



-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #75C
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420.17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

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**Volunteers in Iraq enthusiastic;
more doctors, nurses needed**

By Art Toalston

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Iraq is a land of spiritual excitement -- at least for Southern Baptist volunteers and the Kurdish people they encounter.

However, Iraq remains in deep spiritual need -- and in critical need of volunteer doctors and nurses for medical clinics among Iraqi Kurds whose ill-fated rebellion against Saddam Hussein became a refugee crisis demanding worldwide intervention.

A continuous flow of short-term medical personnel is needed for mobile clinics in villages in northern Iraq where displaced Kurds are settling. The medical work is among key postwar ministries of the Persian Gulf Response Unit of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Three doctors and four nurses are needed for the clinics. Currently only one Southern Baptist physician and three nurses are working in Iraq. The physician is scheduled to leave Oct. 21.

At present, no additional physicians and nurses have signed up for the project, said Tim Brendle, executive director of the Persian Gulf Response Unit. Doctors and nurses able to work in Iraq for three weeks or longer should contact the Foreign Mission Board.

"It's fairly easy to get medical personnel when an emergency arises and the need is a hot news item," Brendle noted. "But when it turns into a persistent longer-term need, it's hard to maintain the momentum of volunteer help.

"That's where we are right now in our ministry to the Kurds: We're looking for people who are willing to help even though the need is no longer in the world spotlight."

Southern Baptist volunteers "may actually have a greater opportunity for ministry impact now than we had during the hectic emergency days when we first began responding to the needs of the Kurds," Brendle added. The Kurds are a heavily Muslim people; converts to Christianity among them are rare.

To date, more than 40 Southern Baptists have worked among the Kurds in northern Iraq. Initially medical volunteers helped staff a clinic at a refugee camp near the city of Zakho. Now the focus of the Southern Baptist effort is clean water and mobile medical clinics in 10 villages where some 35,000 Kurdish refugees have settled.

In August, Brendle issued an urgent call for volunteers skilled in repairing village water systems and drilling wells with a rotary rig and mud pumps. A news story generated a number of replies, and staffing for the water project now is complete through mid-November, when more specialists may be needed, he said. The rig being used in the project was purchased by the Foreign Mission Board with \$125,000 from Southern Baptists' world hunger donations.

Volunteers who have ventured to Iraq say they experienced spiritual renewal in working among the Kurds.

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Cathy Dunn, a nurse who worked in Iraq during August, said it was "a time of dependence on the Lord" that invigorated her prayer life. The Nashville volunteer was stirred by prayer times with other co-workers and came to a personal conviction to pray for world leaders, including Saddam Hussein.

Southern Baptist volunteers from various states were strangers to each other before traveling to Iraq, Dunn said, but quickly they felt they had known each other all their lives. She said her new friendships will endure the rest of her life.

Dunn never had an interest in the Middle East or the Muslim world until she went there, "and now I'm keenly interested."

Describing the Kurdish people as hard-working, Dunn said many are farmers and shepherds. "Seeing shepherds on the hillside with their staffs and flocks was just like seeing a picture out of my Bible," she added.

Still, she saw harsh realities. "Men carry machine guns, handguns and other ammunition as a natural part of their dress." Adults -- and children -- go fishing by exploding hand grenades in a river and collecting the stunned fish.

Dunn treated many Kurdish children with eye, ear and skin infections from unclean water and other unsanitary conditions. Even around their eyes and noses, they had "draining wounds with flies just stuck to them." Many Kurdish adults had joint pains from fleeing into the mountains and enduring harsh winter weather to avoid revenge from Iraqi troops for rebelling against Saddam Hussein's rule.

Buddy Kellett, a volunteer well driller from Simpsonville, S.C., who helped launch the water project in August, said even taxing moments of work were countered by witness opportunities.

At one point it seemed no drilling rig would be available. Kellett and another volunteer well driller, Ed Brentham of Belton, Texas, were frustrated "sitting doing nothing, with nothing else to do." Kellett decided to take a walk "to regroup" down by the river that runs through Zakho. Soon, a Kurdish man with a young daughter approached him.

In English, the man asked for the words to the hymn, "Have Faith in God." Kellett offered to find the words in a hymnal back at the volunteer house.

"There's one other thing I'd like to have ... a Bible in English," the Kurd said. Kellett promptly obliged.

That sort of experience, Kellett said, "picks you back up real quick."

Several days later, the availability of a drilling rig seemed even more bleak. Kellett began wondering what he would tell his church in South Carolina other than, "We didn't do anything." Late that night, he went outside to be alone again, feeling sorry for himself.

He saw four men sitting on the curb, including the landlord of the volunteer house, who is an English teacher. "What's wrong?" the Kurdish landlord asked. "You are brokenhearted."

"I'm very brokenhearted," Kellett concurred. "I've come to do a job and I have nothing to do it with."

As they talked, Kellett realized the men mistakenly thought he was being paid for coming to Iraq. He explained he had paid his own way.

"Why would you come halfway around the world to my country without getting paid to do your work?" the perplexed landlord asked.

"I see your Kurdish people without water," Kellett replied, explaining he had come to share his well-drilling skills.

"Why?" the landlord repeated.

"You and I are brothers, although we might be half a world apart," Kellett said. "When you hurt, I hurt."

The Kurdish man asked Kellett whether he could stay another month. Kellett explained he had to return to his work in South Carolina. "Other drillers will come," he said, "and they'll be just like me, coming of their own free will."

