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91-35

Survey team to seek ways
Baptists can help Kuwait

By Bob Stanley N-FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will send a survey team into Kuwait "in a matter of days" to determine how Southern Baptists can help people in the war-ravaged Persian Gulf country.

FMB President R. Keith Parks announced plans for the team March 7 after a meeting of the board's Global Strategy Group of top administrators and strategists.

Parks said he is convinced Southern Baptists want to be "instruments of reconciliation" and to help meet immediate human needs as the country begins a massive rebuilding program.

"I want us to think big and plan big so the creative energy of Southern Baptists can find heartfelt expression in reaching out to the many needy people of this region," he said.

The survey team will include John Cheyne, who coordinates the board's human needs efforts; Maurice Graham, Southern Baptist worker in Kuwait who was held hostage in the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait City for more than four months before his release Dec. 9; and Jerry Zandstra, pastor of the National Evangelical Church in Kuwait City. Graham was associate pastor of the church after he and his family arrived in Kuwait early last summer.

The team will leave as soon as they can get permission to enter Kuwait, Cheyne said.

"We want to see what Southern Baptists can do that others might not be able to do," Cheyne said. He mentioned aid for Bangladeshi workers who were unable to leave Kuwait when others evacuated as one example.

The possibility of flying a planeload of rice and other food staples into the country will be considered to meet urgent need for food in the Kuwaiti capital, he said.

Meanwhile, another FMB committee will begin considering a variety of recommendations coming from a recent meeting of Southern Baptist personnel assigned to the Middle East and North Africa. Before the conflict began, Southern Baptists had almost 150 people working in the region.

The Baptist workers recommended innovative approaches for ministry in the postwar period, including possible expansion of personnel assignments in the area, said regional vice president Isam Ballenger, who heads the committee.

The recommendations include encouraging Southern Baptists with specialized skills to seek employment with U.S. firms given contracts to help Kuwaitis rebuild their country. As they help with these efforts, the planners said, workers may be able to establish lasting contacts with people in the area.

The mission workers also proposed ways to increase the number of people interested in serving among Arabs. They also urged more Southern Baptists to consider working on volunteer teams and enlisting in longer-term Foreign Mission Board programs such as International Service Corps and Tentmakers.

"There's a great need for Christians to understand better the Islamic religion and to be able to enter into dialogue with due respect and appreciation for the religion and culture of these Middle East peoples," Ballenger said.

But the work can't be done without special donations by church members above their normal church contributions, said Don Kammerdiener, the board's executive vice president and a member of the committee.

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He said Southern Baptists who want to participate may send donations to: Middle East Relief, Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230. All such funds will go to provide food, medicine and other much-needed supplies in the region.

Besides Ballenger and Kammerdiener, the special committee named to develop a comprehensive postwar strategy includes Harlan Spurgeon, vice president for mission personnel; Lewis Myers, vice president for Cooperative Services International; Clark Scanlon, director of research and planning; Alan Compton, vice president for communications; and Jimmy Maroney, assistant director of the Global Desk, which is seeking ways to reach out to those who have never had opportunity to hear the gospel message.

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Belorussian churches seeking
to preserve their children

By Art Toalston

N- FMB

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Baptists in the Soviet republic of Belorussia are trying to save a future generation of church leaders now suffering from nuclear radiation.

In the Belorussian republic, where heavy radiation fell from the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster nearly five years ago, Baptist churches are providing food for 1,000 needy Christian children, reported Ivan V. Bykatyi, president of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Belorussia.

The children are among 800,000 Belorussian youths whose lives are threatened by radiation, Bykatyi said. Many are in hospitals in Minsk, the republic's capital, and other hospitals throughout the region.

"The doctors often weep" as they hold the children in their arms "because they cannot help them," said Bykatyi, who discussed Belorussia's spiritual and physical needs in a March 6 visit to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va.

Medical facilities throughout the republic lack modern equipment and medicine to diagnose and treat cancer and other illnesses caused by radiation exposure, he said. In many cases, hospital labs have only a microscope.

Belorussia, with 12 million people, is north of the site in the Ukraine where the world's worst nuclear accident occurred in April 1986, sending large amounts of radiation into the air. Winds carried much of it over Belorussia. Radiation also was detected in numerous other countries.

Everyone in Belorussia was affected by Chernobyl fallout, Bykatyi said. He thinks two heart attacks he has had, for example, stem from the way radiation weakens a person's body. But with limited resources, Baptist churches can assist only children up to age 7, he said. Churches have no vitamins, he lamented, to supplement food and strengthen children's bodies.

