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NOTE TO EDITORS: Africa correspondent Craig Bird accompanied a Baptist survey team Oct. 1-3 to a remote Kenyan camp housing refugees from suffering Somalia.

Baptists aid refugees from  
Somalia, where AK-47 rules

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press  
10/12/92

MANDERA, Kenya (BP)--"The AK-47 is the president of Somalia now," Noor declared, smiling at his own comment.

Several fellow Somali refugees laugh softly -- including some scarred by blasts from the infamous Soviet assault rifle, and others who have lost wives or children, parents or friends in the bloodletting in their home country.

These days, if a Somali can't find humor in death and dying, there isn't much to smile about. The laughter may be morbid, but so is almost everything else about their situation. At least in Mandera they are out of reach of the ruling firepower.

They aren't out of the grasp of hunger and disease, however. But now they are within reach of Southern Baptist missionaries and Kenyan Baptists in a just-born effort to minister in Mandera.

Noor and 50,000 other Somali refugees live in stick-and-reed huts on the edge of Mandera, a remote Kenyan town. Less than two miles from the camp they can see the low hills of the Somali border. Ethiopia -- and another camp housing 20,000 more sick, hungry refugees -- lies a mile in the other direction, across the Dawa River.

The refugees poured out of Somalia last year when longtime dictator Mohamed Siad Barre was ousted. They brought almost nothing besides their lives -- and upwards of 40 refugees a day are losing even that.

"I wouldn't be surprised if the daily death rate is closer to 80," said David Sorley, a Southern Baptist missionary doctor who has been working in Kenya's northeast province off and on since spring.

Yet another dose of bitter humor: The very rains needed to break the three-year drought in the region likely will produce more graves than planted fields.

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"If the rains start on time, it will get a lot worse as the cold and wet finishes off the children and women and aged already weakened by hunger and illness," Sorley explained.

The refugees have few animals that would benefit from new grass. And you don't hoard seed for next year when your children are starving today.

Against that background, Kenyan Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries are going to work in Mandera, hundreds of miles from the nearest Baptist church. Christians of any description are scarce. Mandera may be in Kenya, one of the most responsive countries in the world to the gospel. But both the refugees and the area's residents are overwhelmingly Muslim.

"When we first contacted the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, they were pretty blunt," Sorley admitted. "They said, 'You better not be coming up here to proselyte.'"

The Minneapolis native responded: "I won't hide the fact that I'm a Christian, but we don't believe in trading food for souls either."

Sampson Kisia, chairman of the Baptist Convention of Kenya, agreed. "Anyone who works in Mandera needs to understand this is a different kind of place. If we start preaching on the street and handing out tracts it will just cause trouble. But if we live out our Christianity while helping men and women and children who are suffering so much, the Lord can provide quiet opportunities for us to witness."

Kisia and Sorley were part of an eight-man team of Kenyans and missionaries who surveyed the area Oct. 1-3. They battled the 100-degree heat to visit refugees in the camp, check in with local government officials and talk with the aid groups in Mandera to see how Baptist personnel and funds could best fit into the emerging aid program.

"We don't want to just show up and start competing with something UNHCR or CARE or UNICEF is doing," stressed missionary Sam Turner, a member of the survey team. "We want to find people who are being missed and minister to them. There is too much human need to duplicate effort."

Food distribution apparently will be handled adequately by other agencies, so likely Baptist projects include:

- A therapeutic medical program focusing on children and the disabled too weak to walk to the feeding centers or stand in line for long hours. Often they are incapable of defending the food they are given. The project would send teams through the camp to locate such people and get them to a medical center. There they would be fed five times a day until they are strong enough to compete in the regular camp system.

- A latrine-building program. The biggest "bathroom" is a dry riverbed that intersects the camp. Rains wash the waste into the river -- the only water source for both the camp and the town. Sorley already has worked with an in-camp group, Somali Intellectuals for Refugees, promoting self-help projects. Southern Baptist funds paid for tools so refugees could dig 4-meter-deep toilets. The first week they dug 36. The camp needs 2,500 -- before the rains come. Baptists will provide more tools, training and help.

- Help with the water supply. The UN refugee commission is rehabilitating the water system itself. So Baptists may do things as simple as teaching the refugees to build one-family, upward-flow water filters out of concrete and sand, or as intensive as drilling boreholes.

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-- Education for children. "You can see the children running in packs with no supervision and nothing to do," Kisia explained. "If they live here two years their social skills will be gone and they'll never go back to school. This is the critical age." Literacy and English classes also are options.

The survey team envisions using missionaries and volunteers from Kenya and the United States, working both in the camp and in the town.

