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91-1

SBC President Chapman asks
Bush for National Day of Prayer*N-Texas*

WICHITA FALLS, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman sent a telegram to President George Bush Jan. 4 asking the president to proclaim Sunday, Jan. 13, as a National Day of Prayer.

Chapman told the president that Southern Baptists are "praying for world peace and for God's supernatural intervention in the Persian Gulf crisis."

"I believe the people of our country would welcome and readily respond to a presidential proclamation drawing us together in prayer on a day prior to January 15," (the date the United Nations has designated as the deadline date for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait) Chapman said in his message.

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CP receipts second highest
for month of December*N-CO*Baptist Press
1/4/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program unified budget receipts in December 1990 totaled \$11,192,207, an increase of 6.73 percent over December of 1989.

The December 1990 total was the second highest December Cooperative Program giving amount on record. Receipts for the same month in 1988 totaled a record \$12,151,002.

Receipts for the first three months of the 1990-91 budget year were 3.54 percent above the same period for 1989-90.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the rate of inflation, or annualized Consumer Price Index, for the period was 6.3 percent.

"I am gratified by the continued increase in Cooperative Program giving," said Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee. "Thank God for faithful Southern Baptist churches," he continued.

Bennett emphasized, "Most Southern Baptists are aware that the Cooperative Program is the lifeline of support for our world mission program. Cooperative Program dollars received by the Executive Committee represent only a portion of the total Cooperative Program gifts. The state mission programs are supported by Cooperative Program funds which remain in the state conventions. The division of Cooperative Program funds between states and the Southern Baptist Convention is approximately 61 percent for states and 39 percent for the Southern Baptist Convention."

"All Cooperative Program receipts are distributed in keeping with the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget as adopted by the convention in June 1990," Bennett stated.

Designated gifts received by the Executive Committee for the three-month period, primarily for the Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions and the Lottie Moon Offering for Foreign Missions, experienced growth comparable to the Cooperative Program, a 3.61 percent increase over the same three months of 1989.

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FMB president's mother
dies of pneumonia at 93

N FMB

BRYAN, Texas (BP)--Allie Parks, mother of Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks, died of pneumonia Dec. 28 at St. Joseph Hospital in Bryan, Texas.

Mrs. Parks, age 93, was instrumental in Parks' decision to become a missionary. She once had hoped to be a missionary herself and prayed for years that God would lead one of her four children into missions.

When Keith Parks was 6 years old he became seriously ill with inflammatory rheumatism. He responded to treatment, but doctors told his parents he would not live past age 13.

"Mother prayed, dedicating me to God, and I lived," Parks said. "I knew nothing of this (what the doctors had said) until I entered vocational Christian service."

Parks and his wife, Helen Jean, were appointed missionaries to Indonesia in 1954, where they served for 14 years until he joined the board staff in 1969 to head work in Southeast Asia. He became president in 1980 of the missions agency which now has more than 3,800 personnel in 121 countries.

His mother was a member of First Baptist Church in Bryan. She joined the church in 1987 after moving from Danville, Ark., to live with her oldest daughter, Jean Glazener.

In Arkansas, she was a member of the First Baptist Church in Danville. She was a Sunday school teacher, Woman's Missionary Union leader, nursery worker and strong missions supporter, said Bobby Walker, pastor of the church.

"She had a love and a gift for being a servant. I knew of no other person with a bigger heart. She was one of our most faithful members," Walker said.

When Mrs. Parks had to reduce church activities in her 80s, she still regularly sent members baked gifts for encouragement. "I don't remember when she didn't bake five or six cakes a week," Walker said. "She was always looking to help out. She was one of the greatest women I've ever known."

A native of Briggsville, Ark., Mrs. Parks, the former Allie Cowger, is survived by her four children, Jean Glazener of Bryan; Keith Parks of Richmond, Va.; Nell Mason of San Antonio, Texas; and Jim Parks of Temple, Texas. Other survivors include 13 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

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Call to duty leaves
churches without staff

By Sarah Zimmerman

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Baptist Press
1/4/91

ATLANTA (BP)--The call to military duty has left dozens of Southern Baptist churches without the ministers they called to their staffs.

Church staff members who serve in the National Guard or military reserves are among the 400,000 U.S. troops assigned to the Persian Gulf.

"We sent a missionary out involuntarily," said David Sapp, pastor of First Baptist Church, Chamblee, Ga. The church's minister of education, Larry Jones, is in California being trained in desert warfare for possible deployment to Saudi Arabia.

Jones came home for a few days at Christmas, and church members learned that he is "doing an incredible amount of counseling. We feel like we've extended our church's ministry to a lot of scared kids in the military," Sapp said.

Jones was called to active duty as a chaplain in November, and the church agreed to continue his salary in full through December. Beginning in January, the church will supplement his income to make up the difference between what his church salary would be and what the military pays.

