



(BP)

-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8918
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

July 6, 1992

92-107

**Graham association confirms
evangelist has Parkinson's**

By Art Toalston

MINNEAPOLIS (BP)--Billy Graham is "in the early stages of Parkinson's disease," according to a statement released by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association July 2.

The statement was a response to an article that day on Graham's health in the Charlotte (N.C.) Observer, said the evangelist's media relations director, A. Larry Ross.

The BGEA statement said Graham, 73, learned about three years he is in the early stages of Parkinson's during a routine checkup at the Mayo Clinic.

"His early manifestations were a mild tremor that causes difficulty in handwriting and some difficulty in gait and in descending steps without a rail," the statement noted. "Both symptoms improved significantly with a modest amount of medication. Otherwise, he is in excellent health and will continue his normal activities, such as crusades and writing, for the foreseeable future.

"His doctors expect him to live a normal life, with a reduction of schedule -- which they were urging him to reduce long before he discovered he had the beginnings of Parkinson's," the statement added.

1991 was Graham's busiest in many years, including a preaching tour of North Korea and an evangelistic crusade in Philadelphia's Veterans Stadium, the release said.

Graham "is determined to give his crusades first priority in the next year with meetings planned in Portland in September, Moscow in October and Germany in Mary 1993 -- which will be extended by satellite throughout Europe," the statement said. "He is also focusing his attention on completing his memoirs."

--30--

**New Europe-Mideast chief hopes
to influence relationships**

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
7/6/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Sam James hopes he doesn't sound pompous by suggesting he has been "divinely called" to make a difference in troubled Southern Baptist relationships in Europe.

James, the Foreign Mission Board's new vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, brings experience as a skilled listener. He also brings a history of getting things done during a 30-year career in foreign missions.

Europe is not his only challenge. James must also be concerned about Southern Baptist advances into the Middle East and North Africa, including seedbeds of Muslim fundamentalism where little Christian witness exists.

But his position is pivotal in Europe, as every day reveals accelerating mission opportunities. To be effective he must accommodate the explosion of opportunities for the gospel in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union -- against a backdrop of frayed relationships with European Baptists.

--more--

"There's a lot of pain, a lot of hurt, among our missionary force, European Baptists and our constituency in America," said James, of Liberty, N.C. "And it's too important a region to lose the opportunity to fulfill the potential we have in that part of the world."

Since 1985 James has been the mission agency's area director for East Asia, overseeing the work of some 500 missionaries in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao. After an aggressive campaign in East Asia to start churches and lessen missionary involvement in institutions, James says he's never been happier. Some missionaries in the region have resisted the changes that altered ministries they felt called to do; some have resigned; others continue to work through their feelings. But James says he has watched God do miracles among many missionaries and Asian Baptists.

Many Foreign Mission Board trustees want to see changes in Europe, too. One thing attracting them to James is his success at helping missionaries focus on starting churches in Asia. "In the long run, he's brought about a major shift," said trustee Hoyt Savage, the Las Vegas pastor who chaired the search committee that recommended James for the vice presidency.

In recent years Europe has been a flash point of contention between opposing Southern Baptist views. Many Foreign Mission Board trustees characterize the area as an example of slow church growth and mushy doctrine. Others counter that European Baptists express a strong and vibrant faith -- culturally different, but no less effective than Southern Baptists'.

James plans to listen to what everyone there has to say before he does anything. "Whatever we do in Europe has to arise from within our missionary force in Europe and our (European) constituency," he cautioned.

Trustees acknowledge good things are happening in Europe, especially as communism has fallen. Statistics show it takes an average of 12 European Baptists to produce one baptism, while it takes 39 Southern Baptists to produce a baptism in the United States. The European Baptist Federation, a fellowship of more than 11,000 churches in 32 unions, claims more than 750,000 members. The federation's seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, has trained many Europeans for the gospel ministry.

German Baptists, numbering some 85,000 members, gave \$5 million last year for mission work in Eastern Europe. This represents a per-member rate about 10 times higher than Southern Baptists give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, said Winston Crawley, interim regional vice president before James was elected. During the same time Germans gave \$600,000 for work in former East Germany and asked Southern Baptists to send two missionary couples to start churches there.

But recently many European Baptists have questioned how involved they want to be with Southern Baptists. Last fall trustees voted 54-27 not to send a promised gift of \$365,000 from their 1992 budget to fund the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland. Trustees, who said board staff had not properly communicated their views to Europeans, claimed the seminary had strayed from Baptist orthodoxy. Seminary leaders denied that.

Bewildered Europeans reacted with hurt and anger. In a special December meeting in Richmond, two European Baptist leaders told trustee representatives they had broken a long partnership arrangement. They questioned what would become of European working relationships with Southern Baptists. Isam Ballenger, James' predecessor, and Europe area director Keith Parker retired early as tension deepened. They said trustees were enforcing "a global agenda" of theological orthodoxy on Baptists overseas.

Trustees respond that their only global agenda is evangelism that results in churches.

"I haven't been instructed in any way, and there are no conditions laid down to me for my election" as vice president, James said. But he adds: "Trustees will have to give me the privilege of being honest, open and genuine. I will have to develop relationships that transcend what individuals might say. That will make me believable and trustworthy."

