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July 12, 1991

91-106

Veterinarians give time,
supplies in mission service

By Linda Lawson

F-SSB

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--On three short-term, volunteer mission trips, veterinarian D.J. Crawinkle has carried in donated supplies, conducted animal clinics, taught veterinary medicine and used a borrowed heart monitor to diagnose the illness of a Baptist pastor in Bolivia.

Crawinkle, who teaches veterinary medicine at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and attends Stock Creek Baptist Church, is president of the National Association of Baptist Veterinarians, an organization which advocates involvement of veterinarians in missions and provides support for eight foreign missionary couples involved in veterinary ministry in Africa and South America.

Crawinkle led a conference on veterinary medicine and world missions during Jericho: A Southern Baptist Missions Festival held July 6-12 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

"In many countries, animals are the lifeblood of the people," said Crawinkle. Keeping their animals healthy becomes a ministry and inroad for the gospel to entire families.

Because obtaining veterinary supplies in third world countries is both difficult and expensive, Crawinkle and others serve as couriers for donated supplies when they visit a country. He took seven 70-pound boxes of supplies when he visited Mali, West Africa.

"If we did nothing else but be couriers, the work would be worth it," said Crawinkle. "Missionaries couldn't afford to buy these supplies in their countries. We can get them donated."

But Baptist veterinarians do much more. Volunteers have served as long as one year.

On a demonstration farm in Mali, Crawinkle provided help to farmers in improved methods and "also witnessed and led Bible studies."

In Bolivia, he conducted animal health clinics "to teach people the importance of worming and vaccinating" the animals.

Before his trip to Bolivia, Crawinkle heard of a Baptist pastor there whose heart rate periodically slowed down so much he would faint. Crawinkle borrowed a heart monitor from a Knoxville cardiologist, followed written directions to attach it to the pastor and brought back both the monitor and tape of the pastor's heart rate.

In Knoxville, the man's disease was diagnosed and a determination made that he needed a pacemaker. A donated pacemaker was then carried by another volunteer going into Bolivia where it was implanted by a Japanese physician there.

"With volunteer labor and equipment, that pastor has had years added to his life," said Crawinkle.

In addition to large animal veterinary care, Crawinkle often treats pets of missionaries and others he encounters on the mission field.

"I've neutered pets on the front porches of missionary homes," he laughed.

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Paul Smith, a professor of veterinary medicine at Auburn (Ala.) University, recently returned from a mission trip to Bolivia where he lectured at a veterinary university, tested animals and conducted a clinic from the tailgate of a truck.

"I personally think volunteerism is a new wave the Lord is using," said Smith.

Jericho was sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission, Woman's Missionary Union, Sunday School Board, Foreign Mission Board and Home Mission Board.

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Churches must educate,
minister in AIDS crisis

By Linda Lawson

F-SSB

Baptist Press
7/12/91

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--"AIDS has come to church; there are people out there hurting; and we must minister," Tommy Dixon told participants in a conference on Christians responding to AIDS during Jericho: A Southern Baptist Missions Festival July 6-12 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Dixon, field services coordinator in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship training department, said: "AIDS is not a New York City or San Francisco disease. It is not a homosexual disease. It has come to our churches and our communities."

The role of Southern Baptist churches is to educate and to minister, said Dixon.

While 70 percent of today's AIDS patients in the United States are homosexuals and 25 percent are intravenous drug users, the greatest increase in people contracting the HIV virus in the next 10 years will be among heterosexual young adults 18-29 years old, Dixon said.

"Those are your teen-agers and mine," he said.

Before Christians can minister effectively, they must learn and internalize the facts about how AIDS is contracted, said Dixon. AIDS is not contracted by casual physical contact, he noted.

The first encounter with AIDS for many churches is among family members of people in the church -- perhaps a son or daughter coming home to die -- he said.

Churches also must be alert to opportunities to minister to families in the community and to enable church members who feel called to minister to people with AIDS.

In the area of education, Dixon said the first need is teaching Christian ethics.

"The church has got to educate its young, especially teen-agers, that the Christian ethic has not changed. There is right and wrong. Sex is for marriage.

That's the biblical way, God's way," said Dixon.

"It is time the church began to educate its own, not only about the biological facts of sexuality but also about Christian ethics."

He recommended two books for church leaders to use in ministry -- "AIDS: A Christian Response" by William L. Tillman and "AIDS: A Christian Student's Response" by Hoyet Chance, a Southern Baptist physician. Both are published by the board.

Also, education about AIDS should begin as early as the first and second grades, said Dixon.

"We must know the facts, exercise good hygiene practices but not become paranoid," said Dixon. "As the church and the people of God, we must help the people affected by AIDS."