Bykatyi, who has issued appeals to Christians in the West to assist in a range of undertakings, recounted the effect three large containers of donated medicine have had in Belorussia. The medicine, valued at \$600,000, was shipped by International Aid, an organization based in the Chicago area.

Government officials at first insisted that it be distributed by the government pharmaceutical center. "You may take it by force," Bykatyi said he told the officials, "but that's the last time anything will come," because Belorussian Baptists have been entrusted with stewardship of the medicine. Government officials relented and Baptists have handled the distribution.

Newspapers have been writing about how Christians in the republic and in the West have joined hands to help the people of Belorussia, he added.

A ceremony marking the arrival of the first container of medicine was attended by a member of the Belorussian parliament who called himself a "scientist of Marxism."

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A newspaper story quoted him as saying, "This church has been very undeservedly ostracized from any attention of our society, but this is a demonstration that proves that religion takes a course toward a bright expression of humanity. That which divides us does not in any way compare to that which should now unite us. We have a duty to work together to save the Belorussian people from the Chernobyl tragedy."

Baptists in Belorussia count 116 churches with 10,000 members, Bykatyi said. Christians survived Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's prediction that worship in the Soviet Union would be stamped out by 1980, he noted. Despite new laws for religious freedom, he voiced uncertainty about "how long (the door) will be open, but we want to do all that is possible so we can tell the people about Christ."

"Atheism has robbed the souls of the people, has made them empty. They need spiritual food," Bykatyi said.

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Annuity Board trustees hear
success report from Powell

By Thomas E. Miller Jr.

N-CO
Annuity

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DALLAS (BP)--The Southern Baptist Annuity Board has experienced "remarkable success in the face of significant obstacles during the past 12 months," board President Paul Powell told trustees in their February meeting.

"Despite the economical, political and denominational climate in which the Annuity Board staff has worked, we have made progress in every area of work," Powell said.

After four years of staggering losses in the Church Comprehensive Medical Plan, there are indications of stability, Powell said.

"In recent months, Prudential has recorded what they believe to be a trend in the right direction for this plan," Powell said. "We prayed for it. We worked for it. We're thankful to be able to continue offering a good benefit plan to our pastors and church staff families," he said.

Trustees on the insurance committee reported to the board that Prudential's latest analysis of incurred claims indicates that the Church Comprehensive Medical Plan might reach a break-even point this year.

A prediction of a 22 percent national increase in cost of medical care in 1991 would still necessitate some rate increase on July 1, but the increase will be uniform and less than those of the past three years. All churches were advised last fall to budget for a possible 10 percent increase at mid-year.

Powell spoke to trustees about the board's commitment to provide a medical plan and praised The Prudential for its willingness to risk losses to see the church plan return to healthy status.

"Our rates are high because we have taken a benevolent approach," Powell said. "We never cancel; we never re-underwrite. We know how to lower the premium -- cancel the sick -- but I'm not going to be responsible for cancelling someone's insurance because he is sick. As long as we have that commitment, our rates will be high."

Increased retirement contributions of \$10.5 million in 1990 are a sign of confidence in the Annuity Board, said Treasurer Harold Richardson. Total member contributions and relief receipts were \$180.9 million.

Powell also addressed the subject of confidence and security in pension programs as he said, "We are strong and unified in our task of serving all Southern Baptists. I cannot tell you how pleasant it is to say to anyone who asks, 'There has never been even a hint of instability or division among trustees or between trustees and staff.'"

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Trustees noted with appreciation a "pastoral letter" Powell mailed to more than 40,000 pastors and staff members in February. The letter listed unique benefits of the Church Annuity Plan and countered certain sales tactics of some for-profit managers.

Addressing relief needs, Richardson noted that appeals for extra money from the Cooperative Program unified budget resulted in an increase of \$10,679 for the next year, making available for relief a total allocation of \$678,551. The budget will be presented to the Southern Baptist Convention in June.

The relief committee of the board reported 29 new applications for which it approved two 2-year monthly grants, one 1-year monthly grant, five 1-time grants, and eleven 2-year expense grants. Ten applications were declined for being outside guidelines for income and assets.

Trustees amended the Church Annuity Plan to comply with the Older Workers Benefit Protection Act.

Some other reports included:

-- The Fixed Fund delivered an effective annual yield of 9.1 percent, an excess over the anticipated rate of 8.9 percent.

-- Benefits and relief payments rose \$10.4 million from 1989 to \$94.2 million.

-- Total assets rose from \$2.78 billion to \$3 billion.

