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November 21, 1990

90-162

KCSB has record
crowd at annual meeting

By Eva Wilson

*N-CO
(Kan. Neb)*

WICHITA, Kan. (BP)--Having the mind of Christ will result in unity, Dave Sellars, president of the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, said during the convention's 45th annual meeting in Wichita.

The meeting was held Nov. 12-14 at Tyler Road Southern Baptist Church. About 375 people registered as messengers, representing 121 churches. The opening session on Monday night, Nov. 12, drew slightly more than 600 people, a record crowd for a KNCBS meeting.

Unity is an "essential aspect of Christian living," Sellars said. Citing I Peter 3:8, he said unity means being like-minded or same-minded. It does not mean absolute conformity, he added.

Sellars, pastor of Northern Heights Baptist Church, Norfolk, Nev., was re-elected to a second term by acclamation.

N.N. "Andy" Antonson, pastor of the host church, was re-elected as vice president. The KNCBS Executive Board elected Antonson to that position in February after the previous vice president moved out of state.

Messengers approved the 1991 budget of \$3,385,140. Cooperative Program receipts from Kansas-Nebraska churches are projected at \$1,788,024. KNCBS will send 32.25 percent to the national Cooperative Program, an increase of .25 percent from the 1990 budget.

Resolutions approved by messengers focused on moral issues affecting the family, support for the Cooperative Program, a call for prayer for troops in the Middle East, and a renewed pledge to cooperate with Southern Baptist boards, agencies and institutions.

The 1991 meeting will be Oct. 21-23 at the Holidome in Hutchinson, Kan.

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California Baptists celebrate
convention's 50th anniversary

By Herb Hollinger

*N-CO
(Calif)*

Baptist Press
11/21/90

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (BP)--California Southern Baptists celebrated the 50th anniversary of the state convention Nov. 12-14 in a look at the past. Messengers approved a \$13 million budget and elected a San Bernardino pastor as president.

Rob Zinn, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in San Bernardino, was elected president. E.W. McCall, pastor of St. Stephens Missionary Baptist Church in La Puente, was elected first vice president, and June Tate, Huntington Beach Baptist Church from Huntington Beach, was elected second vice president.

Amid the pageantry, music and reminiscing, messengers took care of business although the anniversary celebration was the focal point. Only two resolutions were presented, and approved, with one urging California churches to give full support to the Cooperative Program unified budget.

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Georgie Hill is the new director of the state Woman's Missionary Union department. Hill has been Baptist Young Women's consultant with the national WMU in Birmingham, Ala. The announcement was made by the convention's executive board.

Messenger registration totaled 1,339. A total of 700 visitors also registered, for a total attendance of 2,039 people.

In other action, messengers approved a state missions offering goal of \$500,000 and approved one of three proposed amendments to the constitution. The other two were referred to the executive board. The approved amendment requires cooperating churches to "have contributed financially to the work ... during the preceding year through the Cooperative Program."

The convention's 1991 budget, five percent above the 1990 budget, will send 28.85 percent to the SBC Cooperative Program. That is an increase of 0.11 percent over last year. The percentage is based on a formula using the percentage of gifts channeled through the Cooperative Program from the budgets of California churches.

The 1991 convention will be Nov. 12-14 in Oakland.

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Illinois Baptists elect
layperson as president

By Bill Webb

*N-10
Call*

Baptist Press
11/21/90

PEORIA, Ill. (BP)--Messengers to the 84th annual meeting of Illinois Baptist State Association elected layperson Rodney Osborn as IBSA president and conducted their business without discussion at the Continental Regency Hotel here Nov. 6-8.

Osborn, a medical doctor from Peoria and IBSA vice president for the past two years, was the only person nominated to succeed outgoing president Charles West of Bethalto. Osborn is a member of Woodland Baptist Church in Peoria.

Charles Dampeer, pastor of Herrin First Baptist Church, became IBSA vice president by receiving 268 votes to 146 for C. Ray Fuller, director of missions in Three Rivers Baptist Association.

