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July 23, 1993

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'Don't stand down,' Baptists told
as flood relief efforts intensify By Steve Barber

Baptist Press
7/23/93

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The word to Southern Baptists who want to have a part in relief efforts in the wake of flooding in the American Midwest is "don't stand down," that is, don't leave.

"This kind of disaster response starts out slowly and builds as people are able to go back to their homes after the water goes down," said Douglas Beggs, vice president of program services for the Brotherhood Commission, which coordinates multi-state disaster relief for the denomination.

"This will get worse -- much worse -- before it gets better," Beggs, who pointed to another rain-soaked forecast for the weekend of July 24-25, added.

Five additional state convention disaster relief units moved into position the week of July 18 along the Mississippi River system while the Brotherhood director of the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship made an urgent plea for volunteers to help with clean-up efforts in Davenport and Des Moines.

The Arkansas Baptist Convention's Brotherhood is assisting the Iowans as they manage a disaster response for the first time. The Arkansas convention is in partnership with the Iowa fellowship.

A total of 100 individual volunteers are needed in both Davenport and Des Moines. Volunteers will be needed for at least the next three weeks. They must contact one of the two volunteer coordinators prior to coming to the area.

The Davenport staging area is at Central Park Baptist Church, 3400 West Central Park. Volunteers should contact Bobby Blackman, pastor of the church, at 319-386-1895. In Des Moines, the staging area has moved from Crestwood Baptist Church to Ashworth Road Baptist Church, 5300 Prairie Drive. Contact Steve Melvin at 515-278-1566.

Volunteers should be prepared to sleep on a church floor and bring sleeping bags and air mattresses. Cooking teams also are needed. Volunteers will be served meals cooked on feeding units operating at the two locations. Arriving during the week were the Ohio unit at Des Moines and the Indiana unit at Davenport.

Items needed for the clean-up work include disinfectant, bleach, detergent, mops and extra mopheads, brooms, heavy-duty squeegees, square-nosed shovels, rubber boots and heavy-duty rubber gloves. Also needed are chainsaws, sump pumps, heavy-duty hoses, high-pressure nozzles, hammers, saws, sheetrock, lumber and nails.

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Two water purification units purchased by the Brotherhood Commission and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board continued in service at the Corner Stone Baptist Church in Ankeny, Iowa, 10 miles north of downtown Des Moines. Each unit is capable of purifying 50,000 gallons of water every 24 hours.

Downriver, feeding units from the Tennessee, North Carolina and Kentucky state conventions also arrived during the week to reinforce the Missouri and Illinois units operating since the July 4 weekend.

The Tennessee unit is currently at First Baptist Church in Cape Girardeau, Mo., while North Carolina is at Hannibal-LaGrange College in Hannibal. The Kentucky unit is at First Baptist Church in Quincy, Ill.

The Illinois unit, based near Quincy at Pleasant Hill, Ill., since the emergency began, was scheduled to move to a new location July 23. The Missouri units are at Edmundson Road Baptist Church in St. Louis and in Winfield north of St. Louis at a local school. A smaller unit operating near Kansas City was withdrawn last week.

The Missouri units have served more than 60,000 meals since the emergency began, while the Illinois unit had reached a rate of 10,000 meals per day. Meal counts from other state units were not expected until July 26.

Those who wish to make donations for purchase of the purifying units and for initial relief may send contributions to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104, (901) 272-2461. Designate the gift for water purification.

Gifts for disaster relief also are being received by the Home Mission Board, 1350 Spring St. N.W., Atlanta, GA 30367-5601, or the missions divisions of state Baptist conventions in the affected areas.

Prospective volunteers for long-term relief and recovery efforts should call their state convention Brotherhood director or the Home Mission Board at 1-800-HMB-VOLS.

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Baptists anticipate 100% chance
of volunteer help in Midwest By Laurie A. Lattimore

Baptist Press
7/23/93

ST. LOUIS (BP)--The weather report is becoming redundant: hot, muggy and overcast with variable chance of thunderstorms. Flash flood watch in effect for the northwest, central and northeast sections of the state. Look for rain through the weekend.

Welcome to Missouri. Welcome to the Midwest. Welcome to the floods of '93 -- labeled by the American Red Cross as having one of the longest "crisis phases" for natural disasters in general -- and for floods more specifically.

Fortunately for flood victims, the extended forecast for disaster relief is rising, with a 100 percent chance of more volunteer help for food delivery and cleanup crews.

Without another drop of rain, relief efforts are expected to last at least until September. A continued wet outlook for Midwest weather could keep Baptist disaster relief and American Red Cross units open indefinitely. Look for sandbagging efforts to continue through the end of the month.