B.J. Martin of Pasadena, Texas, was elected to a third term as chairman of the board, and William A. Willis of Little Rock, Ark., was elected vice chairman.

In the annual election of executive officers, there was one new employee, six promotions and one transfer.

C. Joe McIntosh was named head of the endowment department and elected vice president, effective March 1, 1991. He will head the work of development of endowment resources to strengthen benefit programs provided to members.

McIntosh comes to the Annuity Board from the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission where he has been director of development services since 1985.

James T. Herod, general counsel since December, was promoted to senior vice president and elected secretary of the corporation.

Terry R. Wade, vice president and actuary, was promoted to senior vice president. He will head a restructured retirement services division that now includes the departments of actuarial services, benefit services and retirement administration, and the board's relief program.

Richard Farr, senior vice president and former head to the retirement services division, was transferred to head the administrative services division and named one of two assistant secretaries of the corporation.

Promoted to vice president were Curtis J. Crofton and Jim W. Morrison, both region heads in the member services division; James D. Haynes, controller and head of the finance and accounting department; and Sandy Holleman, head of the human resources department. Haynes also was named assistant secretary of the corporation.

All other executive officers were re-elected.

Ad hoc committee
will attack Baptist flab

F- Texas Annuity

DALLAS (BP)--A committee that calls itself SBC Ad Hoc Fitness Initiative Group has committed itself to pursue overweight Southern Baptist ministers and their families and seek changes in lifestyle.

Meeting in Dallas on Jan. 25, seven of 14 national members adopted three objectives: reduce the amount of health-care claims in the Church Comprehensive Medical Plan by 10 percent; raise significantly the awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle among Baptist ministers and families; and secure the commitment of 10 percent of the ministers and families to a definite program toward a personal healthy lifestyle.

Eugene Greer, Jr., a Mission Service Corps volunteer and program planning director for the state missions commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, chairs the group.

A special consultant is Tom Collingwood, director of continuing education for the Institute for Aerobics Research of Dallas.

For several months Greer has worked to put together a group who would take the initiative in promoting physical fitness among ministers whom he said are notoriously out of shape, overweight and plagued by stress disorders.

Greer cited statements by the top insurance executive of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

John L. Dudley, in "The Years Ahead," Summer 1990, said, "When you look at the numbers (in church medical claims), you get the feeling that our ministers are under a tremendous amount of stress that adversely affects their health."

Dudley reported that participants in the medical plan took nearly 4.2 million pills in 1989 for stress-related illnesses at a cost of \$1.8 million.

Though the fitness initiative group has no formal relationship with the Annuity Board's medical plan, Greer noted that any general improvement in the health of ministers and their families should help the plan's claims experience.

The Church Comprehensive Medical Plan paid a total of more \$75 million in 1990, which was about \$5.5 million more than premium available for claims. Total medical claims paid for all Annuity Board plans exceeded \$109 million. It has been predicted by Annuity Board executives that within a few years, medical insurance claims for the denomination's ministers, employees and their families will exceed the national Cooperative Program budget.

Richard Couey, Baylor University physiology professor and sports medicine specialist, told his fellow committeemen, "One's body belongs to God. God's Spirit occupies one's body, and one's body is to be obedient to God."

Couey said his concern for physical fitness has grown from concern about the condition of cells to a conviction that taking care of one's body is a part of Christian stewardship. "Fitness is a spiritual issue with me," he declared.

Greer's committee comes from six states, and he said members were chosen because of their known expertise and their concern for the health of Baptist ministers.

The group will meet again in the spring to lay plans for a national campaign to promote healthy lifestyles and enroll participants in a program of exercise, good eating and relaxation.

Others on the committee are Joe Boone Abbott, director of pastoral care and education center, Baptist Medical Centers, Birmingham, Ala.; W. Fletcher Allen, editor of The Baptist and Reflector, Brentwood, Tenn.; Charles Baker, pastor of Southern Hills Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla.; L. Gayle Burton, physician, Woodville, Tex.;

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Ray Conner, director of church recreation department, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board; Woodrow Hudson, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Carrollton, Ga.; Thomas E. Miller, senior vice president, Southern Baptist Annuity Board; Charles Page, pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C.;

Max H. Smith, CLU, partner, Roach-Howard-Smith and Hunter Insurance Agency, Dallas; and Eleanor Yarbrough, director of media library/church recreation office, Tennessee Baptist Convention, Brentwood.

Greer said the next step is to develop strategies for promotion, program development and logistics of operations including records and research.

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Date rape called
common occurrence

By Chip Alford

F-SSB

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Seventeen-year-old Laura was flattered that an "older man" at work asked her for a date.