"There are hungry children in Mandera too," Kisia said. "We would like to earn the right to maintain a permanent presence. We'd like to be there even after the refugees are gone."

The Christian community would like that too. The Catholic mission lent the survey team a four-wheel-drive vehicle during their visit and at every opportunity encouraged the Baptists to move to Mandera. So did the small Christian Community Church.

"Look at us," one Christian woman told the visitors. "There is not an ethnic Somali here. We are all from other parts of Kenya who are here working. We need help reaching the Somalis."

And that is not a laughing matter.

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(BP) photos (one horizontal, two verticals) and related map graphic (vertical, of Africa) mailed Oct. 9 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outlines available on SBCNet Newsroom.

Refugee to Yemen escapes  
grip of war in Somalia

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press  
10/12/92

MEDINAT AS'SHAAB, Yemen (BP)--Bedria first encountered the bloody grip of war in June 1990 when her home in Somalia was destroyed. Two of her children were nowhere to be found -- and assumed dead.

Now a refugee living in the sprawling tent city of Medinat As'Shaab in neighboring Yemen, Bedria has chosen to help some of the thousands of others in the camp. Bedria's camp is one of several refugee areas where Southern Baptists work in Yemen.

Her story is remarkable not because she is a Somali who escaped horror but because she sees triumph despite it. While she aches for two children killed and one separated from her, Bedria nonetheless is thankful.

"One man I met the other day had lost his entire family in the war -- seven children!" she said. "I'm indeed blessed by God to have two of my four children still alive."

In Somalia, her husband of seven years blamed her for her children's deaths. Twenty-three years old and pregnant with her fourth child, she had taken her oldest daughter, Fatma, to run an errand with her and left the two younger ones at home.

"He kept asking me, 'Why didn't you take all the children with you?'" Bedria said.

That was the beginning of sorrow. Bedria's marriage soon broke apart. Six months later, as a single parent, she gave birth again. The civil war advanced. Having put her teaching profession behind her, she trained for seven months in medical relief work under a French doctor. She started work at a hospital in Magadiscio, filling a gap left by fleeing doctors.

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In May of this year, Bedria heard of a cargo ship from Pakistan carrying refugees to Yemen, just across the Gulf of Aden where the Red Sea empties into the Indian Ocean. It cost \$100 per adult and \$20 per child. She left her youngest child with her mother in Somalia and took Fatma, 5.

"More than once the captain assured us his ship had already been given permission to land in Yemen," Bedria related. Overloaded with 3,500 Somalis, it sailed eight days before reaching the Yemeni port of Mukalla. It was promptly denied permission to dock.

By this time, Bedria, Fatma and fellow passengers had run out of water. At Mukalla they paid a businessman to bring water aboard, but he delivered nothing. They headed for the Yemeni port city of Aden.

Ten days at sea had depleted food as well as water. Children began dying. Each lifeless body was carried to the feet of the captain. The passengers started drinking salt water, mixing it with lemon juice, to stay alive.

"The conditions on the ship were horrible," Bedria recalled. "Too awful even to describe."

Port authorities in Aden were no more receptive than those in Mukalla. The reason: a rumor that cholera stalked the ship and would rapidly spread throughout Yemen if passengers made landfall.

Fifteen days out from Somalia, 120 people had died. The rest were desperate. They decided they would run the ship as close to shore as it would go. As others made the four-story-high jump into the water, Bedria and her daughter hung back. Fatma was terrified.

On board, each passing hour intensified the stench of death. Bedria knew they could be next to die. "We kept waiting, hoping someone would come to help us leave the ship," she said. "But day after day, no one came."

Four days later, tied together, the two let themselves fall into the shallow water below. Bedria broke the surface and smashed onto the gravel sea floor, but escaped with cuts and bruises. Fatma, on the other hand, was knocked unconscious. Her little body filled up with salt water.

Like other survivors, Bedria and Fatma settled at the shore, the abandoned ship looming in the background. Until United Nations tents arrived, they used ship parts on which they had floated ashore to provide shelter from the sun.

For seven days Fatma said nothing, her recovery in question. Finally she came around. Now she's a healthy 6-year-old.

Bedria helps distribute milk to fellow refugees at Medinat As-Shaab, a refugee settlement where officials relocated her and the others in September.

She waits expectantly for the day of peace in Somalia when she can be reunited with her mother, daughter and homeland.

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Southern Baptist worker Rodney Armstrong in Yemen contributed to this story. (BP) photos (one vertical, one horizontal) mailed Oct. 9 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outlines available on SBCNet Newsroom.