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At First Baptist Church in Plantersville, Miss., Gene Williams, personnel committee member, said the church "made sure our pastor didn't lose anything financially" while he serves as a military chaplain.

Jimmy Smith, Plantersville pastor, was called to active duty in December and is already in Saudi Arabia. His wife and two children continue to live in the parsonage, and the church pays the utility bills at the house.

"It's a difficult time for his family and the church," Williams said. "We're in the process of hiring an interim pastor, but in the meantime everybody's pitching in and doing their part."

Everyone doing their part is also the operating principle at First Baptist Church of Dawson, Ga. Pastor James Mallard is a chaplain with the National Guard, and he, like Jones, is in California training for desert warfare.

"The last two or three years the pastor has led the deacons in a shared ministry concept," said Ted Stephens, minister of music. "Upon receiving the news (that the pastor was being called to military duty,) one of the deacons said, 'The Lord has been preparing us for this time.'"

When Mallard was activated in the military, the church continued his salary for two weeks, and his family continues to live in the parsonage.

"We're in the process of selecting an interim now, but we're holding a place for our pastor," Stephens said.

The Home Mission Board's chaplaincy division offers the following suggestions to churches whose pastor or church staff member is called to active military duty:

-- Provide a six-month leave of absence. Without a declaration of war, people serving in the National Guard or military reserves can only be given up to two six-month assignments.

-- Continue paying health care, life insurance and retirement benefits for six months.

-- Continue salary, including housing allowances, for one month to allow time for military pay to start. If housing is provided, allow the family to continue living there.

-- Review the agreement during the fifth month to determine if it needs to be modified or continued.

-- Call an interim staff member to serve in the absence.

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Baptist missionaries in Kenya
aid Wycliffe 'jungle camp'

By Ron Ragan

F-FMB

Baptist Press
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MATAPATO, Kenya (BP)--"And then he called me a wimp!"

That exclamation came from Beth Wright, a Wycliffe Bible Translators missionary from Wilmington, N.C. She was laughingly describing her husband Doug's reaction to her screams the night a swarm of African army ants invaded their tent.

The Wrights and 32 other new Wycliffe missionaries participated in Wycliffe's annual "jungle camp" training exercises on property near Matapato, Kenya, owned by Southern Baptist missionaries in the east African country.

The Wrights awoke to hordes of army ants crawling over their cots, clothes and other belongings. "We looked over, and a blob of ants were on top of the baby's crib. But fortunately we had a mosquito net over the crib and they couldn't get inside," Mrs. Wright said.

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The "jungle camp" is the first cooperative effort in Kenya between Southern Baptists and Wycliffe Bible Translators, who have translated the Scriptures into hundreds of languages worldwide.

A Southern Baptist missionary couple in Matapato, Bruce and Martha Schmidt of Virginia Beach, Va., provided Wycliffe with a site adjacent to their home deep in the bush country of southern Kenya near the Tanzania border. They also encouraged contacts with the local people and furnished logistical support.

The army ant incident was just one of many stories told around the campfire as the new Wycliffe missionaries and their 28 children communed with nature and the Maasai people of Kenya. Participants in the six-week experience came to Kenya from the United States, Germany, Canada, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Afterwards each missionary was scheduled to live with an African family for three weeks in a village.

One night the gathering heard a marauding lion near their encampment. Another evening a badger attacked a missionary family's tent. According to Jon Arenson, Wycliffe's director of orientation in Kenya, badgers in Africa can be very persistent. Living up to his reputation, the animal kept "badgering" the missionaries. It attacked and attacked; nothing would scare it away.

"Finally the badger ended up on the sharp end of a Maasai spear," said Arenson. A Maasai warrior, hired as a guard for the compound, speared it.

The group had a big laugh several nights later when the Schmidts cranked up their generator and invited everyone over to watch videos. "We were watching 'The Gods Must Be Crazy, Part II,'" Arenson explained. "In one very funny scene a honey badger attacks a guy's boot and wouldn't let go. We could all relate to that."

Arenson said the Schmidts, who live in the remote area with their three children, were instrumental in organizing the training exercise.

"I didn't realize just how primitive our conditions are until Wycliffe wanted to use us as a 'jungle camp,'" Schmidt said with a laugh.

"Bruce has bent over backwards to help us," said Arenson. Indeed, Schmidt approached local governmental officials, tribal leaders and others in a position to either help or hurt the project.

Schmidt's aid was especially valuable in making contacts with local Maasai villagers, Arenson said. "One of our main purposes for being here is to teach our people to understand and appreciate Africans, to know what's going on in their heads and feel good about them," he explained. "Bruce was our man on the ground here. His knowledge of the local Maasai people and their customs made it just that much easier to integrate into the local population."