One of James' earliest official appearances in Europe might come as he attends a proposed September meeting between missionaries, board trustees and European Baptists to discuss future work together.

"It may be that my training, my experience and my commitment to world missions all has come to a place where I'm able to be used in a crisis situation like this," James said. "The Lord is doing such miraculous things in East Asia that I hate to leave. Under normal circumstances, I wouldn't."

Savage said God so clearly affirmed James as the man for the job committee members almost felt they had to get out of the way and let it happen. "We really need someone who's a strong people person," Savage said. James, an experienced pastoral counselor, dealt "with some very difficult and touchy situations as he came on them in Asia and the Pacific."

In electing James June 24, trustees departed from a 30-year trend of choosing regional administrators who have worked in the same region. James' character qualities, the teamwork he and his wife, Rachel, have shown, and his varied duties in leadership positions kept him at the head of the list, Savage said. Although the committee wasn't looking for someone from outside Europe, Savage believes this could be a benefit since James carries none of the personal hurt others in the European theater feel.

James began in East Asia by personally visiting each missionary family, conducting several hundred hours of interviews. He asked missionaries how they felt about their part in the work there.

His only immediate plans in Europe are for similar interviews with missionaries and European Baptists. "My first challenge is to listen to missionaries, to hear what they're saying, to feel where they're hurting," he said. "My second responsibility is to hear what (European) leadership and grass-roots Baptists are feeling and saying."

Based on these findings, James plans to help missionaries and Europeans chart a course together ensuring "all of us together can see God's will done in Europe," he said. The direction they take might be very different from the direction missionaries took during his tenure in Asia, he said.

In Asia Baptists faced many obstacles they face in Europe, he said: materialism, pockets of slow response, problems with relationships to Baptist leaders. But trends in Asia are beginning to reverse, he added.

A few years ago in Japan, for example, only 19 churches were started by all denominations in one year, he said. Today Southern Baptist missionaries are involved in 34 church starts. Where it once took nine years to call a pastor to a new church, it now takes some churches four to five, he said.

A published scholar, James received master of divinity and master of theology degrees and a doctorate in pastoral counseling from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

James was appointed a missionary to Vietnam with his wife, the former Rachel Kerr of Durham, N.C., in 1962. He was a pastor and church starter and did extensive work in evangelism and theological education. After founding the Vietnam Baptist Theological Seminary in Saigon, he was its president for eight years. The Jameses evacuated Saigon in 1975 just before the communist takeover and then worked with refugees in Guam and in missions research.

From 1976-80 James was field representative for East Asia, based in Taiwan. He provided a personal link between the board and its 389 missionaries in the area.

James joined the Foreign Mission Board's home office staff in Richmond in 1980 to head the missionary learning department. He oversaw the orientation program for new missionaries and designed the concept for Southern Baptists' new Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va.

In developing the learning program, James called on his skills in personal development and relationship building among missionaries. Those skills will be tested as the next year unfolds.

James knows he faces a tough job, but he feels an urgency to do it. To the extent that trustees, European Baptists and missionaries demonstrate confidence in him, James believes he will be able to form honest relationships in Europe -- and make a difference.

--30--

NOTE TO EDITORS: A photo of James was mailed June 24 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Zimbabwe hunger relief
fills mouths, classrooms

By Donald D. Martin

Baptist Press
7/6/92

BEITBRIDGE, Zimbabwe (BP)--In drought-stricken Zimbabwe, middle-school students once too weak to walk to school are back in the classroom because of a Southern Baptist feeding program.

Southern Baptist missionaries in Beitbridge, Zimbabwe, have helped transform 25 schools into feeding centers for hundreds of local families in the city's eastern district.

"April was hard on this country. Many of the area's schools closed because students had no food or energy," explained missionary Ron Langston, a church developer from Jonesboro, Ark.

"We're eliminating a lot of that now with the food program. We're making sure every school, child and family get food."

Donations by Southern Baptists to the Foreign Mission Board's hunger relief fund provide for the year-long project.

Langston, missionary Ed Moses from Orlando, Fla., and local Baptists recently completed their first month of distributing corn, beans and salt to about 20,000 people. They plan to feed 40,000 every month by this fall.

The project will channel nearly \$700,000 in relief funds toward the Venda people, a group primarily made up of herders. For the past seven years Langston and his wife, Janice, also from Jonesboro, have worked among the Venda, who number about 75,000 in the Beitbridge area.

Beitbridge, situated on Zimbabwe's border with South Africa, has never been a lush area. Zimbabwe traditionally is one of the continent's breadbaskets but rainfall around Beitbridge averages only 12 inches a year. In comparison, semiarid New Mexico averages 15 inches a year.

So when the current drought hit Beitbridge, the area turned to desert.

"There's nothing in the fields," Langston said. "There's not a sign of anything green. There's no grass at all -- nothing for (the Venda people's) cattle or goats." In many places the ground is hard as cement.

--more--

In desperation, people in the area have begun eating the gourd-like fruit of Baobab trees, which has a sour, pasty taste. And many have been forced to stand helpless as they watch their herds slowly die.