Somalia's agony: scenes  
of terror, few of grace

By Craig Bird

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--There are plenty of figures about Somalia.

At least 2,000 people starve to death there -- each day. A thousand refugees abandon the hemorrhaging country -- each day.

The porous borders hold 8 million people, 7 million guns and 100 million rounds of ammunition. The relief flights are numbered, the sacks of grain counted. Casualty reports are specific. Dollar costs are computed.

The figures don't lie. But they don't tell the whole story either. The tragedy is greater than math. Little pieces of hurt refuse to fit into neat equations:

-- Along the banks of the Dawa River, the boundary between Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia, two young boys play soccer with a rag ball. They ignore the two bloating donkeys five yards away. The last grass was eaten months ago and no grain is left to waste on animals. A few miles away a camel sprawls, his chin resting flat on the ground. "I've never seen that before," a missionary remarks. "But I've never seen a starving camel before either."

-- In Habaswein, Kenya, 1,700 people who fled Somalia with deposed dictator Mohamed Siad Barre wait. They fear reprisal from other clans if they return to Somalia. Kenya doesn't need more refugees in its already overcrowded cities. Siad Barre left them in the desert and reportedly is in Nigeria now. Parked alongside their stick-and-mud huts are 119 vehicles -- mostly Toyota and Mercedes four-wheel drives but also a few buses and heavy trucks. Like the camel a hundred miles north, the mechanical beasts of burden also are dying.

-- Outside a village in southern Somalia where a feeding program has been established, a second village springs up overnight. "Our children are starving too," the newcomers tell a Southern Baptist missionary. "Bring them in," he replies. "We have enough." The offer is refused. "This is a different clan. We can't come in; you have to come to us," the newcomers say. The astounded and angry missionary asks, "You mean you'd let your children die when there is food 200 yards away because of clan differences?" The answer: "Yes. It is Allah's will."

-- A young boy in Somalia climbs onto a truck outfitted with a heavy artillery piece. He pushes the wrong button and the gun fires, crushing him against the cab when it recoils. The shell hits a building 75 yards away, kills 18 people and wounds another 33. The people step over the bodies and continue walking down the street or return to their noon meal. It happens all the time. Someone tosses the boy's body from the truck as it drives away.

-- Violence often means relief flights laden with food are canceled. But nothing stops the "khat flights." These planes, each carrying around 1,000 pounds of the narcotic plant, come every day to airstrips in northern Kenya and Somalia. Chewing khat, a stimulant, is the national pastime of Somali men. The dealers sell every twig within an hour of landing, then fly back to Nairobi. They take tens of thousands of shillings with them. They leave the starving children behind.

-- In Kenya, a group of Baptist missionaries who have helped Somali refugee leaders initiate self-help projects ask if they can pray for God's blessings on the work. "No," the group leader, a former government minister, answers quickly. "It is our turn to bless you. We will never forget all you have done and how you treated us. We want to ask Allah to bless you and protect you." After the prayer, he invites the Baptists "to visit us in Somalia when all this is over. ... Before the war I was a person, not a refugee. I have a master's degree in engineering. I owned five big buildings in downtown Mogadishu. Someday we want you to visit us in our homes and let us do nice things for you."

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-- In another Somali town a young boy begs food from aid workers. They don't have any, but give him some money to buy a small bowl of lentils in a nearby cafe. Later they see him again and offer to buy him a cup of tea. "No, I do not want any tea," he answers. "I just want you to tell your guard to shoot me. It is better to die now than starve later."

-- Two years ago a Somali village was home to 5,000 families. Today only 28 families -- 96 people -- are left. Many fled the drought and the war. Many died. Skeletons lie in beds or mats. No one has time or energy to bury them. One still holds a comb in her hand. She had been combing her hair when she died. No chairs or desks remain in the schoolroom, but blackboard lessons are legible, waiting for students who won't return.

-- A Somali waits until he is alone with a Christian. He asks for a Bible, but when it is offered he refuses. "I have to build a box for it first" (to hide it), he explains. "I couldn't let others see me read it."

-- Beside a dusty road aid workers find yet another skeleton. The ragged clothes still hold most of the bones together. Near one hand lies a torn Somali 500 shilling note. The armed guards (two come with every rented vehicle) help the aid workers dig a shallow grave and cover it with clods of hard dry soil. After placing a small stick marker, both Muslims and Christians pray.

As they drive away, a missionary in the group observes: "God alone could ever find the grave now. Maybe he alone cares."

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Muslim Somalis have found  
little use for Christianity

By Donald D. Martin

Baptist Press  
10/12/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--When the world's handful of Christian Somalis pray for their homeland, they know few countrymen share their beliefs. But almost all share their lineage.