Nearly a month after the original flooding began along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, Missouri Baptists are continuing to help meet the overwhelming needs of people whose residences are under several feet of standing water. Reports estimate 320,000 acres have been flooded so far in Missouri.

Bob Nowlin, church and community ministries director for St. Louis Baptist Association, said volunteers at Edmundson Road Baptist Church are preparing all the food for Red Cross vans to deliver over a 50-mile radius in the St. Louis metro area. Fifty to 60 volunteers will be needed each day for relief response beginning in August.

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Jim Furgerson, disaster relief coordinator for the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, Tenn., said about 10 disaster relief teams, including the Missouri units, are responding to the ongoing floods.

"We are busy," he understated. Furgerson has been at the Red Cross national headquarters in St. Louis since July 22 and he expects a long stay. "I think we are here for the duration."

Furgerson said this disaster is different from Hurricane Andrew, which clobbered southern Florida almost one year ago.

"The floods have 25,000 families displaced, and they are displaced over 1,000 miles," he said. "Andrew displaced 100,000 families over 30 miles. This is a major, widespread disaster."

North Carolina Baptists are among the state conventions that have sent relief teams to the Midwest; their 15 volunteers took a large feeding unit to Hannibal-LaGrange College in Hannibal, Mo., July 21. The team is prepared to stay three weeks.

Ruthie Critten, public relations coordinator for HLG, said most of the business district and residential areas of the northern Missouri town are not damaged by floodwaters. But the rural areas and small surrounding towns are inundated.

Water levels rose to 32 feet in Hannibal -- two feet above the height predicted for a 500-year flood. The town's bridge link across the Mississippi River into Illinois has been out almost a month.

A Tennessee team was dispatched July 21 to First Baptist Church of Cape Girardeau. Pastor John Owen said the downtown area has been protected from the raging river by the flood wall, but surrounding areas have not fared as well with the Mississippi 12-15 feet over flood stage in some areas.

The Tennessee group of 30 men set up a feeding station alongside a Red Cross shelter in the church's activities building. Red Cross emergency response vehicles (ERVs) are delivering hot meals along a 100-mile stretch from Chester, Ill., to Cairo, Ill. Owen said the units are capable of sending out 30,000 to 40,000 meals per day.

"Cape Girardeau is the largest city between St. Louis and Memphis, so there is a lot of territory to cover here," Owen said. Church members are helping wash the canisters carrying the food and are relieving volunteers when needed.

A group of 10 from First Baptist Church of Dyersburg, Tenn., went to the site July 17 to help relieve the volunteers. South Carolina has sent a non-feeding unit to Olive Branch, Ill., across the river from Cape Girardeau to serve a supporting role for the Tennessee crew delivering meals in southern Illinois.

Indiana, Ohio and Arkansas all have sent disaster relief teams to Iowa, where the floods have been devastating. Two million acres have been drenched with more than \$1 billion estimated in property damage and \$750 million in crop damage. Water supply in Des Moines was cut off for almost two weeks because of contamination. Running water in homes and businesses there is now available but cannot be used for drinking.

Kentucky has 25 volunteers helping at First Southern Baptist Church in Quincy, Ill., just across the Mississippi River from Missouri. Illinois has been hit hard, with an estimated \$2 billion in property damage.

C.A. Easterling of the Kentucky team said they are anticipating preparing 15,000 meals a day for Red Cross ERVs to deliver in a three-county area. The group also brought chainsaws, pumps, waders and other cleanup supplies for what will be a massive "mud-out" once water begins receding.

"We hear the water is not going down," he said. "We'll put our boots on and go out there to serve meals if we have to."

The major feeding operation at Edmundson Road Baptist Church in St. Louis is sending out meals by the thousands every day. More than 50 Baptist volunteers and 30 volunteers from other denominations and from the community are donating countless hours to help the Red Cross aid flood victims.

Edmundson Road has 15 ERVs that deliver cold and hot meals to 7,000 people daily in the St. Louis area, including sandbaggers and victims in shelters or affected neighborhoods. The Missouri Baptist Convention feeding unit also is set up at the site to assist in meal preparation.

The Edmundson Road feeding operation has expanded from 4,000 meals per day to more than 7,000 in the last two weeks, so food supplies have been moved into the church gymnasium while cooking continues in the parking lots. Volunteers at the feeding unit have prepared more than 70,000 meals since relief work began three weeks ago.

A Baptist disaster relief center at Winfield public schools has a feeding line and supports two ERVs. Volunteers there are preparing and distributing about 500 meals each day.