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More than 1,300 people attended the third annual Ridgecrest Jericho sponsored by the Sunday School Board, Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: The following six stories cover the first Kazakh-American Cultural Festival, a historic exchange that brought 330 Americans, including many Southern Baptists, to the once-isolated Soviet republic of Kazakhstan June 21-July 6. Specialized versions of the first story, a roundup of the event, are being sent by to Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, Pennsylvania-South Jersey, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. They also are available via SBCNet upon request.

First Kazakh-American festival
draws understanding, cooperation

By Michael Chute

Baptist Press
7/12/91

ALMA-ATA, U.S.S.R. (BP)--The first large-scale cultural exchange between Americans and Kazakhs created an array of humanitarian, environmental, business and social projects in Kazakhstan, second-largest of 15 Soviet republics.

The first Kazakh-American Cultural Festival, June 21-July 6, drew 330 Americans and more than 100,000 Kazakhs. Southern Baptists initiated the cultural exchange, working with the Central Asian Foundation, a non-profit corporation that directs Christian aid toward human and economic development. Kazakhstan's Golden Apple Foundation and the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey assisted CAF. Americans of many denominations participated in the exchange that brought them into contact with a primarily Muslim people largely isolated from the West for centuries.

"The festival became a foundation for establishing Kazakh-American cooperation," Kazakhstan President N. Nazarbaev told participants. "It was conceived as an opportunity to get closely acquainted with new friends. Favorable conditions for this kind of exchange were created by great changes in the Soviet Union."

Projects held across Kazakhstan -- a vast region as large as the eastern United States -- involved medical, business, technical and professional people, educators, university students, construction and crafts workers, pastors, media producers, athletes, and performing artists.

"This is the first group of its kind ever to work in the Soviet Union," said CAF vice president Brian Grim, a Southern Baptist worker who lives in Kazakhstan. "It was a diverse group of people coming to use their professions to help people here. That's a goal of CAF: to get Christian lay people involved in Kazakhstan using the resources they have."

A significant part of the festival was the first international religious conference ever held in Kazakhstan. It created a forum for adopting a "manifesto" -- signed by leaders of Islam, the Russian Orthodox, Baptists and Seventh Day Adventists -- calling for a law to guarantee religious freedom and grant each person the right "to choose the most satisfying religious confession." The manifesto also said religious freedom guarantees the "government will not interfere in any way -- either by restriction or favoritism -- with any religious confession."

The religious community also asked festival participants to establish a Kazakh-American College in Alma-Ata, the Kazakh capital, that will exchange both scientific information and philosophy. Leaders of religious communities in Kazakhstan also established an International Mercy Fund.

"We had a true chance to feel proud to be Christians, to be on the cutting edge in a way that's meaningful to people," said Wallace Williams, executive director-treasurer of Pennsylvania-South Jersey Baptists. "We found people right around the edges waiting for somebody to come out and say something credible about Christianity. Those stories are just amazing."

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Just one of many stories involved the experience of a headmaster of a youth camp sponsored by the Kazakhstan Communist Party's publishing house. With a tear running down her cheek, she told festival participants: "My impression of Americans was that they were people with cold hearts. But now, through your (university) students, I've seen warm souls."

Kazakh and American businessmen and professionals focused on establishing the infrastructure for a market-based economy in the republic. An agreement between CAF and the government calls for the immediate enlistment of 10 American business specialists to help President Nazarbaev's economic committee train Kazakh business leaders in Alma-Ata, the sixth-largest Soviet city.

"Some of our people have signed up and committed to come back to teach, so that's a positive step meeting a very basic need," said Paul Helton, financial director of a company in Pittsburgh. "Kazakhs are relatively inexperienced in conducting international business."

American businessmen attending the festival hope entrepreneurial activity will develop in the Kazakh business community. They're taking information back to the United States to try to match up Kazakh and American companies.

Laws relating to private enterprise, the backbone of a market economy, are being written in the Soviet Union. Since the Kazakhstan republic can't speak for itself, Helton hopes Soviet politics will stabilize so responsibility for major selling -- now held in Moscow -- will move to the republics.

American medical workers and environmentalists aided health institutions in Semipalatinsk and Pavlodar. The two communities, located on either side of a nuclear test site, have high rates of radiation-related diseases.

Americans also helped in food distribution around the inland Aral Sea. Southern Baptists have provided \$1 million to a feeding program in the famine-stricken region. At least 7 million people in the Aral region face severe malnutrition because of extensive irrigation from its source rivers. Diversion of water for cotton fields in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan has put the region on the brink of ecological disaster.