While most of Africa's social structure is built around tribes, Somalia is bound together by closely related family clans. This has made Somalia one of the most homogeneous nations in the world.

In fact, most of the world's 8 million Somalis can trace their origins back to two first-century brothers, Samaal and Saab. The brothers, whom many regard as mythical, came from the same Arabian tribe to which the Islamic prophet Muhammad belonged.

Today hundreds of intertwined family lines have formed a nation rooted in a common language, culture and religion.

From about the seventh century, when Arab traders first introduced Islam to Somalia, the faith has grown to the point that 99.9 percent of the people are Sunni Muslims. Sunni Islam is the dominant branch of the religion, accounting for 85 to 90 percent of Muslims worldwide.

This tight union of family and faith has found little use -- or tolerance -- for Christianity.

Catholic missionaries began work in Somalia in 1881. Protestant missionaries arrived in 1898. Yet both Christian groups have little to show for their work after a century. When the Somalia government nationalized Christian hospitals and schools in 1972, the Catholic Church had about 500 converts. Protestant groups had only a few hundred.

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In the mid-1970s Somalia began expelling missionaries. By May 1979 the last Protestant missionaries had been forced to leave the country.

Since then the world's Christian community has essentially forgotten Somalia, said David Barrett, research consultant for the World Evangelization Research Center at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"Somalia must be considered the most ignored country by Christianity in the history of Christian missions," he said.

When Christian researchers compared the distribution of evangelistic resources in Somalia to those in post-Soviet Russia, they found that a Russian will receive a million evangelistic messages before a Somali receives one.

The recent suffering of Somalis because of the country's civil war and famine has regained Christians' attention.

Christians now praying for Somalia hope this attention will outlast the suffering.

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What you can do about Somalia:  
Pray and give to combat hunger

Baptist Press  
10/12/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--As hunger continues to devastate Somalia, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board urges people to increase their prayers and their gifts to the board's world relief funds.

The board has just allocated more than \$1.3 million in hunger funds and \$100,000 in general relief funds for Somali aid. But those figures represent only a small part of what will be needed, according to John Cheyne, who coordinates hunger and relief efforts. That brings total Somali aid allocations since March 1991 to about \$1.5 million.

Besides relieving hunger, missionaries seek to meet urgent general relief needs, such as for medicine, blankets and other vital supplies, Cheyne said. He encourages donors to designate gifts to world relief, rather than just to hunger, since world relief funds may be used for all urgent needs, including hunger.

In other action related to the hunger crisis, the board has issued special calls to prayer for Somalia and asked several hundred Southern Baptist churches to include the Somali people in their prayer ministries that focus on unreached people groups.

The board also has agreed to assist a group of Somali expatriates in its attempt to secure peace between warring factions in Somalia.

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Fired professor files suit  
against Criswell College

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press  
10/12/92

DALLAS (BP)--A \$7 million lawsuit has been filed against Criswell College in Dallas by James Parker III, a former professor at the school who says he was wrongfully fired last spring.

Parker, who taught philosophy and theology, is asking for \$973,962 in severance pay and lost pension benefits, \$1 million in compensatory damages for "defendants' libel and slander" and \$5 million exemplary damages.

Jack E. Brady, chairman of the Criswell College board of trustees, denied Parker's allegations.

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"His contract had come to an end and a new contract was not offered to him," Brady, a Dallas attorney, said.

"It wasn't based on animosity. There was a recommendation made from staff as to contract renewals, and that was followed by the board of trustees."

Parker, 43, contends in his suit he was given a "permanent appointment" at Criswell until age 65 or until he resigned or was asked to leave "for reasons of delinquency."

"He was not delinquent in any respect," and "his evaluations were well within the standards for continued employment," the suit contends.

"Nevertheless, he was pretextually terminated by Defendant Criswell (College) acting through its illegally constituted board and defendants Sexton and Brady," the suit alleges.

Parker said, "I have reason to believe they fabricated a reason to fire me."

Parker said he did not fault Paige Patterson for his firing. "He had nothing to do with it at all," Parker said, noting Patterson had stepped away from duties as college president in transition to becoming president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Dallas businessman Bo Sexton, immediate past chairman of the board, said, "I don't really know the basis of where he's coming from. Let me just say that based on the information that the board had and the recommendations made, the board acted."

Parker, who said he was fired one month shy of his five-year anniversary with the college when he would have received improved pension benefits, added, "I just really regret it having to get to this point.

"It was absolutely the last resort and was brought about because they refused to communicate."