Messengers approved a 1991 Cooperative Program goal of \$4,708,840, a 1 percent increase over 1990, and a CP distribution ratio of 59.75 percent to IBSA causes (\$2,813,532) and 40.25 percent to Southern Baptist Convention causes (\$1,895,308), the same ratio as 1990.

Messengers also approved a \$6,298,290 general budget for 1991 (without a salary increase provision), about a third of a percent above 1990.

In addition, messengers approved 1991 anticipated Baptist Children's Home expenditures of \$890,810 and anticipated Baptist Student Center expenditures of \$612,613.

Messengers also adopted a measure that would allow executive director Maurice Swinford to revise the 1991 budget, adjust the staff salary scale and provide staff salary increases of up to 5 percent on Feb. 1, 1991.

That measure was granted on the condition IBSA ends 1990 receiving more money than it spends in its general fund. The balance would then be available for salary increases -- up to 5 percent of 1990 salaries. A deficit between IBSA expenditures and income would mean no 1991 salary increases and no revision in the 1991 budget.

Six resolutions proposed by the IBSA Resolutions and Christian Life Committee were approved without discussion.

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They included resolutions on reaching and discipling people, the state association's 1991 emphasis; the national debt; obscenity, pornography, violence and Christian responsibility; homelessness; and IBSA N.O.W. Phase II, a statewide program to raise funds for five specific ministries.

Next year's annual meeting will be held Nov. 5-7 at the Holiday Inn in Decatur.

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Southern Baptists to help ease
suffering in Soviet republic

By Marty Croll

N-JMB

Baptist Press
11/21/90

ALMA-ATA, U.S.S.R. (BP)--Three separate environmental calamities in the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan present an open door for Southern Baptists to help people who have long been hidden from the eyes of the West.

Through their service organization, Cooperative Services International, Southern Baptists plan to send up to 700 volunteers to Kazakhstan next summer to provide assistance in many fields. It could be the largest Southern Baptist volunteer group ever to participate in a single overseas project. Southern Baptists also have begun to ship a series of huge containers of food and nutritional supplements to the beleaguered area.

Much of the assistance during the project, scheduled June 20-July 8, 1991, will focus on the heavily Muslim people living along the fringes of the Aral Sea, where over-draining of upstream rivers has caused water to recede from the shoreline. Forty percent of the seabed has turned to salty dust.

Other support will go to an area surrounding a nuclear testing site and to an earthquake-stricken region.

Because the region has long been out of contact with the West, most Kazakhs have never met a Christian.

"How we respond to their needs gives rise to the question, 'Why?' and we can answer them, 'Jesus Christ,'" said John Cheyne, who administers Southern Baptists' overseas hunger and disaster relief funds. Cheyne traveled to the area in September at the invitation of the Golden Apple, a group set up to help Kazakhstan by fostering exchanges between the Kazakhs and other cultures.

Cattle and sheep -- lifeblood to the economy of Kazakh farmers and herders descended from the ancient Turks -- still graze on the hillsides near where the Soviet government is believed to have staged atomic tests similar to the ones the United States conducted in the American western deserts.

Disfigured children inhabit the village of Sarzhal, near where underground atomic blasts reportedly were vented into the air. In Sarzhal, a collective farm project with some 35,000 people, Cheyne visited the home of a 40-year-old woman and was told her dwarf-like appearance resulted from radiation exposure.

Kazakh leaders told Cheyne nuclear testing dangers were not evident for some time. They thought other factors caused growing malformation and mental disorders in the region. More recently, however, signs of radiation poisoning such as cancer, leukemia and pulmonary problems have become overwhelming.

The tragedy along the Aral Sea also was heartbreaking to Cheyne. "The people there suffer from a combination of hopeless desperation and fatalism," he said. Because of their traditional religious beliefs, they feel they must stay in the area despite the little hope they hold for the future.

As water flow into the sea has fallen sharply, an estimated 40 percent of the sea's surface area and 60 percent of its volume have disappeared, Cheyne said. Without a change in the use of upstream waters that feed it, the sea could become a geographic memory in the next century, some experts say.