"Almost every day when we go out, we see cattle dead or dying on the side of the road. The people can't even eat the meat because the starving cattle's organs stop working properly and it makes the meat bad," the missionary said.

More than 100,000 head of cattle have died during the current drought, according to reports. The government is trying to relocate surviving herds to less affected areas. Meanwhile, cattle owners have rushed to slaughter their herds before they starve, slashing market prices for beef. Drought-stricken cows now sell for as little as \$4.

The lack of rain extends through much of southern Africa. It reportedly has wiped out between 50 and 90 percent of the staple corn crop in the region. Relief groups estimate starvation threatens some 130 million people in eastern and southern Africa. They call it the worst drought in 80 to 100 years. Some believe the region will need to import between 9 and 11 million tons of corn to offset the area's crop losses.

This has prompted some African government leaders to question the wisdom of depending so heavily on corn as a staple food. Several countries are considering planting drought-resistant sorghum or millet. Langston and Moses have incorporated the same ideas into the Beitbridge relief project.

"After this one year of food distribution, we want to follow up with an agricultural project using sorghum, which should be able to grow in this area," Langston said.

The missionaries plan to request a volunteer agriculturist to work in Zimbabwe for about two years through the board's International Service Corps to help with the next phase of the project.

Other missionaries in Africa also have requested long-term volunteer help in meeting hunger needs, including a nutritionist to help oversee the feeding of some 40,000 refugees in another country.

The Beitbridge program also has helped start two new churches in the first month of food distribution.

A man at one of the new churches said it best: "We have seen that Baptists really care for the Venda people."

"I believe we're going to see a lot of Christian growth and maturing because of this project," Langston said.

--30--

Former missionary continues
improvement as Baptists pray

By Ferrell Foster

Baptist Press
7/6/92

HENDERSON, Ky. (BP)--Cancer patient and former missionary Kathy Lloyd has received good news in recent weeks but doctors warned her not to celebrate, yet.

First, a bone marrow biopsy taken on her birthday, June 19, indicates the cancer in her bones has been "killed."

Second, a blood marker test that tracks cancer cells in the blood stream has dropped to 35, after a high of about 170. Below 31 is considered "no cancer," Lloyd said.

And third, other tests indicate her heart, lungs, bladder and kidneys have not been damaged by her cancer treatment.

--more--

The former missionary also was blessed with a shorter hospital stay than expected in June. She was dismissed after only 18 days. Doctors had told her to anticipate a four- to six-week stay.

She attributes the good news to answered prayer.

Lloyd and her husband, Skip, from Granite City, Ill., resigned as missionaries to South Korea at the end of last year because of the cancer that had spread rapidly through her bones. She was given six months to two years to live.

A process involving chemotherapy and "harvesting" and transplanting cells began in the spring. Lloyd was hoping to return to St. Louis University Medical Center the week of July 6 for a second transplant.

She pushed for the new round of treatment so it would coincide with Woman's Missionary Union week July 4-10 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center -- and with the prayer support she anticipates.

The earlier cell harvesting and the first transplant occurred during Illinois and national WMU meetings, and both times special prayers were offered on Lloyd's behalf.

News accounts of Lloyd's situation have appeared in various state Baptist newspapers and she has received letters from around the country affirming prayer support in her behalf.

"I think it is just so evident ... the prayer support has made a difference through it all," Lloyd said in a telephone interview. And she asked Baptists not to stop praying, yet.

"The transplant was probably the most horrible experience I've ever had," Lloyd stated. But it did "what it was supposed to do."

"We were real excited" after receiving the biopsy results, the Indiana native said. But the doctor said it's too early to celebrate. That should come after two or three years of good reports.

"To us it's very encouraging to show this result this quickly," Lloyd said. "It's given us some assurance that I do have some time at least. I can plan past Christmas."

The second transplant is required to kill any "stray" cancer cells. "The idea is to get in there and annihilate" any remaining cancer cells.

Lloyd expressed concern for women in the St. Louis hospital who received the same treatment. One has permanent nerve damage, another has lost her hearing.

"Those women do not have the same prayer support I have," Lloyd said. "And I don't see how you could get through something like that without a strong faith in God It's a ministry that our churches could definitely pick up."

Patients at the hospital already have benefited from the support given to Lloyd.

Baptists in the St. Louis area had been asked to donate blood for use in Lloyd's treatment. While in the hospital, Lloyd was told by hospital officials that more blood was donated for her than she needed and she granted permission for it to be used for other patients.

Conference of blind Baptists
canceled by low registration

NASHVILLE (BP)--A national meeting of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Blind Aug. 14-16 in Nashville has been canceled, according to the organization's president, Charles Couey of Nashville.

Low registration, Couey speculated, may have been caused by the nation's sluggish economy.

Couey said he hopes the conference will hold a meeting by next spring to increase involvement of an estimated 45,000 visually impaired Southern Baptists in SBC affairs.

--30--

EDITORS' NOTE: A Spanish-language version of the Baptist Press story July 2 titled "Language conference highlights priority for ethnic ministries" is available on SBCNet.