Parker contends in his suit that "Sexton, Brady and other representatives of Defendants ... were motivated by personal animosity."

He further alleges "that Sexton, Brady and other individual representatives and employees of Criswell have published and have caused to be published statements which constitute slander, business disparagement and defamation."

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Churches approach Halloween  
with evangelism in mind

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
10/12/92

ATLANTA (BP)--Making people disappear is this month's assignment for Hutch Matteson.

He's not a magician; he's minister to students at First Baptist Church in Snellville, Ga. The congregation is among a growing number of churches seeing Halloween as an opportunity instead of a curse, said Thad Hamilton, associate director of mass evangelism for the Home Mission Board.

"I don't believe Jesus would be hiding in a church building on Halloween," Hamilton said. "We've got to provide something positive for the community because we have the responsibility to be salt and light."

Matteson's challenge is in conjunction with his church's production of the "Chilling Fields." The outdoor event portrays six scenes from Revelations, including a rapture scene where people representing Christians disappear.

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The elaborate event takes place on a wooded lot away from the church. At the conclusion people are taken to a tent where the plan of salvation is explained.

Last year 10,000 people went through the "Chilling Fields" in seven days and 600 registered professions of faith, Matteson said.

"We make use of the fact that the world celebrates Halloween, and we give them something to really celebrate," Matteson said.

Life Line Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., produces a "Hereafter House" to present the gospel at Halloween. Borrowing the idea from another Arkansas church, Life Line introduces participants to a suave character playing Satan.

"He's dressed in white tails and he has a handful of money and keys to a Cadillac," said Leslie Willis, minister of music.

People follow this character to a room where a black light makes packing bubbles painted florescent orange look like hell's fiery coals. Volunteers portraying biblical characters such as the rich man who rejected Jesus and modern people who reject Christ share their testimonies.

Spectators are then led upstairs where a cross sits on the landing between floors. The pastor explains that the only way to heaven is through Calvary.

From there, the group goes to a room with plants, "streets of gold" and people singing and sharing their Christian testimonies.

Last year, Willis said 2,300 people came through the Hereafter House in four nights and more than 100 people made professions of faith.

First Baptist Church in Trussville, Ala., uses a similar approach with its "Judgement House." People who attend are introduced to two characters whose death is simulated, said Tom Hudgins, youth and music minister.

Each year the fabricated cause of death is changed to give the event variety. Last year the people were "killed" in a fire. This year it's a car wreck.

Participants follow one of the characters to Sunday school rooms decorated to reflect the punishment of hell. From there, participants move to another room with the second character who goes to heaven.

After the heaven scene, an evangelist shares the plan of salvation. Last year 2,500 people attended "Judgement House" and 248 people made professions of faith, Hudgins said.

The event is not without critics. One year Hudgins received an anonymous letter complaining that the church went to extremes to present the gospel. He responds: "If we sit around and sing 'Precious Memories,' we're not going to reach the youth in this decade."

Other churches prefer a different approach. Hebron Baptist Church in Dacula, Ga., for example, transforms its Sunday school classrooms into game rooms where people pin the tail on Balaam's donkey, fish for Jonah's whale and name that tune with gospel songs.

The fall festival includes a hay ride around the church property and face painting, said Billy Britt, associate pastor and education director.

Everyone who attends is asked to register, with the information added to the church's prospect list.

Wieuca Baptist Church in Atlanta also hosts a fall festival where outreach is the only motivation, said Kathy Dobbins, interim coordinator for singles and activities.

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This year's activities include a dunk tank featuring church staff members, a space walk, cake walk, hot dogs, cotton candy and a resting area for parents.

"We want to let the community know we're here and that this is a place where the whole family can come," Dobbins said.

Hamilton stressed the need for a variety of approaches to Halloween activities. "If some people won't go to one kind, they'll go to another." Being unique, he said, is essential to a successful special event.

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For information about using special events for an evangelistic emphasis, contact Hamilton at the Home Mission Board, (404) 898-7590 or 1350 Spring St. NW, Atlanta, GA 30367-5601.

Right has no 'franchise on God,'  
says news conference speaker

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
10/12/92

DALLAS (BP)--Some conservative pastors have "perverted" the gospel and the Christian mission by turning their churches into political action groups, according to spokespersons for Southern Baptist Denominational Relations Information, Inc.

"Stop claiming the franchise on God," said Randall H. Fields, a San Antonio attorney and leader of the Nashville-based, laity-led "denominational relations" group.

Offering a message to secular politicians wanting to co-opt the church, Fields added, "We're pro-church, we're pro-First Amendment, and we vote."