Phelps County (Mo.) Baptist Association executive board voted last week to donate \$3,000 from its general fund to the MBC disaster relief monies. Director of missions Jim Chilton said the board also agreed to challenge its 16 churches to pool a matching amount for relief to flood victims. The association mailed out flyers and printed up posters for its "Flood Relief Fund Drive."

"We know we have been spared here. We've had an ample amount of rain but no flooding," Chilton said. Several churches had called to find out what they could do to help. "We need to help our neighbors to the east, west, north and just about all around us."

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Baptist college association
shifts leader selection policy

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
7/23/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools has adopted new bylaws, one stating its executive secretary no longer automatically will be the executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention's Education Commission.

And, during the association's annual meeting in late June, one of its committees selected the Education Commission's newly elected executive director-treasurer as the association's executive secretary, but on an "interim" basis.

Those two actions prompted at least two editors of state Baptist newspapers to inquire of Baptist Press whether the association was distancing itself from the SBC. The association encompasses 71 member institutions.

Such speculation is mistaken, Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention's Education Commission, told Baptist Press.

"This is not a distancing from anybody," Walker said. "It is an attempt to assure the continued cooperative efforts of Baptist colleges and schools."

Meanwhile, the association's president, Don Newbury, president of Howard Payne University in Texas, said the bylaw change does "not necessarily" reflect any larger change in the organization's relationship to the SBC.

The new bylaws state the association will elect its executive secretary; previously, the bylaws stipulated that the organization's executive secretary is the executive director-treasurer of the Education Commission.

Walker, who retires from his Education Commission post Aug. 31, explained rumors have circulated around the SBC for several years "that the Education Commission might not have a continued existence. Nothing definite has been done (by the SBC), but there have been various suggestions that a number of the smaller (SBC) agencies would no longer have the funding of the past."

Thus, the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools added its new executive secretary bylaw provision, Walker said, "to assure that the association could and would continue to function," regardless of the fate of the Education Commission.

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The association began its bylaws revision process two years ago, Newbury added.

As to the "interim" status the association gave to the Education Commission's newly elected executive director-treasurer, Stephen P. Carleton, Walker recounted some members of the association felt its administrative committee should handle the executive secretary's selection, while other members wanted to move ahead with the election during the June meeting. The association ended up referring the matter to the administrative committee, which later decided on the interim status, Walker said.

Walker held the associational post without any interim designation.

Both the Education Commission meeting, in which Carleton was elected, and the association's meeting were held in late June in Riverside, Calif.

Newbury stated the association's members were "very enthusiastic about Steve Carleton. Steve has a vast acceptability and respect throughout the membership, in my opinion." Carleton has been executive vice president and academic dean at California Baptist College since 1971.

Newbury, however, said he could not speak for the association as to whether it will retain Carleton's interim status as executive secretary.

The earliest any further action could be taken, Newbury said, would be at the association's 1994 meeting in Charleston, S.C., unless an unlikely special meeting is called.

Asked if the association might have any other direction in mind apart from selecting Carleton as executive secretary, Newbury said "I cannot imagine" it would.

Carleton could not be reached for comment July 21-23.

Meanwhile, Walker has mailed all Education Commission members a letter dismissing rumors that he might take a position with the association.

"Let me please say, I have no intention of any continued relationship with the Association," Walker wrote. "I will retire totally from all responsibilities with the Education Commission, the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools" and other commission-related institutions.

The Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools was organized in 1947, four years before the Education Commission received budget for a full-time staff.

The association had its own secretary-treasurer, H.I. Hester, a faculty member at William Jewell College in Missouri, until his death in 1983.

Walker recounted his first involvement in the association's administration, noting Hester "asked me as a personal favor if we would take over the writing of checks and keeping of the books when he was unable to do it because of infirmity."

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Baptist couple trades
Togo unrest for Somali war

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
7/23/93

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--When Togo became too dangerous for Americans, Les and Rhonda Brooks left. And went to violent Somalia.

Mogadishu, Somalia's capital, "is definitely not the place you'd want to homestead, settle down and raise your kids," Brooks admitted. "But it's a great place if you want to learn to enjoy eating camel -- which I did."

It also was a great place for them to spend three months helping feed 46,000 people daily and keep 22 medical clinics going.

The Brookses originally volunteered to spend two years in the small west African nation of Togo, operating a Southern Baptist conference center in the capital of Lome. But three weeks after their arrival last October political unrest turned to gunfire and looting.

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By late January all Southern Baptist missionaries had evacuated Lome and no one wanted to meet at the conference center. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board offered the Brookses two other jobs in West Africa or a trip back to Alabama. They are from Locus Fork and Fairhope, respectively; their home church is Moffett Road Baptist Church in Mobile.