Southern Baptist missionaries are working toward more cooperation with other "Great Commission" evangelical groups like Wycliffe Bible Translators in an effort to speed up world evangelization.

Arenson, in his fourth year with Wycliffe's Africa operations, sees Southern Baptist cooperation as a positive trend. "I've lived and worked with (Southern Baptist missionaries) Sam and Ginny Cannata in the Sudan. I taught many Southern Baptist missionary kids at Rift Valley Academy in Kijabe, Kenya. So working closely with Baptists is nothing new to me," he said.

Arenson described Wycliffe's "jungle camp" as experiential training. "We talk about it, then we do it," he said.

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New Wycliffe missionary Doug Wright is a former chemical engineer with Dupont Corporation in Wilmington. A corporate man on the fast track, he was at his career peak in manufacturing management with a large cadre of people reporting to him. He told how he decided to "chuck it all" in favor of Bible translations in the African bush: "I had a long commute to and from work each day, and I would drive home at night saying to myself, 'What have I done today of any eternal lasting value?' So I began to pray and seek God's leading."

In the beginning, his wife opposed the idea of being a foreign missionary. "She felt we could express our Christian faith right there at Dupont," he said. "But eventually we both decided it was definitely God's calling."

Before arriving in Kenya, the Wrights were in the application and training process for more than three years, including two years in Wycliffe's Dallas language facility, where they learned translation techniques and anthropology. After orientation they will work in Zaire.

Wycliffe missionaries generate their own financial support and typically spend several years preparing academically for their assignments. Many, like the Wrights, come from varied backgrounds not necessarily related to Christian work.

Another new missionary at the "jungle camp," Bill Mann, is a retired professor from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Mann will combine his expertise in the field of artificial intelligence and computer science with his knowledge of linguistics at Wycliffe's Kenya computer center in Nairobi.

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

Southern Baptist scholar
helps revise Living Bible

By Pat Cole

N (9/5/91)

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--As a member of the team that is retranslating The Living Bible, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Gerald Borchert approaches the task with a mixed view of the popular version of Holy Scripture.

Borchert, T. Rupert and Lucille Coleman professor of New Testament interpretation at the Louisville, Ky., school, likes The Living Bible's flowing style and easy readability. However, he disagrees with its rendition of several New Testament passages.

Borchert and other biblical scholars working on the project have an opportunity to make substantive changes to the translation. Their objective, he said, is to keep the paraphrased style of original translator Kenneth Taylor but strive to stay true to the Greek and Hebrew texts.

Borchert's assignment centers on the writings of the apostle Paul. He and two other scholars -- each working independently -- offer suggestions on passages where they may differ with the present Living Bible. The three then meet, discuss their proposed changes and reach a consensus. Their collective work goes to Taylor who critiques the style of the revised translation but not its meaning, Borchert said: "You will find that many, many people are buying The Living Bible and saying 'now I know what it (the Scripture) means.' Our task is to say what it means in the style of Kenneth Taylor."

Since Borchert had been "critiquing The Living Bible all of my academic life," he had some reluctance about joining the translation team. Yet he said he knew The Living Bible would continue to be popular because churchgoers "like the way it reads." He said, "I finally came to the conclusion that if I can help the average person understand it (the Bible) then that, in addition to teaching students, is what my business is all about."

Taylor's primary goal in the original Living Bible was "to translate it for his children in order that they could understand what the Bible is all about," Borchert noted. The style of The Living Bible indicates that Taylor is a "fine literary figure," Borchert said. However, he added that Taylor's knowledge of Greek is "not the scholar's Greek" and some of the language's finer points cause him difficulty.

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He also believes The Living Bible "tends to be very middle class, very Western and very American in its perspective." The Living Bible thus "communicates very well with most North Americans," he said. "The only problem is that it isn't always correct in the translation. What we face is how can you maintain the integrity of the text and still communicate?"

The Living Bible's failure to communicate clearly the sufferings of the early church is an example of its American bias, Borchert said. "The early church was a suffering church and Americans don't want to suffer. I think that's (suffering) a very crucial aspect of the Bible. The Bible doesn't promise you that it will all go happily ever after. The Bible tells you that you may have to suffer and you may even have to die for Jesus and there is not enough of that in The Living Bible."

The paraphrased style of The Living Bible gives the translators great freedom to communicate the meaning of the biblical text, he said. Yet, Borchert cautioned that such latitude also opens the door for translators to insert their sociological and cultural context.

The translators are mostly people who have criticized portions of the original Living Bible, said Borchert, adding they represent a variety of theological perspectives. He described the translators as "conservative scholars who have a high view of Scripture without being rigid."

Borchert said The Living Bible will never be a substitute for a knowledge of biblical languages nor will it even be a substitute for English translations that more closely follow the Greek and Hebrew texts. Still, he maintained that if the translators "can achieve a closeness to the meaning we have accomplished something."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southern Seminary