Ties between the conservative wing of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Religious Right was one of many subjects addressed by about a dozen speakers at an Oct. 8 news conference in Dallas sponsored by the "denominational relations" group.

Speakers at the wide-ranging news conference also touched on the role of Woman's Missionary Union, the threat of "New Age Fundamentalists" and a perceived attempt by conservatives to take over the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The vast resources of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board may soon be used to export controversy and "promote fundamentalist dogma throughout the world," claimed John Baugh, a retired corporate executive from Houston who spearheaded the press conference.

Baugh pointed to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and Woman's Missionary Union as potential vehicles allowing moderate Baptists to do missions.

"Woman's Missionary Union is the best of all Baptist agencies to send missionaries throughout the world," Baugh said. Traditionally, WMU has not been a missionary-sending body but has focused on missions support and missions education.

Alluding to recent efforts to have WMU rescind its auxiliary status and surrender to SBC control, Baugh said, "It's time for the New Age Fundamentalists to stop bullying the WMU."

Texas Baptist laypersons must not allow the Baptist General Convention of Texas to be captured by these "New Age Fundamentalist" pastors -- men who position themselves between the laity and God, Baugh said.

Support for cooperative missions professed by conservatives in Texas masks their scheme to seize control of the state convention, according to Gracie Hatfield Hilton of Arlington, Texas.

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"The Cooperative Program is a smoke screen being used to mask a takeover plot," she said, pointing specifically to implied criticism of BGCT leadership in a mailing sent to all Texas Baptist pastors in August.

The "Common Statement of Convention Support," signed by about 150 Southern Baptist pastors in Texas, called on Texas convention leadership "to maintain the historical and traditional process of funding in the BGCT Cooperative Program budget."

"The implication that current BGCT leaders do not support the Cooperative Program is a charge that begs examination," Hilton said, refuting the claim.

The announced plan by the Texas Baptist Conservative Fellowship to deny incumbent BGCT President Richard Maples a traditional second term is unprecedented in Texas Baptist life, she said. The fellowship and the framers of the "Common Statement" have thrown their support behind Rudy Hernandez, a San Antonio evangelist.

First Baptist Church of Bryan, Texas, where Maples is pastor, gave 10 percent of its undesignated gifts through the Cooperative Program last year, Hilton said. On the other hand, Village Parkway Baptist Church in San Antonio, where Hernandez is a member, gave nothing through the Cooperative Program last year and less than 1 percent of its undesignated receipts the previous year, she said.

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Montana Southern Baptists  
kickoff '2 X 2000' campaign

Baptist Press  
10/12/92

KALISPELL, Mont. (BP)--Kicking off a special emphasis to double the number of churches by the turn of the century, Montana Southern Baptists met Oct. 7-8 in Kalispell for their 32nd annual session.

Nearly 200 people, 141 registered messengers, met at Kalispell's Easthaven Baptist Church to conduct business for the Montana Southern Baptist Fellowship. But the fellowship's energetic campaign to present the gospel to every person in Montana and then have 2 percent of the state's population involved in Southern Baptist churches and missions by the turn of the century, "2 X 2000," was the focal point for the two-day meeting.

The campaign, if successful, would double Montana's more than 100 churches and missions and have more than 16,000 of the state's 800,000 residents involved in the fellowship's churches and missions.

"We have a goal ... to help us accomplish the goal Jesus Christ wants us to do," fellowship President Paul Jones told the annual meeting.

Jones, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Billings, was re-elected president. Doug Hutcheson, pastor of Westside Baptist Church in Great Falls, was elected vice president and Debra Armstrong from Billings, was re-elected recording secretary.

In other business, messengers approved a 1993 Cooperative Program budget of \$238,178, a 7 percent increase over the 1992 budget. The new budget would channel 21 percent, the same as the current year, to the SBC's Cooperative Program. The fellowship's total budget for 1993 is \$850,484, nearly 2.5 percent above the 1992 budget.

Messengers heard a number of speakers, including Gray Allison, president of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn., and Charles Chaney, vice president of the church extension section of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta. Dellanna O'Brien, president of Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, Ala., was the keynote speaker for the WMU annual meeting.

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Special recognition was given to W.J. "Dub" and Dorothy Hughes of Billings, retiring associational missionaries and longtime workers in the Dakotas and Montana. She has been commissioned by the fellowship to write the history of the development of Southern Baptist work in Montana.

The 1993 meeting will be Oct. 6-7 at Trinity Baptist Church in Billings.

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Newsletter to help raise funds  
for Associated Baptist Press

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
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NASHVILLE (BP)--A monthly newsletter, with a \$25-per-year subscription price, will be launched Jan. 1 by Associated Baptist Press.