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During much of the year, no water flows into the sea. Fish are dead, and with them the fishing industry that once fueled local economies. Large boats sit stranded atop desert-like stretches of sand, once the Aral Sea's bottom.

The adjoining countryside is a vast wasteland. Many species of animals have vanished. Scrub brush peppers endless mounds of salty sand. Trains of camels transport most of the supplies to the region. Water comes by truck.

In the earthquake devastation area, people have been able to make only limited attempts to prop up buildings left unsound with gaping cracks. Little, if any, rebuilding is evident. In some places people have welded metal braces like angle irons on the outside corners of concrete structures.

"They seem to have absolutely nothing to work with," Cheyne said.

The areas also seem to lack adequate medical facilities, he reported. One of the components in the upcoming Southern Baptist volunteer project calls for 50 health care professionals to work in Kazakhstan. Each will carry a footlocker of medical supplies to donate to the people.

Kazakh officials particularly want radiologists, infectious disease specialists, dentists, prosthetists and nurses. Health volunteers will teach and work in hospitals and go into rural clinics.

Other requests for the volunteer project include 300 university students to make cultural presentations; 100 professionals to give seminars in such subjects as business, communications, management, law, banking, law enforcement, food, education, transportation, art and music; 25 construction workers; 50 people to operate cultural and commercial display booths; and 175 specialists in the performing arts.

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

Ethicist advocates negotiation
in Middle East conflict

By Pat Cole

N-10
(BTS)

Baptist Press
11/21/90

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--"Making war or doing nothing" are not the only alternatives for resolving the current conflict in the Middle East, emphasized a Southern Baptist ethicist.

Glen Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said he believes the United States should begin negotiations with Iraq to end the tensions.

"The first principle in making peace is that you have got to talk," said Stassen, an expert on peacemaking and disarmament issues and author of the book "Journey into Peacemaking." "I think it is unwise for us (the U.S.) to simply demand of Iraq that they get out as an unconditional surrender. ... Instead we should be talking with Iraq about how they will get out of Kuwait."

The second principle for peacemaking is to "affirm each side's valid interests," said Stassen at a November ethics luncheon on the seminary campus devoted to the Middle East crisis.

The United States is rightfully concerned about the availability of the region's oil supply and the aggressive tendencies of Iraq, he said: "The United States doesn't want this aggressor to get the power of oil, nuclear weapons and chemical weapons and an army of a million men which it can use to dominate other countries."

On the other hand, he said, Iraq's legitimate interests include disputed oil claims with Kuwait and Iraq's need for a seaport. Stassen proposed that the United States push the Kuwaiti government to agree to international arbitration by the World Court or the Arab League to solve the oil dispute. He also suggested that Kuwait consent to lease two small islands to Iraq which block that nation's access to the sea.

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Stassen said negotiations with Iraq should deal with the country's stockpile of chemical weapons and its nuclear capabilities. Iraq must guarantee it will decrease its chemical weapons and not build nuclear weapons, he said, adding that these promises should be enforced by inspection. He suggested that Iraq decrease its chemical stockpile at the same rate the U.S. and Soviet Union are talking about decreasing their stockpiles.

The United States also could facilitate peace in the Middle East by helping to ensure the Kuwaiti government will abide by its promise of holding parliamentary elections, said Stassen. While acknowledging Saddam Hussein's history of aggression against other nations and his responsibility for the assassination of internal political enemies, Stassen also said the Iraqi leader is perceived by many Arabs as championing the interests of the common people. Therefore, he said, Hussein has an interest in increased democracy for Kuwait, a nation now governed by a monarch. A Kuwaiti parliament would provide Kuwaiti citizens more voice in their government and would let Hussein "save face as he gets out" of Kuwait, he said.

The Middle East situation could prove pivotal in the formation of the post Cold War era, Stassen said: "The super powers no longer dominate. We now have regional powers, a multi-polar world. We are shaping the world in which we will live. It is crucial how we solve the problem in the Middle East."