They already had their tickets home when the phone rang again.

"I thought it was more job offers, but when Les wrote down 'Somalia' on the note pad I thought, 'He never stops, does he?'" Mrs. Brooks said, recalling her reaction as she watched her husband talk on the phone. "But when he wrote down 'primitive living conditions, communal cooking, stressful conditions,' I realized he wasn't kidding!"

An international relief agency in Somalia was asking to "borrow" the couple for a few months during a temporary personnel shortage. "We said, 'We'll call you back tomorrow,'" she said. "I didn't need to ask any more questions because I knew I wasn't going!"

So how did they wind up living in the Somali capital, falling asleep each night to the sound of gunfire and hearing almost-daily reports of bandits attacking trucks on road they drove regularly?

"We looked at it as a challenge instead of a war zone," Mrs. Brooks explained. "As Christians we took the ministry point of view instead of a purely humanitarian one. The thought that we could be pioneers in sharing the gospel appealed to us."

"There are just a handful of Christians in Somalia and they need help starting off," Brooks agreed. "We felt like we could do that."

Once in Somalia, Brooks tried to shake as many hands and greet as many of the elders as possible in villages where he was helping with feeding. Mrs. Brooks' cheerfulness also stood out in the desolate city of Mogadishu.

No one is happy in Mogadishu, so her joy was a great witness; someone full of the joy of Jesus gets noticed, the Brookses recounted.

Education in religious realities was another goal for the couple, since most Somalis think all Americans are Christians the same way most Americans think all Somalis are Muslims.

They got educated, all right: Brooks was in one village where people had lined up at 3 a.m. to get two kilograms of corn hours later. As he greeted them a young boy spat out, "Christian! Christian!" with such hatred Brooks was stunned. The rest of the day the name followed him "like a dirty word."

Even without the insults, the feeding centers weren't morale-boosting places to be.

"I can count on the fingers of one hand the number of times I was told 'Thank you,'" Mrs. Brooks said. "At one village, they had drums at the entrance and people ran alongside the truck singing and cheering -- that's what you'd expect. But that was the only time. Mostly they demand more."

But the response of individual Somalis was different.

"Everyone I talked to about spiritual things was eager to continue the discussion," Mrs. Brooks said. "It was always one-on-one, never in a crowd. But they were open. I wasn't always the one to initiate the conversation."

Other inquirers were even more subtle -- an understandable trait in a country where newspapers publish death threats from Muslim militants against anyone who converts to Christianity.

An electrician came to the house where the Brookses and several nurses lived when the group was having its Bible study. For the next several weeks he returned at the same time, eavesdropping. Finally he announced he would come "fix something" every time they had Bible study.

Brooks, who had rarely been sick before, was ill so often in Mogadishu he "considered moving a desk and lamp into the bathroom." He got so paranoid about being stricken by dirty food that he kept a napkin over his plate between bites. But the final indignity came when a rat jumped into bed with him.

"That's it," he declared. "We're going back home to Alabama."

And they did, trading the stress of Somalia for "a different kind of tension -- no job, no place to live." She wants a master's degree in accounting and he hopes to get back into student counseling work. But he admits counseling American students will be different now.

"I'm afraid the first boyfriend-girlfriend crisis I hear about I'll want to say, 'Grow up and let me tell you how it was in Somalia.' I'll sound like all those parents who claimed to have walked 10 miles in the snow to school."

But Somalia will always be a part of them.

"I can't say we changed a lot of lives or started a lot of churches," he said. "We don't even know for sure that we planted any seeds. But we helped the feeding program go from serving 12 villages to feeding 26 in those three months, and we saw real transition from relief to rehabilitation."

Mrs. Brooks' view of Christianity also changed. "God has broadened my vision of him and my religion," she said. "We are so limited in America. But in a situation like Somalia ... you can see how God wants his children to walk and talk and how he wants his church to be."

And in December, a living memory of the Somali days is due -- their first child.

Relatives in America wrote to Somalia to suggest the baby be named "Boutros Boutros Brooks" after Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the secretary general of the United Nations who initiated the U.N. intervention in Somalia.

"Or, we could name the baby Mohammed -- in honor of half the people we met in Somalia," said Mrs. Brooks.

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available on SBCNet Newsroom.

Patients call Maria Daoud
the 'Angel of Beirut'

By Mike Creswell

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7/23/93

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)--Sixteen years of civil war have ended in Lebanon, but angels are still a scarce commodity.

That's why hundreds of people across Beirut consider themselves lucky -- or blessed -- to know Baptist worker Maria Daoud. Some call her an angel.