A team of U.S. ecologists from the festival has agreed to form a consortium with Kazakh environmentalists. Through Kazakhstan's wildlife and fisheries department, they will work on revitalizing the Aral Sea. The group also hopes to get people involved in humanitarian projects.

The consortium will discuss plans to bring water back to the Aral Sea. Another project would build an 11-acre botanical garden over the sea floor near Aral'sk to put enough foliage over the land to keep salts from being blown back into that city.

"Salts are being picked up off the seabed and blown back into the cities causing major health problems, a lot of lung disease, a lot of throat cancer," said Ron Dickerson, an environmentalist from Easley, S.C., who will work with the consortium.

Over the past two decades, the death rate in the Aral region has doubled. More than 80 percent of pregnant women there are afflicted with anemia. Studies show people there contract typhoid 30 times more often and viral hepatitis seven times more often than in other areas of Kazakhstan.

A 15-man construction team worked in Zaisan repairing a boarding school dormitory damaged in two 1990 earthquakes that left 14,000 people homeless in its wake. The team also built a Kazakh-American Friendship Center and broke ground for a new U.S.-Kazakh school.

During the construction project, Don Langston of Strawberry Plains, Tenn., said local officials asked the group to pray for rain because rainfall has been low this year.

"During our Sunday evening worship service at the dormitory where we were staying, we had a special prayer for rain for the people," Langston recalled. "The next morning it started raining and rained on and off" for three days. "Our interpreter stopped everyone and told them the Americans had prayed to their God for rain and he had answered their prayers."

Fourteen American musical performing units toured throughout Kazakhstan with Kazakh groups. A permanent U.S.-Kazakh performing group called Heart to Heart continues to tour. Sports clinics and cultural displays attracted many participants. U.S. college students conducted recreational and educational programs in Soviet "Pioneer Camps."

The head instructor of one "Pioneer Camp" asked Jeff Lewis of Mt. Juliet, Tenn., if the American students could bring some Bibles and talk to the children -- ages 8-14 -- about God. About 230 children packed the auditorium to hear about Jesus Christ.

"I was concerned about their understanding," Lewis admitted. "The first question was from a little 8-year-old boy who stood up and asked, 'Why did God let his son die for us?' That just cut my heart. God was giving them understanding; he was bringing clarity to their hearts.

"We (had) a prayer so (they would) understand it was through prayer that they receive Jesus Christ. Forty raised their hands saying they had prayed. I'm not going to judge whether they did or didn't. But I know God can use the message we shared to bring them to personal relationship with him."

The crafts exposition was a favorite of Kazakhs, who were curious about Americans and American things. The exhibits "were the one thing, besides concerts, open to the general public. I hope we were able to build friendships with the average people in Alma-Ata," said Edna Frances Dawkins of Richmond, Va. "Not only have great friendships been made, but I believe we've broken down some walls of separation" between Americans and Soviets.

Opportunities for continued and expanded long- and short-term Christian lay involvement are available in business, ecology, medicine, education, performance, language study, tourism, student programs and sports. Christian host families able to provide for Kazakh high school and college students visiting the United States will begin receiving them early in 1992. Christian hosts also will welcome 300 Kazakh business professionals coming annually for two- to eight-week programs as interns in American businesses.

A second Kazakh-American festival will be held in Pennsylvania and other states May 10-25, 1992, with 300 Soviet participants.

After Kazakhs and Americans celebrated the U.S. Independence Day July 4 -- another first for Kazakhs -- Stan Smith of Harrisburg, Pa., commented, "I feel like I'm looking over God's shoulder and I don't want to leave.

"People thanked us for giving them the opportunity to celebrate. They never had a celebration like that before. It gave thousands of Kazakh people the opportunity to celebrate and develop relations with Americans, to just experience freedom, sharing and joy. It was an incredible thing to watch."

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

Southern Baptist workers aid
earthquake-stricken Soviet region

By Michael Chute

N-fmb

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ZAISAN, U.S.S.R. (BP)--The earthquake was merciless. Giving no hint of its approach, it ripped apart the foundations of fragile buildings in Zaisan.

People had cultivated gardens, tended orchards and herded sheep in nearby pastures. Suddenly, in a few frightening moments, 14,000 people in the Soviet Central Asian city lost their homes.

Because most people were outside their homes -- a Muslim custom in the evenings -- only one person, a 2-year-old girl, was killed. If the earthquake that hit Zaisan a year ago had waited a few hours, an estimated 7,000 people would have died. Still, the lives of 80 percent of the city's 17,000 people were shattered.