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Philippines hit hard
by 'Super' Typhoon Mike

F-FMB

Baptist Press
11/21/90

MANILA, Philippines (BP)--Baptists and missionaries in the Philippines are trying to determine how to aid the people hit hardest by 'Super' Typhoon Mike.

Hurricane-strength winds slammed into northern Mindanao and the Central Visayan Islands Nov. 13. At least 270 people died and more than 1 million others were reported homeless.

Philippine President Corazon Aquino declared nearly half of the country's 73 provinces disaster areas after the typhoon. Initial estimates said more than 36,800 houses and thousands of acres of crops were damaged or destroyed.

The storm also sank about 70 passenger, cargo and Philippine navy ships. Some airports are still closed. At others, evening flights are canceled because there is no electricity for radar or runway lights.

Southern Baptist missionaries were attending a meeting in Davao when the storm hit and were out of affected areas. Some experienced difficulty in returning to their homes. No deaths among Philippine Baptist families have been reported, but missionaries are still trying to reach remote churches to check on families there.

In Cebu, the country's second major commercial and transport center after Manila, electricity and telephones will be out for one to two months. Water supplies are scarce, and food is being brought in by boat and plane. Gas for cooking also is scarce; most people have switched to charcoal or firewood. Reports indicate long lines for water, kerosene and gasoline, which is being rationed.

Two of three Baptist churches in the Cebu area were completely destroyed. Nazareth Baptist Church in Minglinilla and Kalawisan Baptist Church on Mactan Island were blown down and flooded. Jaime Pancho, custodian at Nazareth church, said water and mud flooded through the area waist-deep after winds had blown down everything.

"Government agencies, non-government organizations and even private individuals do not know where and how to start relief operations," said Sampaguita Juarez, Baptist World Aid supervisor on the island of Panay. "Everybody is affected. We are cut off from civilization."

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Missionaries grieve for
Liberia as violence continues

By Donald D. Martin

N-FMB

LOME, Togo (BP)--Stripped of clothing and standing at gunpoint in a churchyard, a Liberian Baptist pastor and others were asked, "Who of you knows Jesus?"

The question was posed by an armed rebel -- part of a force that captured the port city of Brewerville, Liberia, during last summer's rebel march toward Liberia's besieged capital, Monrovia. As they combed the captured area, a band of rebels found a small group of refugees hiding in a church.

The rebel leader ordered the huddled group outside and told them to undress. Among the refugees was the pastor, his wife and their four children. The family had escaped Monrovia and walked north to Brewerville. There they had hoped to evacuate by ship to safety. For more than a week the family had lived on grass and water.

Both the pastor and his wife answered the question. Yes, they knew Jesus. At this the leader motioned them from the group, turned to his men and ordered the family shot.

When he heard the order, one rebel soldier balked. Another soldier who recognized the pastor said, "Take your family, get your clothes and go."

But at this the pastor balked. He looked to the group of refugees and said, "But they are my family also. I cannot leave without them."

The rebel leader paused and then said, "OK, all of you go."

The refugees eventually boarded a boat for Ghana and there found food and shelter in a refugee camp.

Jane Park, a Southern Baptist missionary nurse, heard the pastor's story while helping at the Ghana refugee camp. Mrs. Park and her husband, James, of Paducah, Ky., are temporarily assigned to the Baptist seminary in Ghana. In Liberia, Park taught at Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary. Mrs. Park was the seminary nurse. The Liberian pastor was a recent graduate of the seminary and one of Park's students.

His story and others were shared during a meeting of Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to Liberia but displaced because of the fighting there. Many of the stories ended in tragedy. Others spoke of courage and strength.

The missionaries met in Lome, Togo, Nov. 12-16 not only to share news but to grieve for lost Christian brothers and sisters and pray for Liberia's future. The group of about 40 missionaries also discussed where they will go from here.

"It was a beginning," said Billy Bullington, west Africa area director for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. "Some (missionaries) have been able to handle what has happened in Liberia. For others the deep hurt and loss of friends and relationships in Liberia, not to mention the loss of their mission family, is just now coming to the surface and it's very painful."