A trained physical therapist, she spends her days zigzagging across the battle-scarred city to help the physically handicapped. Some patients have war wounds; others have birth defects, nerve disorders, injuries or strokes.

The combination of exercise, manipulation and coaching she administers through physical therapy can mean the difference between walking and being paralyzed, between self-sufficiency and being bedridden.

Beirut is a city ripped to its core by Christian-Muslim hatreds and dozens of factions that once fought to the death. Daoud moves with caution, but drives her battered, shrapnel-pocked 1975 Volkswagen across the congested city without regard to borders. She lives in Ain Saade, a mountain town overlooking Beirut.

"I go anywhere I'm needed," she said matter-of-factly.

Going where she's needed often means trekking to the top of apartment buildings where elevators don't work (electricity is sporadic in Beirut). Lengthy stair climbs are a part of the travel time -- and fatigue factor.

"I see about seven or eight people a day, which is a lot because I have to go from one place to another," said the 35-year-old therapist, a longtime member of Mansourieh Baptist Church. "Beirut is very crowded and it's time-consuming to move through the city."

Lebanese can get such therapy for free at government hospitals or health clinics. But many of Daoud's patients are too handicapped to be moved; others are so poor they can't afford transportation. Lebanon's postwar economy is in shambles, caught up in runaway inflation that has eaten away at the currency. The deep economic crisis has hit the handicapped especially hard.

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So when Daoud is referred to them by hospitals and helping agencies, they welcome her gladly.

A graduate of a physical therapy school that's now part of Lebanese University, she also studied in France, specializing in the treatment of scoliosis, or curvature of the spine. She teaches physical therapy weekly at the university. But most of her working days are spent in ministry.

Her ministry is funded by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board through its representatives assigned to Lebanon. Southern Baptist workers can't live in the country for the moment. The war and rash of kidnappings of Americans in the '80s led the U.S. government to declare Lebanon off-limits to anyone holding American passports. In February President Bill Clinton extended the ban for yet another year.

So when a survey of ministry needs in Beirut showed that many handicapped city residents badly needed physical therapy, the workers turned to Daoud.

"We missionaries contribute to her ministry personally because it's something we really believe in," said Frances Fuller, who directs Baptist Publications in Lebanon from her office in Cyprus.

Daoud's total ministry costs just \$10,000 a year. Half that amount covers her modest salary and not-so-modest travel expenses. The rest buys food, supplies and medicine for her patients. Many are children.

"Some people are so poor they can't eat if I don't give them food or money for food," she said. "So I have to see them on a long-term basis, especially when there are neurological problems."

When Daoud visited one elderly woman for the first time, she found her living alone in a shack with cardboard walls. She had eaten only bread and tea for three days. Bedridden for months with a broken hip, her muscles were wasting away from lack of exercise. With Daoud's help, she now can walk. But Daoud still visits to feed her and bring medicine.

"This woman could be helped for \$60 a month. It's a little money, but sometimes it's not available," Daoud says.

One of her regular stops is a home for senior citizens. The care provided there leaves much to be desired. "The old people are treated quite badly," she reports.

"They tell her she's an angel for them, the light of their lives," missionary Fuller says of the aged patients. "They realize she's somebody who can pray for them, that she has some truth to share." The missionary seeks prayer partners to pray for specific patients of Daoud's; they are amazed to hear someone in America or elsewhere is praying for their recovery. Those interested can contact Fuller at P.O. Box 835, Larnaca, Cyprus.

Along with her therapy and medical advice, Daoud hands out Bibles and pamphlets with a Christian message. "I do tell people about the Lord and sometimes they do respond," Daoud says.

She once walked into a nursing home room and a woman began crying, "I found him! I found him!"

"Who did you find?" Daoud asked, wondering if the woman was delirious.

"Jesus! I found Jesus!" the woman exclaimed happily.

Daoud had been leaving a cassette tape player with Christian messages for the bedridden woman to hear. Such stories highlight the nature of her ministry: The lame walk again and the lost come to walk in faith.

One problem Daoud has is ending her visits, even when patients no longer need physical therapy. They enjoy her visits, her warmth and the presence of Christ they sense in her life. Lately she has been lining up Baptists from area churches to take over visits to former patients.

"We could easily use three more Marias," Fuller said.

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(BP) photo (vertical) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines available on SBCNet Newsroom.

Precautions needed to avoid
child abuse within church

By Terri Lackey

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Church leaders wanting to avoid child abuse within church walls must take sensible and legal precautions, a specialist in preschool/children's ministry said during Discipleship and Family Development Conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

"Child abuse has come to the church," said Bill Young, retired manager of the preschool/children's area of discipleship at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. "I don't want to make you paranoid, but sensitive to what is happening in the world today."