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To the dismay of local officials like Zaidilbek Kuniyarov, chairman of the Zaisan regional council, no help came from either international aid organizations or the Soviet central government. In fact, news of the earthquake's devastation never reached beyond Soviet Central Asia. Helping local people dig out from under the rubble was left to neighboring regions, which sent food, money and materials.

Southern Baptist workers in Kazakhstan learned about the disaster during a fact-finding mission late last year. Zaisan officials told them the earthquake rendered the majority of the city's schools unsafe. About half the school children were attending classes in apartments.

Cooperative Services International, a Southern Baptist aid organization, appropriated \$120,000 and sent a 15-man construction team as part of the Kazakh-American Cultural Festival held June 21-July 6 to help with three projects:

-- Repairing a boarding school dormitory severely damaged in the earthquake. Children of shepherds live in the dormitory; their parents stay in nearby mountains and only come down from highland pastures on weekends.

-- Building a Kazakh-American Friendship Center to serve as headquarters for future projects in the region sponsored by the Central Asian Foundation, a non-profit corporation that facilitates CSI work in Kazakhstan. Soviet experts in Siberia designed the prefabricated structure, a seismologically sound model for new houses in Zaisan. The government provided a construction team to work with the Americans in building the friendship center.

-- Breaking ground for a U.S.-Kazakh school, the first joint venture in Kazakhstan by groups representing both nations. Zaisan officials hope city construction teams can complete the school within a year. Combining the best of American and Soviet education, organizers hope to enroll 360 students in the school. CAF and Zaisan officials also have agreed on student exchanges between the two countries.

"When you invest in a school you invest in the future," CSI director Lewis Myers told a Kazakh crowd at groundbreaking ceremonies. "For Zaisan children, we hope this school will not only teach things, but also values for their lives so they will not only know things but believe things."

Festival program director Dusenbek Nakipov called the Zaisan project "the most humanitarian" of all projects in the festival. The Zaisan construction work has become a focal point of Southern Baptist humanitarian aid in Kazakhstan.

"No other organization has done much in this area although many have toured Zaisan," explained CAF special projects coordinator Stephen James. "In this effort, Southern Baptists have given a concrete example of their willingness to be of service and cooperate with Kazakhstan people on a long-term basis."

Besides Southern Baptist help in repairing and building schools, neighboring regions have constructed 2,500 temporary houses and repaired another 2,000 homes in other projects over the past year.

Still, Zaisan's economic woes continue. Surrounded by China on three sides, the ancient city -- a former trade link between China, Russia, Mongolia and Kazakhstan -- has no industry and no raw materials. Supplies come from Ustkamenogorsk, 300 miles away. Agriculture barely sustains the region.

"We still have 5,000 families in 'yurts' (traditional tent-like structures) and small houses but that's not good enough when winter comes," said Kuniyarov. "We were fortunate that the last winter was mild. Our people are patient. They wait and hope everything will be better soon. The Americans have done a lot in a short time and done good work."

Aral: tears for a
dying sea, people

By Lounette Templeton

N-EMB

ARAL'SK, U.S.S.R. (BP)--As a boy, Tieuzhanov Zhylykshibai and his friends swam in the Aral Sea while their fathers went out on their fishing boats.

The vast inland sea lapped contentedly at the edge of Dzhambul village and gave it life.

Today, 25 years later, as chief medical assistant of the village clinic, Zhylykshibai treats malnourished children who have never seen a sea -- only rusty skeletons of boats lying on a dry, salty seabed.

The Aral Sea is on the brink of extinction because the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers are used almost exclusively for irrigating cotton plantations in the Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The sea will dry up completely by the turn of the century, say opponents of the government's channeling" policy.

Over the past three decades, the Aral Sea has lost 40 percent of its volume because of extensive irrigation projects. The water level has dropped 45 feet. An entire industry -- fishing -- has ceased to exist.

"Before 1970, everyone worked as fishermen. Now they must go to Lake Balkhash 3,000 kilometers away to fish," complained Kapanov Zhanabai, chairman of the village council, throwing up his arms. "Our water resources are dead."

Once a month, Zhylykshibai and his clinic staff welcome Ed and Vi Mason, who are doing their bit to improve the health of the Dzhambul children. The Southern Baptist volunteers from Tallahassee, Fla., are carrying out a nutrition project costing more than \$1 million. The Masons are sponsored by Cooperative Services International, a Southern Baptist aid organization.

The Central Asian Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides aid for human and economic development, put the project together.

Dzhambul is the smallest of six feeding stations the Masons manage. They receive a fresh supply of food every six months in the three-year project.