Fighting continues in Liberia as three groups vie for control of the nation. The National Patriotic Front of Liberia, led by Charles Taylor, controls the largest region. Another rebel group is led by Prince Yormie Johnson, who broke away from Taylor. His troops now hold parts of Monrovia. The third group is a peacekeeping force sent into Liberia by the Economic Community of West African States. So far this multinational force has seen little success, but it has the support of Liberia's neighbors.

All three forces have occupied areas in and around Monrovia. Earlier, reports of cholera, contaminated water and rampant starvation streamed from the city, while bags of rice packed docks in neighboring countries because no group could assure safe entry into Liberia's ports. Recent reports say some food is now reaching Monrovia, but life in the city is far from normal.

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During the mission meeting, Bullington met with individual missionaries to discuss their future. Some plan to continue in temporary assignments they took after evacuating Liberia early in 1990. Others will commit to two- or three-year assignments in other African countries. A few missionaries have chosen permanent assignments in other countries.

In time, missionaries hope to restart Liberian mission work on two tracks, Bullington said. One track will focus on church planting, evangelism and leadership training while the second will meet social needs.

When the fighting does stop, missionaries likely will have to start from scratch. In the Monrovia area looting has been so severe that scavengers have stripped buildings of plumbing, windows and doors.

"We'll be doing well to start with empty shells," said Betty Kay Yamaoka, FMB associate area director for west Africa.

Not all Southern Baptist missionaries have left Liberia. In Yekepa, a small town near the Guinea border, Earl and Jane Williams of West Monroe, La., and Knoxville, Tenn., are working with Lawrence and Alice Hardy of Savannah, Ga. They are distributing medicine and food and holding church services.

In Mano River, near the Sierra Leone border, Ed and Fran Laughridge of Rock Hill, S.C., and Great Falls, S.C., have set up a small food distribution center and are conducting worship services.

The Foreign Mission Board has spent more than \$300,000 in food and medical relief in Liberia and neighboring countries since fighting broke out in December 1989. Missionary Bradley Brown plans to visit Liberian refugee camps to determine how Baptists can meet spiritual and physical needs.

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Guatemalan radio station is
'electronic John the Baptist'

By Art Toalston

F-FMB

Baptist Press
11/21/90

LAS CASAS, Guatemala (BP)--Holding a stack of letters from listeners, the radio announcer readies himself at the microphone. He begins reading the letters on the air -- one by one.

Twice each morning and once in the evening, one of four announcers at Radio K'ekchi' devotes an hour to reading through the station's mail.

The program is called "Greetings," yet most of the listeners are not writing just to hear their letters on the radio.

One listener wants a friend to know "that it's very important that you come to see your mother because she is very sick." Another, writing from a neighboring country, wants to tell his younger brother, "I'm doing fine here. I'm working. Don't worry about me." Still another tells her mother in a distant village, "I think of you often and I love you."

Telephones are rare in this part of north-central Guatemala, where about 400,000 K'ekchi' Indians live. The "Greetings" program has become a key means of communication among relatives and friends scattered throughout the region's tree-laden mountains, coffee-plantation foothills and jungle lowlands.

"It's the nerve center of the K'ekchi' culture," claims David Daniell of Houston, a Southern Baptist media missionary who worked for five years with K'ekchi' Baptists to launch the shortwave station in March 1988.

"It's not just a few" who listen to Radio K'ekchi', adds Andres Xo, pastor of the largest of the 135 congregations in the K'ekchi' Baptist Association. "It's a multitude of people. They listen because it is in our language."

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Because it is a Baptist enterprise, Radio K'ekchi' also devotes plenty of time to spiritual programming via half-hour programs produced by 45 K'ekchi' Baptist congregations. Some congregations are on the air five times a week; others, two or three times. Twenty-one other evangelical congregations also participate in the station's witness, most with weekly programs.

Many of the 400 letters received by the "Greetings" program each month make note of the station's religious programming.