A \$20,000 grant from Freedom Forum, a Gannett newspapers-related foundation based in suburban Washington, funded development of the newsletter. Freedom Forum's president and CEO, Charles Overby, has chaired ABP's 18-member board of directors the past two years.

Goals of the newsletter, approved by ABP directors meeting Oct. 9 in Nashville, include uncovering "new sources for news and funding for ABP" and to "increase the awareness of ABP among Baptists and the general public."

ABP is a competitor to Baptist Press, the Southern Baptist Convention daily news service. ABP was formed by various Baptist journalists and Southern Baptist moderates when the SBC Executive Committee fired Al Shackelford and Dan Martin, BP's top news executives, in July 1990.

ABP's four-page newsletter, to include condensations and briefs based on its stories, will have an initial press run of 1,000 copies, with each to carry card-like inserts for ordering subscriptions.

The newsletter, even if published twice monthly, will break even with 1,000 subscriptions, ABP Executive Editor Greg Warner told board members. With 2,500 subscriptions, ABP will make a profit after the first \$12 of each \$25 subscription, he said.

ABP directors adopted a proposed 1993 budget of just over \$150,000, up 25 percent over 1992, Warner said.

Revenue projections include contributions of \$35,500 from various state Baptist conventions, \$80,000 from organizations such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, \$25,000 from churches and \$10,000 from individuals and \$21,800 in fees charged for subscriptions to the news service, not counting potential newsletter income.

In receipts from January through September, ABP has received \$40,369 from the CBF, \$20,000 from the Baptist General Association of Virginia and \$25,000 from the Freedom Forum, including the newsletter start-up grant, executive director-treasurer Don McGregor reported.

Overall year-to-date income was \$140,372 compared to \$103,295 during the same nine-month period in 1991, McGregor said.

R.G. Puckett was elected new chairman of ABP's directors. Puckett is editor of the Biblical Recorder, North Carolina Baptists' newsjournal.

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**Pioneer religious educator,  
former Southwestern prof dies**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptist religious education pioneer and former Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Floy Barnard died Oct. 7 in Sunnyvale, Calif. She was 97.

Barnard was dean of women and professor of missionary education and educational arts at the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary from 1933 until her retirement in 1960.

During her tenure at Southwestern, Barnard was a conference leader and speaker across the SBC. She spoke every year from 1935-59 at Ridgecrest and Glorieta Baptist conference centers and was active in the SBC Woman's Missionary Union.

Barnard also spoke at Southern Baptist mission meetings in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Guatemala.

When she retired, Southwestern's trustees voted to name the women's dormitory Floy Barnard Hall because of "her gracious spirit and total dedication that has so endeared her." Barnard Hall is still the women's residence hall at the seminary.

She was a 1917 graduate of Colorado College of Education in Greeley and later earned the master of arts degree from that school. She graduated from Southwestern Seminary in 1929 with the master of religious education degree and in 1939 she received the doctor of religious education degree from the seminary. The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, Texas, awarded her the honorary doctor of literature degree in 1957.

Her writing included Sunday school lessons for the Baptist Sunday School Board. She served as the Primary Sunday School lesson writer for six years and wrote four Bible study books for the WMU department of Texas.

Her other books included "Drama in the Churches," and "Christian Witnessing," both published by Broadman Press.

Barnard was born in 1895 in Dawkins Pueblo, Colo., to Jehu and Mary Ann Barnard. After completing her education at Southwestern Seminary, she was educational director of First Baptist Church, Anderson, S.C. She later served with the American Baptist Convention as a home missionary in Salt Lake City before joining Southwestern's faculty.

Services for Barnard are Wednesday, Oct. 14, in Greeley, Colo. Arrangements are being handled by the Allnutt Mortuary in Greeley. Memorials to Barnard may be made to Southwestern Seminary's development department.

Barnard is survived by one brother, John Darrell, of New York, and two nieces.

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**Healthy marriage requires  
intentional choice, action**

By Deborah Aronson-Griffin

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PALM COAST, Fla. (BP)--A healthy marriage requires intentional choices and actions to keep it that way, a couple from McDonald, Ga., agreed while attending the second of 14 weekend Fall Festivals of Marriage scheduled this fall in 10 states.

"Communication and Intimacy" is the theme for the 1992 conferences sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division.

"A good marriage is a choice," Dan McKay said during the fall festival held at Palm Coast, Fla. "It is intentional. A healthy marriage can stay healthy by taking time-outs."

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"It reaffirms our commitment," Joyce McKay added. "We come with a group and it is a special way to build friendships. We can sit down and talk without the children being around."