Each month, volunteers and "Sherlock," a handicapped young man the Masons hired, distribute a one-month supply of food supplements to villagers. Powdered milk, cereal and vitamins are given to babies and mothers. Fruit juice and cheese go to everyone else. Besides the feeding, records are kept on each child to monitor the effectiveness of the project.

Nurse Zholamansva Urpachi said the food supplements are good but "the greatest need is water."

"Four trucks bring water from Aral'sk, 60 kilometers away," added Zhanabai, explaining that Dzhambul has no clean water. "We have many health problems. Many children already die."

Nurse Urpachi knows good nutrition is vital to combat health problems. Villagers suffer from heart disease, anemia, high blood pressure, kidney and gastrointestinal problems and tuberculosis. The salty sand that blows almost continuously causes eye, skin and lung diseases.

Over the last 20 years the death rate in the Aral region has doubled. More than 80 percent of pregnant women suffer from anemia. Studies show people there contract typhoid 30 times more often and viral hepatitis seven times more often than in other areas of Kazakhstan.

Despite the poor conditions in the village, people stay. The population is actually growing as others come looking for jobs and food.

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"Where would we go?" the nurse asked. "Conditions in other parts of the country are just as bad."

The government is trying to find a solution to the problems, said regional Communist Party Secretary Akpenbelov Baltabai. Many villages just like Dzhabul are affected. Millions of dollars have been allocated for the region to "drill wells, build medical clinics, and give other help," Baltabai said.

But the help doesn't come quickly enough to cure the dying Aral Sea. Soviet officials mention cures: reducing losses in the irrigation systems, using a scientific basis to determine watering programs, scaling down cotton acreages. While the doctors argue over treatment, the patient dies.

David Oliphant, environmental project manager for Sirrine Environmental Consultants in Greenville, S.C., suggested "fervent prayer for rain" for the area. That was the answer for Utah, he added, referring to the receding Great Salt Lake during the 1980s.

Oliphant was in Kazakhstan for the Kazakh-American Cultural Festival June 21-July 6. He and other American and Soviet environmentalists discussed ecological concerns.

Although the Masons are deeply concerned about the environmental aspects of the Aral Sea, they can't bring fresh water to the caked seabed. They can't even provide food that will solve all the health problems.

But a Kazakh film producer, in Dzhabul to make a documentary about the situation, observed Mason, an energetic 74-year-old retired attorney, distributing food supplements.

"This man (Mason) opened up his big arms and gathered up the children," the producer said. "Everyone who sees him is touched. He gives them hope."

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

Bomb test site draws
Baptist medical team

By Connie Davis

F - FMB

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SEMIPALATINSK, U.S.S.R. (BP)--An American health care team -- part of the Kazakh-American Cultural Festival -- worked in and around Semipalatinsk, a Soviet nuclear testing site since 1949.

Held across the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan June 21-July 6, the cultural festival was sponsored by Southern Baptists through the Central Asian Foundation, a non-profit corporation that provides Christian aid for human and economic development. Kazakhstan's Golden Apple Foundation and Southern Baptists in Pennsylvania-South Jersey assisted CAF.

The nuclear bomb detonation site in eastern Kazakhstan is home to nearly 850,000 people. About 500 above-ground nuclear tests were conducted from 1949 to 1963. Underground tests continued until 1989. Kazakh voters soon will decide on a Soviet central government offer to allow two more tests.

After an eight-day stint in Semipalatinsk, a city of 350,000, the Americans were surprised to find less emotional depression among residents than they expected. But they reported many needs.

Residents welcomed the medical team, which worked with Soviet counterparts in fields such as cardiology, orthopedics, pharmacy, lab technology, nursing, orthodontics and oral hygienics. They also had many chances to share their Christian faith and visited the only Baptist church in the city. The team discovered Soviet medical personnel were well-trained but, in most cases, crippled by a lack of equipment and supplies.

The Americans reported the highlight of the trip, apart from their medical observation, was living with Kazakh families.

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"They're not as backward and isolated as I thought. If any nation has been isolated, it's been mine," said Clive Wakely, a pharmacist from Redding, Calif. He met one man who had more books about the life of Jesus Christ than Wakely owns. "They're so gracious, helpful, and friendly, it's impossible to understand how there was any animosity between us."

Health care is affected not only by lingering radiation but by the political system, the team said. The system provides good medical care for Communist Party leaders and their families but inadequate care for the rest of the people, said Latham. Different facilities treat the two groups, he said.

Latham broke away from "academic rounds" with his Soviet counterparts to reach people with the greatest needs. He took medicine and equipment to the Baptist church on Sunday and conducted a clinic after the service. He treated about 50 people before the evening service, but had to turn others away.