"I want to know if the gods that man makes with his hands really have power," one Catholic woman wrote. "I need to know if it's true that they give us life ... or if these are pure lies. I need to know which is the way that leads to God."

Such questions give the announcers -- each a K'ekchi' Baptist minister -- a chance to offer a few moments of on-the-air counsel about Christian faith.

Most letters do not come via the government postal system. Many listeners give letters to fellow villagers headed toward Las Casas. Others deliver letters personally after several hours of walking or even a day of riding in the back of a pickup truck. In many cases, the listeners cannot read or write, so they seek the help of someone who can put their words on paper.

Interacting with listener mail is but one of the station's major thrusts. It also has played a key role in launching Baptist work in three regions where K'ekchi' Baptists had never before been able to gain a foothold.

As Daniell puts it, the station is an "electronic John the Baptist" preparing the hearts of listeners.

Elias Cuc Quim, president of the Baptist association, says Radio K'ekchi' is "like having a missionary everywhere all the time." The association employs several home missionaries who regularly visit remote, unreached areas, but the station's signal jumps ahead many villages yet to be visited.

The greatest response has come in the Polochic Valley, a fertile coffee-growing area southwest of Las Casas. Eight new Baptist mission congregations have sprung up there and more than 300 people have professed faith in Christ.

"Ever since I've been in the country, which is over six years now, we've tried to start work in that area with no results," says Jim McGriff of Elmore, Ala., missionary co-worker with K'ekchi' Baptists. Efforts to organize evangelistic crusades there met closed doors. "Finally last year the whole area just burst wide open because of the Lord's Spirit using Radio K'ekchi'."

Jose May, a coffee plantation laborer, began listening on a simple shortwave set in the village of Benipec, which means "on top of the rock" in the K'ekchi' language.

"He began to hear the truth," McGriff says. "He had never really heard the truth before in a way he could understand. Before long he made a commitment to the Lord."

A few weeks later May walked four hours down the mountainside to visit a Baptist mission church. He said he had friends in his village who also were listening to Radio K'ekchi', McGriff said, and "that somebody needed to take the good news to them." The mission started sending a team to the village to conduct services. Within two months 29 people had become Christians.

Another major thrust of Radio K'ekchi' occurs right on the station grounds.

"Fifty to 75 folks would show up at the station almost every day," recalls Tom Dufresne, an aircraft electronics worker from San Angelo, Texas, who has made two volunteer trips to the station to do technical trouble-shooting. "People were walking in from all parts of the forest and the mountains. I saw several people come to know the Lord while I was there."

Radio K'ekchi' staff members credit Daniell with providing indispensable help in starting the station. "If he had not come to help us, we wouldn't know how to do radio work," says Gilberto Sun Xicol, director of Radio K'ekchi'. "He gave his heart to the work."

Daniell and his wife, Lorna, moved to Las Casas for 11 months in 1987 and 1988. They were there as the studio building was being constructed with the help of \$60,000 from Southern Baptists' gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. Earlier in 1987, the couple's son, Forrest, designed the radio station's facility between finishing his degree in architecture at Texas A&M University and beginning his first job with an architectural firm in Mobile, Ala.

Besides Dufresne, two other volunteers, Richard Loveless of Birmingham, Ala., and George Franklin of Big Spring, Texas, have provided trouble-shooting know-how. Franklin recently installed a backup transmitter to relieve the load on the station's sole transmitter and reduce its absences from the air.

Another volunteer, Roger Smith of College Station, Texas, installed most of the station's original equipment. Also, Keith Morris, a long-term volunteer now stationed in Panama, has helped record some 200 hymns and choruses by K'ekchi' Baptist musical groups.

Dufresne's work with Radio K'ekchi' kindled a vision for enlisting technicians for periodic volunteer "service calls" to Las Casas and other media ministries. A station like Radio K'ekchi', he says, needs a full-time engineer, but no one is available. At present, he has a roster of about 25 people open to doing short-term technical work in missions settings.

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(BP) photo sent to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press