Young taught several seminars for preschool/children's ministry leaders at the SSB-sponsored conference July 17-23.

"Only 10 percent of abuse toward children is committed by someone they don't know," Young said. "Parents are the perpetrators 25 percent of the time, then relatives, then acquaintances."

Those acquaintances could be discipleship or Sunday school teachers, he acknowledged.

The American Bar Association has written guidelines for liabilities of volunteers, sexual misconduct of churches and negligent hiring, Young said. Negligent hiring of staff or volunteers is usually what gets a church in trouble, he added.

Young said churches are susceptible to leaders committing child abuse and to lawsuits that follow because they tend to trust everybody who walks through the doors.

"Not enough churches have screening procedures for their volunteer workers, and consequently there is ample opportunity for a pedophile to get in. If a pedophile wanted access to children, where would be a good place to get that access? At the church," Young said.

Young suggested several ways churches could avoid child abuse from occurring inside their walls:

-- Have a six-month rule. "Don't allow someone to be a teacher until he or she has been at the church at least six months."

-- Provide screening forms for hired staff and volunteers. Ask pertinent questions related to the subject.

-- Draft a child abuse policy for the church. Know what actions to take if child abuse is suspected. Educate parents in the area of child abuse.

-- Know the reporting requirements of your state.

"You need to look around and make sure you are covered on these particular points," he said.

A typical church response to accusations of child sexual abuse against a leader is denial, minimization and blame. Young said if child sexual abuse is reported, the church must "promptly" remove the accused from his or her position and report the alleged act to church authorities and then to public law enforcement authorities.

The average age of a child abuse victim is now 6, Young said, as opposed to an average of 8 years in 1983.

Research demonstrates, Young said, that children over the age of 6 are just as reliable and accurate when reporting the events as are adults. Children under 6 are able to report the events but are more susceptible to pressure from the interviewer.

Young said research also indicates children give more accurate and detailed information when the interviewer is friendly toward them rather than formal and distant.

**Retired Home Life editor
dies after lengthy illness**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Reuben Herring, retired senior editor of Home Life magazine and longtime employee of the Baptist Sunday School Board, died July 21 after a lengthy illness.

Herring's 34-year career with the Sunday School Board began in 1953 when he joined the agency's staff as associate editor of Home Life, the board's Christian family magazine. He later served as supervisor of children's materials in the former training union department, editor of family life materials, editor of The Deacon magazine, and coordinating editor of the former church training department. He became editor of Home Life in 1980 and retired seven years later.

He was the author of 16 books and numerous articles for denominational publications.

A native of Tifton, Ga., Herring resided in Brentwood, Tenn., at the time of his death. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy, three sons and a daughter.

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**World Changers build
Montana church in 5 days** By Carol Spurlin & Tim Yarbrough

Baptist Press
7/23/93

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The sound of hammers and saws could be heard across the high plains of eastern Montana this summer as Southern Baptist youth raised a church in Brockton during a World Changers project on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation.

When the work crews arrived at the church site all they found was a concrete slab. On Friday, July 2, after five days of work, crews smiled with satisfaction. A church now stood before them. It had walls, windows, doors and a roof overhead.

World Changers, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, is a coeducational missions project for youth. It combines missions education with construction work.

David Boyd, pastor of Brockton Baptist Church, said he and the congregation are excited because the new building "gives us the opportunity to have Sunday school inside where the kids won't freeze." He added classes in the church's old unheated building were upstairs; the building did not have plumbing; and the electrical wiring was in extremely poor condition.

Boyd said the new facility will enable the church to better reach its community. Alcoholics Anonymous meetings now will be held at the church.

"It has been a big testimony to the community," he said, referring to the construction of the facility in one week. "The kids did a great job. They worked very hard to get the church finished."

More than 400 youth and leaders from 15 states participated in the Montana project. In addition to the church in Brockton, youth worked on two other churches in the area and on 113 homes. Jobs included roofing, painting and renovations.

Participants of other World Changers across the country pooled their resources in a special offering that was taken at each World Changers project to help fund the Brockton church and a church that was built in Juan Diaz, Puerto Rico.

World Changers will involve more than 4,000 youth and leaders from 23 states in 13 projects this summer.

"I've learned that through God's strength you can do anything -- roof a house, paint or whatever needs to be done," said Heather Hamilton, 16, of First Baptist Church in Fayetteville, N.C.