Soviets were intrigued that the 13 Americans exposed themselves to risks related to radiation in the area.

Keshrim Bostaev, Communist Party committee chairman for Semipalatinsk region, spoke highly of joint ventures with Americans. He credited the region's cooperation with Americans in Nevada in a nuclear test ban movement with halting nuclear testing.

He also thanked the medical team, noting he understood the members' Christian beliefs motivated them to offer aid. Religious restrictions enacted in 1922 for the region were abolished about three years ago, he said.

Southern Baptist nurse Nancy Dickerson, from Easley, S.C., explained "the calling of the medical profession" and her faith were her motivation. "I don't think that's naive, because with God I feel I'll be protected (from radiation dangers)," she said.

Orthodontic specialist Paul Bonham of Tempe, Ariz., said dental professionals "were extremely impressive," but said "no modern work is being done" because of facilities and equipment that date back to the 1920s. He cited an astounding number of patients with cleft lips and abnormal palates.

Bonham and another team member, Connie Wong, a dental hygienist from San Francisco, said dental education, prevention and fluoridation of water are desperately needed. Semipalatinsk officials say such programs are planned. Wong reported a warm reception from Kazakhs because of her Asian heritage. She also introduced her profession to dental workers in Semipalatinsk, where there are no dental hygienists.

Other health problems discovered by team members included heart disease, rheumatic fever, cervical cancer and obstetric concerns. About 65 percent of pregnant women in the region have health problems, said Paula Hemphill, a cytotechnologist from Norfolk, Va.

The volunteers suggested additional ventures between Kazakhstan and the United States to provide collaboration, educational opportunities, equipment, supplies and treatment.

"They (Soviets) don't want just research which will profit from the lessons to be learned here, but also treatment," said Hemphill. "We have to bring hope: emotional hope, physical hope and spiritual hope."

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Baptist expert: 'Stop
hazardous nuclear testing'

By Connie Davis

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F-FMB

ALMA-ATA, U.S.S.R. (BP)--A people's movement in the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan to stop nuclear bomb testing has the support of visiting Americans but not the government of the United States, according to Glen Stassen, a participant in the Kazakh-American Cultural Festival.

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Americans and Kazakhs have the same goal: to stop hazardous nuclear testing, said Stassen, a former nuclear physicist and current professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Both countries are guilty of exposing people to deadly radiation, Stassen said. But Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev stopped testing several years ago, duplicating the initiatives taken by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy that led to treaties banning above-ground testing, he said.

Because the U.S. government did not act on the Gorbachev initiative, nuclear testing continues, said Stassen. The United States is not actively negotiating with the Soviet Union on the testing issue, according to the Council for a Livable World in Boston.

Plans to resume testing in the Soviet Union have been drawn. The Soviet government has asked the Kazakhstan republic to approve continued nuclear detonations.

The cycle of destruction in preparation for war will continue unless things change, Stassen said. He presented steps to peace at the religion conference of the festival.

"You only test to develop a new type of bomb. ... Clearly we have both made mistakes," he said. "(Americans are) so skeptical of the Soviets. It's a hangover from the Cold War."

Stassen explained he doesn't support the elimination of all nuclear weapons or research, only what he called the most destabilizing efforts, such as bomb testing, "Star Wars" space weapons and missiles that carry multiple warheads -- the MX missile in the United States and the Soviet Union's SS-18.

"Gorbachev clearly demonstrated his good faith by (allowing) on-site inspections and by actually stopping testing," Stassen stated, referring to measures instituted to monitor testing. "It's up to the White House."

The United States began nuclear testing after World War II; the Soviet Union began in 1949. Keshrim Bostaev, a Soviet official in Semipalatinsk, confirmed the region was the site of 500 detonations from 1949 to 1963, the year the two nations ceased above-ground testing. But underground testing continues in both countries at nearly an equal rate, according to Stassen.

Some of the resulting health problems of the 850,000 residents of the Semipalatinsk region were viewed by the 13-member American medical team working there during the festival, although research has not tied the health problems directly to radiation exposure. The medical team was part of the cultural festival held June 21-July 6. It was sponsored by Southern Baptists through the Central Asian Foundation, a non-profit corporation that provides Christian aid in human and economic development.

The nuclear tests have affected the world population as radiation has drifted from above-ground testing and from underground leaks, Stassen said. When he conducted nuclear physics research at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, radiation from tests in Nevada halted testing in that state, he said.

Although some people feared for the health of the American medical workers visiting Semipalatinsk for eight days, Stassen cited radiation exposure dangers in the United States. Testing continues in Nevada, he said, and research and storage of materials proceed across the country.