The McKays attended the conference as participants, although they will lead conferences at a later festival at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center on subjects such as "Understanding the Differences Between Men and Women" and "What Kids Really Need from Their Parents."

They said they find the weekend away from home and children strengthens their marriage. "It is a refreshment, a time to be quiet and focus on each other," Joyce McKay said. "We are committed to go every year. It is a gift to one another."

Added Dan: "I hope I never have the attitude that we have arrived in our marriage. We are always growing and changing. I want us to grow together as we grow older."

Also among the 265 participants in the festival were Chris and Phil Conduff, who attend College Park Baptist Church in Apopka, Fla. With two children and busy lives, they said they realized during the weekend that "going and doing all the time is not good."

Chris Conduff compared the value of the weekend to a routine maintenance check of an automobile. "You don't take your car in to be fixed, just checked."

Phil Conduff said many things he learned about marriage relationships "also can be applied to the work atmosphere."

The pastor for the weekend, Doug Tipps of First Baptist Church in San Marcos, Texas, urged couples to emphasize the importance of verbal communication.

"God is a God of words," Tipps said. "The powerful word of God brought all of creation into existence. Words are constructive and glue things together. Words and dialogue with actions are dynamic."

Conference topics during the weekend included sex in marriage, being friends with one's children, affirmation, negative emotions and fighting and resolving conflict.

David Huebner, national coordinator for Fall Festivals of Marriage, said the conferences are "not therapy weekends. They are really for couples with good marriages who want to make them better. Going to one does not mean you are admitting there is something drastically wrong in your marriage."

Other conferences are being held in Louisiana, Kentucky, Florida, Texas, Arizona, Alabama, California, Maryland, Missouri and New Mexico.

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Aronson-Griffin is a free-lance writer based in Williamston, N.C. (BP) photo mailed to Baptist state newspapers by BSSB bureau of Baptist Press.

Couples cite importance  
of marriage enrichment

By Deborah Aronson-Griffin

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PALM COAST, Fla. (BP)--Whether preparing for marriage or completing 40 years as a married couple, enrichment of the relationship should be a priority, according to two couples who attended a recent Fall Festival of Marriage.

Weekend conferences are being conducted in 10 states this fall by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division where participants attend conferences on topics such as sexuality in marriage, praying together, resolving conflict and communicating.

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Troy Harshman and Gloria Cain of Orlando, Fla., plan to be married Jan. 9 and attended the festival by way of a gift from Troy's parents, Walter and Barbara Harshman who are marriage counselors at Grace Bible Church in Sebring, Fla. Bill and Marilyn Huber, married 40 years and with four children and seven grandchildren, believe they have "just about experienced everything" in their marriage. The Hubers, originally from Dayton, Ohio, now live in Zellwood, Fla.

Harshman, 25, met his bride-to-be at MGM Studios in Orlando where both are among the 35,000 employees. He spotted Cain one day as she was eating alone on her break. Good friends for two years, they eventually began dating.

Because Cain was not a Christian, Harshman broke off the relationship. However, through the counsel of Harshman's mother, Cain, 24, made a profession of her faith and became a Christian.

"His mom opened my eyes to Christ," Cain said. Soon thereafter, they began dating again.

Harshman presented Cain an engagement ring the day her parents' divorce became final. "I wanted her to remember that day, not as the last day of her parents' marriage but as the first day of her engagement," he said.

At the Fall Festival, Cain said she realized how important communication is between partners. "It helped me because I suppress my anger. I don't talk about anything that bothers me."

Harshman said he learned the importance of partners affirming one another, especially by listening to the other and letting her know that what she is saying is important.

Even after 40 years of happy marriage, the Hubers said Fall Festivals have something to offer them.

"We are still learning," said Marilyn Huber. "It's good to know we're not the only ones having troubles. We still have our struggles. But we've learned there is nothing we can't climb over. We've had some rough times in our marriage but the Lord has helped us overcome them."

The Hubers agreed that family crises have strengthened their marriage.

Actively involved in First Baptist Church of Apopka, Fla., Marilyn, 58, and Bill, 60, work in a senior adult Sunday school department. Bill Huber is a deacon at the church and Marilyn is a special consultant with senior adults and a Sunday school special worker for the Florida Baptist Convention.

The Hubers hope to retire in two years and volunteer their time as conference leaders at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center and other locations.

Participation in Fall Festivals keeps them on the right track in their marriage.

"They give us new ideas, insights, examples and resources," said Marilyn Huber. "We hope we can be an encouragement to other couples. Some are here as a last resort. We want to show the younger people (staying together) is possible."

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