"He even asked me out again," she said. "And nothing happened on those two dates to make me think anything was wrong. He was a perfect gentleman."

Still, Laura (not her real name) did not tell her parents about her friend because he was nine years older. At 26, he would be considered too old for a high school girl. She lied to her parents to get out of the house and meet him for their third and final date. That meeting would leave Laura with emotional scars that would take years to heal.

"We went to the fair that night," she remembered. "All the fun rides, cotton candy, holding hands in the moonlight -- how romantic. But as the lights were going out, we headed to the car which he parked far away from everything.

"He shoved me in the back seat of the car and started tearing at my clothes. He had a gun in the floorboard and let me know he would use it if I didn't cooperate. I fought for awhile but I knew I was making him mad enough to really hurt me. He raped me."

The "magical feelings" Laura had felt were shattered. Trust was gone, replaced by mistrust, fear, hate and anger. And the trauma was far from over.

"I didn't know where to go, or who to turn to for advice," Laura said. "I couldn't tell my parents. I had lied to them. I had to hide the shame and guilt I felt at home, church and school."

For Laura, the pain surfaced in many ways. She developed health problems, struggled with a weight problem, suffered from insomnia, and when she did sleep, would often have nightmares. She also drifted in and out of short-term relationships, including a three-and-a-half-year marriage that ended in divorce.

"Life really got to be a mess," she remembered. "My whole world was falling apart."

When she finally did begin to confide in others about her experience, Laura said she was often treated like she had committed a crime. People asked her questions like, "How were you dressed?" and "Did you make advances?"

Unfortunately, Laura's story is not unusual.

"Some youth-serving professionals are now estimating that by the time girls move through junior high, high school and college, one-fourth of them will have experienced date rape or a severe attempt at a physical attack by a trusted acquaintance on a date," said Richard Ross, youth ministry consultant for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church administration department.

"Unfortunately, the great majority of girls who are raped by an acquaintance are not willing to tell anyone. Consequently, they suffer the pain of this experience for years without help," he added.

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With this in mind, Ross decided to add a counseling tape on date rape to the 24-Hour Counselor audio cassette series. Produced by the board's Broadman Press, the 24-Hour Counselor series covers a variety of teen issues. The tapes are offered for sale in individual units called "capsules" or in volumes that contain several tapes. Churches can duplicate the tapes without charge as a counseling resource for youth. Ross said he encourages churches to display the tapes so that teen-agers can pick them up anonymously.

The tape on date rape was released in January, along with three other new 24-Hour Counselor tapes on adoption, shame-bound experiences and an audio-drama presentation of the plan of salvation called "Gospel Tract." The date rape capsule is presented as a counseling session featuring Wade and Jodi Rowatt. Both are on the faculty at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., he as professor of psychology of religion and she as instructor in pastoral care. Together, they offer encouragement, practical advice, help in dealing with painful emotions and Christian love and support to a victim of date rape, portrayed on the tape by a teen-age girl.

"They carefully and gently guide the victim toward talking with someone who can provide further help," Ross said. "We see this tape as the beginning of help, not the end."

Laura, now 24, eventually sought help and received the counseling she needed. She also found strength in her faith in God.

She recently listened to the 24-Hour Counselor tape on date rape, and said she would "highly recommend" it to youth ministers and school guidance counselors.

"But most of all I would like to strongly urge anyone who has survived rape to listen to this tape," she said. "I know from experience that you'll only suffer longer if you put off getting the help you need."

"If I had access to this tape at age 17, I possibly could have made some clearer decisions on dealing with all the emotions my mind and heart couldn't understand. I wouldn't have lived like a victim for so long. I would have sought help sooner."

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Military families gain
strength from church

By Ginny Whitehouse

F-55B

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GOLDSBORO, N.C. (BP)--A circle of hands and prayers forms around military families every Sunday at Adamsville Baptist Church.

The circle reaches around those who have returned from the Persian Gulf War, those who await deployment and families who have been left behind.

The words of Pastor Albert Wright's prayer are simple, but the congregation's hopes are great: they pray for a revival among soldiers in the desert, the safety of allied troops and the conversion of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Fourteen-year-old Jennifer Epley was among those encircled. She was baptized in February, while both her mother and stepfather served in the Persian Gulf. Stepgrandparents that now live with Jennifer brought her to church.

"My mom woke me up in the middle of the night right before she left," Jennifer said. "She cried. It was sad."

Elizabeth Williamson was less than five months old when her father, Gary, left for Saudi Arabia. He has now been gone half her lifetime. But she seems to remember him as she points to his picture in a photo album and kisses the page.