In addition to the Brockton project, locations of World Changers national projects are Houston; Kansas City, Mo.; Millington and Briceville, Tenn.; Campbell County, Tenn.; Savannah, Ga.; Eastern Shore, Va.; Canton, N.C.; Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Clarksdale, Miss.; and Shreveport, La.

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(BP) photos available upon request from the Brotherhood Commission.

Venezuelan medical crusade
heals bodies and souls

By Jim Burton

BARQUISIMETO, Venezuela (BP)--More than 1,500 Venezuelans professed faith in Christ as a Southern Baptist volunteer medical missions team and Venezuelan Baptists joined forces July 12-17 for medical clinics in northwest Venezuela.

"Friday the 16th, 104 people accepted Jesus into their hearts," said project coordinator Dewey Dunn, a gastroenterologist from Nashville, about the spiritual response at a clinic where he worked in San Felipe.

"I've never been in any place where more than 100 people accepted Jesus in one day," said Dunn, a veteran of volunteer medical mission trips, including several to Venezuela.

An estimated 5,000 Venezuelans received free medical and dental exams as well as pharmaceuticals in the clinics.

Representing 11 states, the 60 Americans worked in the Foreign Mission Board project to complement the church planting objectives of Venezuelan Baptists.

"They have given us a tremendous boost in the association's objectives to have 50 churches by 1995 in the Venezuelan states of Lara and Yaracuy," said Sam Paris, Southern Baptist missionary from Houston now living in Barquisimeto.

The clinics were scheduled in areas that strengthened the work of existing churches or opened doors to starting missions. Venezuelan Baptists provided one-on-one spiritual counseling services, which resulted in the decisions. Each person registering a decision was to be followed up within days, Paris said.

"The combination of medical missions and church planting has been successful in Venezuela for several years," said Henry Love, executive director of the Baptist Medical/Dental Fellowship, based at the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, Tenn.

"It's a strategy that could be repeated in countries around the world," Love continued.

The clinics centered in Barquisimeto, San Felipe, Carora and among a remote Indian tribe southwest of Maracaibo, Venezuela's second-largest city. While most clinics were based in urban areas, one team traveled to remote Indian villages in the Sierra Perija mountain range to do vaccinations and medical exams among Yukpa (pronounced with a long "U" sound) Indians. Southern Baptist missionary physician Paul Seale of Houston, now based in Maracaibo, led that team.

"The age of volunteerism is here and it is not going to go away in the foreseeable future," Seale said. "The Lord has given us a tremendously valuable resource (in medical volunteers) and our challenge is to use that resource as best we can."

Travel to the Yukpa tribes proved treacherous at times. To reach one village, volunteers crossed a makeshift bridge of long metal strips. At another village, the last leg of the journey included a mule ride across a river.

There have been more than 15 medical crusades in Venezuela over the past six years, dating back to the Tennessee-Venezuela partnership that ended in 1988, Dunn said.

Working concurrently with the medical project was a volunteer construction team led by Jesse James of Hampton, Tenn., and Frank Hawkins, Southern Baptist missionary from Whitesboro, Texas, now serving in Maracai, Venezuela. The construction team did electrical work in churches around Barquisimeto.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Brotherhood Commission, with specials to Tennessee, Texas, New England, Kentucky, Minnesota-Wisconsin and South Carolina.

**Ministry gives housing, counsel
to ex-offenders and families**

By Toby Druin

DALLAS (BP)--Mike Rouse knows the construction business. He was in it during his young adult years in Abilene, Texas.

He knows about the "reconstruction" business, too. He's been in it for five years in Dallas. The difference is that in the construction business he helped put together buildings for families; in the reconstruction business he's helping put the families back together.

Rouse is director of Exodus, a ministry to ex-offenders and their families. The ministry offers six months free housing to people who come out of prison and their families. They get help in obtaining a job and advice on how to be a family. Since August 1988, when it took in its first family, more than 115 families have come through the program. Only five of the former prison inmates have returned to prison, remarkable considering the high recidivism rate among ex-offenders.

The success of the program comes from many reasons. First, because many of the people who come there out of prison find Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and make him the center of their lives, which is the principal goal of the ministry.

"Second, we teach them to be self-sufficient," said Rouse. And for many it is the first time in their lives they have learned to do it.

The ministry was the idea of Don Dennis, who as a former prison inmate, knew the struggle ex-offenders have putting their lives and their families back together. He had been befriended by a Richardson man in getting out of prison and was anxious to see others have such an opportunity. Dennis, who has become known for leading MasterLife in prisons, was pastor of Beautiful Gate Baptist Church in Dallas in 1987 when he approached Joe Mosley of Dallas Baptist Association about such a ministry.