Residue also remains from bomb production plants that have been closed. Those locations include Rocky Flats, Colo.; Hanford, Wash.; Barnwell, S.C.; Oak Ridge, Tenn.; and Fernald, Ohio. Stassen said he and his family personally are affected by the former Fernald Feed Materials Plant in Ohio, which was not far from his home in Louisville. The company admitted it lost 335 tons of uranium into the air and water, Stassen said.

"Uranium and plutonium blow like dust and ... it's not safe for 24,000 years later. ... It gradually blows around the world," Stassen said. "One tiny fleck in a lung will do you in."

Kazakhstan, which has borne the brunt of Soviet nuclear testing, is flexing its new political muscles. Rather than ruling on the request of the central government to allow further testing, the parliament approved a referendum.

The action probably was swayed by popular opinion. In 1989, not long after the emergence of glasnost and perestroika in the Soviet Union, Kazakhs participated in a testing-ban rally with Americans from Nevada.

Since the announcement of the referendum, rallies have been planned for July in Alma-Ata and Semipalatinsk.

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Christian guitarist
rocks socks off Kazakhs

By Connie Davis

Baptist Press
7/12/91

F-FMB

ALMA-ATA, U.S.S.R. (BP)--Playing to concert halls packed with screaming Soviet teens made Dennis Mink remember a period in his musical career before he became a Christian.

The lead guitarist for Sound Theology, a Christian rock band, Mink performed 12 concerts in two cities of the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan June 21-July 6 during the Kazakh-American Cultural Festival. Southern Baptists sponsored the festival through the Central Asian Foundation, a non-profit corporation providing Christian aid in human and economic development.

Soviets filled the 8,000-seat Sports Palace in Alma-Ata during the second night of concerts performed by Sound Theology and the popular Soviet rock band, A Studio.

The adulation of the Soviet fans surprised Mink and the five other members of the Dallas-based band. But Mink is familiar with screaming fans.

In the early 1980s Mink played guitar for the band Mirage. He associated with rock musicians like Jackson Browne and members of ZZ Top. After a stint with Mirage he played with another band that was offered a contract to tour with the Styx group and to record before it even had a name.

But just days before he was to sign the contract, Mink became a Christian because of the witness of a brother who was in prison.

"I decided I couldn't do it. I couldn't be a part of that world any longer," said Mink during an interview at the Kazakh festival.

After 11 years in the music business, Mink put his guitar away along with the accompanying limelight and social life, which included alcohol and drugs. He's thankful he wasn't addicted and God took away the desire for his former life style, he explained.

But Mink doesn't like to talk about the past. "No one's testimony is any greater than anybody else's," he noted. He's just happy to be a part of Sound Theology, which has been performing for about two years.

A member of Casa View Baptist Church in Dallas with several other members of the band, Mink claimed a miracle brought them to the festival. "God reached out and put us here," he said.

The band received \$20,450 from Casa View Church in less than eight weeks to subsidize the trip and purchase 1,100 Russian Bibles. A Russian man Mink has known for 10 years translated cassette tape labels for a Soviet version of one of their recordings. The band's recording studio, Future Audio of Dallas, provided 140 tapes for distribution.

"We're here to let people, especially the youth, know that they're not alone; we're their friends. They'll get no condemnation from us. If anyone's going to point a finger at anybody I'd point it at myself," said Mink, who admitted to playing in "honky-tonk" bars at the age of 15.

As the tour continued, members of Sound Theology and A Studio developed relationships and began performing tunes together.

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"We've formed some lasting relationships with them," reported Mink. "We have such a testimony to take home."

Sound Theology band members besides Mink are Paul Ridenour, Michael Judd, Mark Smith, David Seay, and Chris Chumley, all of the Dallas area. Clay Camp of Broken Arrow, Okla., assisted the group.

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Baptists to expand aid
to Kurds in Iraq, Iran

By Art Toalston

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Vigilant to unfolding opportunities among displaced Kurds in the postwar Middle East, Southern Baptists have committed to repair village water systems in Iraq and build a 20-bed hospital in Iran.

In northern Iraq, Southern Baptist funds will repair ransacked water systems in 10 villages where some 35,000 Kurds have settled. Costs for pumps and other equipment are being gathered, said Tim Brendle of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board after a Mideast trip in late June and early July.

Several Southern Baptist volunteers with water system expertise will be needed for the project, coordinated by Global Partners, a London-based Christian organization, said Brendle.