"I praise God that I have Elizabeth. If something happens to Gary, she looks just like him and I'll have a part of him," said Shannon Williamson, as she sat with her Sunday school class members. At least six are wives with husbands fighting in the Middle East. "It's easier if we all talk about it."

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"Not a week goes by that a different person from church doesn't call," said Wendy Lawrence, a close friend and class member whose husband was also deployed.

A friendly ear is not the only thing Adamsville Baptist Church is providing its military families. Each is assigned a sponsor who will pray and offer whatever support they can.

Located near Symore-Johnson Air Force Base, the church has had 45 members of the 1,500-member congregation deployed. Out of that number, five are Sunday school teachers or substitute workers.

But Wright said attendance at the church is on the increase, and volunteers have filled in for the absent Sunday school teachers.

Lewis Sparks, an Air Force technical sergeant, is part of a Sunday school class for the husbands of Korean women. With four of their number deployed, the weekly meetings have been put on hold. But the men continue to support the wives left behind.

"We've tried to take care of their homes and fix the cars. The wives have helped other wives get driver's licenses -- some had not had them before," Sparks said.

Church members have helped Pam Hogancamp chop wood and take garbage to the dump and even baby-sat her four children. One church member has offered to re-seed the lawn for her family's new home in the spring.

Because her husband is an aircraft commander, Hogancamp is "unofficially responsible" for the other wives. She believes that God is in control of the Gulf crisis and her family. The women under her watchcare do not understand her prayers and even think she's "a little crazy," but Pam said they are starting to ask questions about her faith.

Wright said more and more people are coming to his church with these questions.

"People have a deep sense and need of God. Many have been saved in the desert, but there are those at home who may need God even more. All the world's attention has turned," Wright said. "Even an unbelieving world knows something is happening."

Adamsville church members say they are drawing support from each other, particularly in the most difficult times of day -- late at night.

Jennifer Epley remembers her mother while she does her homework, since "Mom is really great in math."

After putting Elizabeth to bed, Shannon Williamson sits down to write her husband. They've written more than 100 letters each since he left in August.

Pam Hogancamp prays and reads the Bible with each of her children. She says that is the only way they can find courage to go to sleep at night.

Lewis Sparks settles in with his family, but he is on a deployment waiting list and knows he too could be sent to the Middle East.

Wright said the biggest change in Adamsville are the people's prayers.

"It's a burden we all share," he said.

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

Southern Baptist couple shares
secrets of urban ministry

By Tim McKeown

F-Texas

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Reaching urban residents requires living out the gospel message while living next door to them, a missionary couple told students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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And for eight-and-a-half years, Ken and Melody Morris have been doing just that in an effort to reach baby boomers in a high-rise, affluent community near downtown Chicago. One previous effort to begin a church in this area failed.

"This is the kind of ministry where you've got to be willing to plant yourself and in some ways die to the dreams of a quick success," Morris said.

The Morrises spoke to classes at the Fort Worth school and to 150 people attending an Urban Evangelism Fellowship meeting.

Morris serves as pastor of Near North Church while his wife is the music and worship leader. The Morrises work in a largely unchurched, mostly affluent, well-educated area of Chicago. According to Morris, the area is unique because it is home to more than 50,000 people in a 50-block area. The high-rise apartment where Morris began the ministry in 1982 houses about 6,000 residents.

"Our goal is not to grow into a large church, but to train and disciple," Melody Morris said. "We know a large number of the people are not going to stay around for long so we concentrate on growing 25 people deeper in the faith."

Morris, a 1982 graduate of Southwestern, is the first pastor of the church. The ministry out of which the church began was a project of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

One of the strategies in reaching the people is to move in, meet the people and meet the needs of the people through creative methods.

"This is not a standard situation," Morris said. "What we do as a denomination elsewhere in the country will not work here in reaching the people."

Some of the principles the Morrises use in urban evangelism include:

1. Incarnation, or living the gospel alongside the people,
2. Making use of existing resources, such as rooms and offices in the complex to hold services and Bible studies,
3. Identifying felt needs of the people, primarily the social and spiritual needs,
4. Getting the people into the Bible through informal, non-threatening studies,
5. and, Continually evaluating for effectiveness.

"The community is unusual but those basic principles are not," the 35-year-old pastor said. The church does not own property and the "urban evangelists" gear their teaching on a two-year cycle, due to the high mobility of the population.

The most important key for effective ministry in quickly-changing urban ministry is longevity, Morris said. "Many people see things come and go quickly here and many sit back and wonder if this person is willing to hang in there," he said.