Mosley, the association's director of missions Gary Hearon and Wayne Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church in Carrollton, asked the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board for help with it and got the necessary funding -- \$43,000 the first year -- from the HMB, Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Dallas association. The HMB dropped its support after three years and the BGCT support is down to \$375 monthly. Most of the budget of \$189,000 comes from individuals and churches.

Rouse entered the picture in January 1988 through contact with Mosley at Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas. Rouse grew up in Abilene, was in the construction business there and active in Pioneer Drive Baptist Church where he was ordained a deacon in 1978.

But along the road to success he was arrested in 1984 and charged with possession of cocaine and served 14 months in the federal penitentiary at El Reno, Okla.

He resumed life and his business in Abilene after his release but at a singles conference at Park Cities church he met Debbie. Both had been divorced and they were married in July 1987. They moved to Dallas to get a fresh start.

During a Bible study, Rouse heard Mosley share Don Dennis' story and desire for a ministry to ex-offenders and said he had time to give to it. He helped draft a policies and procedures manual and then was asked to become the program director.

The ministry was first housed in facilities operated by the Dallas Interfaith Housing Coalition and began with one family in August 1988. Rouse served on the coalition staff in payment for the unit provided for the family in the coalition's 12-unit complex.

For a year and a half that was the extent of the ministry -- one at a time. In early 1990 they bought a four-unit complex and expanded to three families at a time. Rouse used one unit for an office.

A year later the second property was sold to Munger Place Methodist Church, which needed it for expansion of its facilities. The sale price was \$58,000 and with \$60,000 from Park Cities church the current location became home for the ministry. Rouse considers it no small miracle that the out-of-state owners asked \$118,000 for the property -- almost to the penny what they had available.

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The 20-unit complex has since been home to more than 100 families. Former inmates are referred to the ministry by chaplains, parole officers or ministers, said Rouse.

"They have to show initiative that they want to get their lives straightened out," he said.

One family Exodus took in had been turned down by 17 other agencies, Rouse said. The husband and wife were both in jail because of writing hot checks. But 18 months after coming to Exodus they had paid off all their debts, bought a car and were paying on their own home. Both had good jobs.

Exodus provides a one- or two-bedroom apartment, depending on the size of the family, for six months with free utilities. The apartment is furnished with used but highly usable furniture given to the ministry. The families take it with them when they leave.

Volunteers prepare an apartment for a family before they move in, even to the extent of having dishes on the table and a meal prepared for their first night at Exodus. Sadly, some have been so unaccustomed to such things that the dishes have remained in place on the table for the entire six-month stay. One woman, 37 years old and the mother of two children, said she had never prepared a meal before coming to Exodus.

The first few days a family is at the ministry are taken up in getting them situated -- school-age children to the proper schools and younger ones to day care. After-school care is provided at the YMCA. The couple is signed up for food stamps and clothes are gathered out of the ministry's closet. They are required to wear coats and ties or dresses and high heels to job interviews.

Rouse, his wife, Debbie, who is the associate director, and Kay Coldiron, the administrative assistant, shepherd the families through the process. Resumes are prepared and counsel given about job qualifications.

"We show them how, but it's their responsibility to get a job," Rouse said. "We expect them to work eight hours a day, five days a week at getting a job until they get one."

Once they get a job they are required to spend two hours weekly in budget planning classes with volunteers who help them learn how to manage their money. They draw up a budget of their projected weekly expenses, including rent and utilities, although those items are provided free by Exodus. The money, however, is deposited in a savings account as if they were paying it. It disciplines them to pay it, said Rouse, and provides them a fund to pay initial rent and deposits when they leave Exodus after the six-month period is over. Other classes are provided in homemaking, parenting, nutrition, hygiene, first aid, all taught by volunteers. The ministry has a constant need for more volunteers. Rouse said they can use volunteers regardless of their skills. "We will find a place where they can serve," he said.

With as many as 35 children at the ministry at one time, they always have a need for child-care volunteers, he said.

One woman asked what she could do to help and Rouse asked her to bake a birthday cake. Now, every other Monday she brings a cake and current birthdays are celebrated. Many of the children never had a birthday cake before moving to Exodus.

The homemaking and budget classes are compulsory. Literacy classes also are offered as well as tutoring for those who want to work on getting their GEDs.

"We also try to find a church for each family," Rouse said. Church attendance is not compulsory but encouraged.

When a family leaves, they are feted to a "going out" party. It is an emotional affair because many are leaving the only "family" they have ever known.

Almost all come back for visits, however, and several have made contributions to the ministry, anxious to be a part of the ministry that helped them along the way.

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(BP) photo available upon request from The Baptist Standard, Texas Baptists' newsjournal.

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