The water development and hospital projects are the latest efforts in a Southern Baptist postwar Mideast outreach for which \$2.4 million has been budgeted for food, cooking equipment, blankets, medicine and Bibles. More than 100 Southern Baptist workers and volunteers have been involved -- including Southern Baptists' first-ever workers in Iraq and the first workers in Iran since the Ayatollah Khomeini's rise to power in 1979. Numerous workers from other denominations -- and from 17 countries -- also have assisted in Southern Baptist efforts in Iraq, Iran, Kuwait and Jordan.

The United States' threat of renewed warfare against Iraq's lingering ability to develop nuclear weapons will not put Southern Baptists' plans on hold, said Brendle, who heads the Foreign Mission Board's Persian Gulf Response Unit.

"The United Nations is negotiating with Iraq," he said. "But no one knows if, in reality, military action will ensue." If hostilities break out, Southern Baptist volunteers will be evacuated, he said.

Currently in Iraq, Southern Baptists Paul and Virginia Smith work with Global Partners to coordinate Southern Baptist work in a Kurdish refugee camp near the city of Zakho. About 30 Southern Baptist volunteers have worked a week or longer at the clinic since it opened in May, alongside relief workers and volunteers from several other countries. Southern Baptist volunteers there now are physicians Tom Kent of the Baptist Medical Center in Asuncion, Paraguay, and Cecil Russell of Powell, Tenn.; and nurses Tim Malone of Mesquite, Texas; Sharman Holland of Carrollton, Ga.; and Patricia Manner of Fort Worth.

The clinic, which has treated 500 or more patients in a day, is scheduled to close Aug. 1 due to the declining number of Kurds at the camp. But the Smiths are working with Iraqi authorities on new opportunities for Southern Baptist medical volunteers to conduct day clinics in villages where the water systems will be repaired.

In Iran, the proposed 20-bed hospital would be built at a yet-to-be-determined site near the border with Iraq. Korean Baptists have taken the lead in forwarding the proposal to Iran's Ministry of Health. Construction and the initial year of the hospital's operation also would involve Christian congregations in Iran, the London-based Iranian Christian fellowship, Southern Baptists and others. Under the proposal, Korean Baptists and the Iranian government would enter into negotiations on the long-term control and operation of the hospital.

Southern Baptists will allocate \$120,000 to help build the hospital, Brendle said.

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Korean Baptists would provide medical personnel for the hospital's start-up, but staffing later would be "international in scope," Brendle said. "We would anticipate that some Southern Baptist medical personnel may participate."

The proposed hospital, which will serve Iranians and Kurds who have taken refuge in Iran, will be built by a Korean construction company already undertaking projects in Iran. It will include four outpatient treatment rooms, a 10-bed ward for men and 10-bed ward for women, lab, X-ray rooms, pharmacy and living quarters for a staff of 10. "We will seek equipment donations from the international community," the Korean proposal says, "and will assure that only usable, good-quality equipment is provided."

The proposal stems from a trip to Iran by three representatives of the Wallace Memorial Baptist Hospital in Pusan, Korea, in late April and early May. The team surveyed medical needs among Kurds who were part of the massive exodus from Iraq after a failed rebellion against Saddam Hussein's rule. The team included Song Ji Kim, the hospital's medical director, and two doctors on the hospital staff, Un Ki Youn and Dan Jones, a Southern Baptist.

In Iraq, the village water projects stem from the working relationship Global Partners has established with United Nations officials in the area.

Iraqi Arabs inhabited the villages until the recent Kurdish uprising forced them to flee the region. They ransacked the water systems as part of their angry exodus. Now displaced Kurds who have moved into the villages have no source of clean water.

The villages are in a region where thousands of ancestral Kurdish villages -- 5,000 according to Newsweek -- were destroyed by the Iraqi government in a 30-year campaign against the country's sizable Kurdish minority. In razing the Kurdish villages, the Iraqi government forced tens of thousands of Kurds into exile from their homeland, often with nothing but their clothes. The onslaught also claimed nearly 2,500 mosques and churches, including 13 that were more than 1,000 years old, according to one report. Then the government built new villages of small concrete block houses for Arabs who were transported in from elsewhere in Iraq.

From Kuwait, Jerry Zandstra, pastor of the National Evangelical Church, reported July 6 the group is "strong in spirit and growing daily in number." The church's worship services on Sunday and Wednesday now have about 300 in attendance, compared to 8,000 people in 28 ethnic congregations that met there before the Iraqi invasion last August.

Southern Baptists have allocated \$83,990 in relief funds to be channeled through the congregation to workers from Bangladesh, the Philippines and other countries who suffered hardships during the Iraqi occupation. Zandstra relayed the church's appreciation to Baptists: "We are most grateful to you for supplying bread, Bibles and prayer to many in Kuwait in Christ's name. These people daily bless you for your help and love."