece for the five-hour event which drew about 300 families from the neighborhood and the congregation. More than 5 tons of newspapers and 283 pounds of aluminum were collected, and proceeds from the sale of the recycled materials were given to world hunger relief.

"We wanted to emphasize the environmental connection between world hunger and stewardship of creation," Mrs. Barner said.

However, though the environmental fair was scheduled the same weekend as World Hunger Day in the Southern Baptist Convention, the church did not link the two emphases, Mason noted.

Rather than tie world hunger giving to a one-day emphasis, Wilshire is making it an on-going program associated with the three offerings for state, home and foreign missions, he explained.

In addition to the recycling collection, the environmental fair also included educational activities for children related to the environment, including recycling projects, composting demonstrations and junk art displays.

Other sections of the fair for adults included a display on energy conservation in transportation featuring a drive-through, tire air pressure check, a booth on household energy conservation and an exhibit on organic gardening.

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Persons attending the fair received refrigerator magnets bearing Wilshire Baptist Church's name and address and the logo: "Committed to Caring for Creation." The refrigerator magnets also were distributed following Sunday worship services at Wilshire Church.

"As an on-going project of our committee, we'll have monthly bulletin inserts focusing on different practical environmental issues and suggested lifestyle changes," Mrs. Barner said. "We'll encourage people to post these on their refrigerators with the magnets as reminders."

The committee also is in the process of compiling a resource booklet that it hopes to make available to other churches. The booklet, scheduled for completion in December, will include a "how to" section on recycling, suggestions for educational activities and a theological examination of stewardship of creation.