"But they won't be as enthusiastic as you are," the Kurdish man said.

"Oh, yes, they will be," Kellett replied.

Before Kellett and Brentham left Iraq, a rig was found in Turkey. The two volunteers provided the expertise needed to inspect it and negotiate a fair purchase price.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: This updated story subs out BP release of 9/26/91. Headline remains same.

Unrest in Zaire forces
missionaries to evacuate

By Donald D. Martin

Baptist Press
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KINSHASA, Zaire (BP)--Five Southern Baptist missionaries and six missionary children left Zaire's capital Sept. 26 on an evacuation flight to Frankfurt, Germany, following the spread of violence sparked by a mutinous rampage by national troops.

Prior to evacuating Kinshasa, the missionaries had moved to the safety of an oil company compound and were waiting with other foreigners to leave the country. The U.S. Embassy in Zaire helped arrange the evacuation flight to Germany. Press reports said U.S. officials plan to evacuate 5,000 U.S. citizens by plane.

Missionary Steve Seaberry, from Laredo, Texas, said the Southern Baptist missionaries arrived safely in Frankfurt, Germany, Sept. 27.

The group included: Seaberry and his wife, Anne, from Denton, Texas, and their three children; Duane and Kristy Falk, both from Dallas, and their two children; Jared Hodges, 17, son of missionaries Al and Karen Hodges; and overseas correspondent Craig Bird, of Camden, Ark., who was in the country working on coverage of the missionaries' work. Bird, former Baptist Press feature editor, and his wife, Melissa, of Deer Park, Texas, are based in Kenya.

The Falks plan to fly to Lome, Togo, and wait until it is safe to return to Zaire. The Seaberrys plan to fly to Dallas. Bird will return Sept. 28 to Kenya.

The Hodgeses, their two other children and journeyman Jane Gouge remain in Kikwit, a nine-hour drive from Kinshasa. Hodges is from Harrison, Ark.; Karen Hodges is from Paragould, Ark. Gouge is from Orlando, Fla.

Seaberry received word unrest had broken out in Kikwit, and Baptist mission personnel have gathered with other Americans in a single location. They plan to leave the country as soon as possible.

Unrest in Zaire began Sept. 23 when about 3,000 disgruntled Zairean paratroopers entered the capital and looted stores and closed the international airport and the Congo River port. They were angry because they had not been paid in several months. The unrest quickly spread to a frustrated civilian population beset with economic chaos and an inflation rate of nearly 1,000 percent.

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French troops took control of the international airport on the second day of unrest and began protecting French and other foreign citizens. France and Belgium since have dispatched hundreds of reinforcement troops to Zaire to help stop the rioting and looting, which have killed 30 people since the unrest began.

France also warned Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko, who came to power in a 1965 coup, democratic reforms should soon follow restored law and order.

News reports on Sept. 27 said some order had returned to the capital. Government officials in Zaire have ordered a dusk-to-dawn curfew and adopted an emergency plan to distribute food to its citizens.

"Although there seems to have been some quieting down, both the missionaries and foreign officials in Zaire anticipate a backlash in two to three weeks because of food shortages in the country," said Bill Phillips, area director for west Africa. "All expatriate personnel are still being advised to leave."

A Belgium relief group estimated at least 40 people have been killed and between 1,250 and 1,750 people have been injured in the rioting.

Southern Baptist missionaries began work in Zaire in 1987. Zaire, a nation of 34 million people, is the third-largest African country.

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SBC computer link to test
Sunday school lesson updates

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
9/27/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Weekly, computer-transmitted teaching helps will provide youth Sunday school workers with last-minute suggestions in a one-month test project conducted by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board through SBCNet, the denomination's computer communication network.

The test project will begin Oct. 24 and will offer teaching helps for Sunday school workers who use "Youth in Action: Teacher," a periodical for youth in grades 10-12 in the Life and Work Series, according to Richard Barnes, design editor of youth Life and Work materials.

Included in the service will be current news stories, up-to-date statistics, ways to use current movies, TV programs and music to teach youth Sunday school and other fresh teaching ideas. The service addresses a need expressed by Sunday school workers for age-graded teaching plans and resources for each grade, Barnes said.

"Our research for the curriculum improvements showed that teachers want suggestions that are current. No one is providing anything this current," Barnes said.

"The potential is for regionalized suggestions with teaching ideas for the West Coast, cities, rural churches ... the possibilities are endless," he pointed out.

Based on the test project results, the service may be expanded to "Youth in Discovery," the Life and Work material for younger youth, as well as Bible Book Series materials, Barnes said.

A target date for offering the service has not been determined and will be part of the test evaluation, Barnes said.

SBCNet, a denominational computer network, has been available since April 1 through CompuServe, a national computer network service, and at present primarily provides computer networking between convention agencies, state conventions and associational offices, said David Haywood, SBCNet systems operator in the board's office of communications.

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The test project for youth Sunday school workers will be the first SBCNet service specifically directed to the local church.

There will be no charge for the test. Users will pay only for the CompuServe user fees. If not already an SBCNet subscriber, churches or individuals wanting to test the service must purchase from the Sunday School Board a \$20 membership kit which includes a \$15 usage credit and software.

After purchasing the kit, subscribers pay a usage fee to CompuServe for actual time used. Subscribers also have access to all CompuServe services which include electronic mail, news clippings, data base access and other networks.

Haywood said SBCNet is available to anyone with a computer and a modem. He said subscribers also are able to communicate with any other SBCNet subscriber through a bulletin board feature.