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August 6, 1993

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TENNESSEE -- Baptists join alliance to meet "massive" flood cleanup need.
MISSOURI -- South Carolinians respond to Missouri flood relief call; photo.
NASHVILLE -- BSSB staff reductions likely after study of overhead.
PHILIPPINES -- Besieged FMB trustee Duncan tells missionaries of hope.

**Baptists join alliance to meet
"massive" flood cleanup need**

**Baptist Press
8/6/93**

By Tim Yarbrough & Sarah Zimmerman

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptists are linking arms with the St. Louis religious community to help meet the need for a "massive" number of volunteers to do cleanup following the devastating Midwest flood.

Working under a plan devised by World Vision, an international relief and development organization, an extensive cleanup effort is being established to organize St. Louis churches into Community Coordinating Centers (CCCs). The CCC plan for St. Louis is being adapted following a successful effort in Des Moines, Iowa, said Lyric Murphy of World Vision.

It will be the first time St. Louis churches across various denominations have worked so closely together. "It was a successful model in Des Moines. It is being adapted for St. Louis because there are some distinct differences ... basically, the size and the migration of the flood," Murphy said. "The waters will recede very differently and along a different line than in Des Moines.

"Volunteers will need to be organized quickly now that a plan is in place to start cleanup, Murphy said.

"A massive outpouring of Southern Baptist volunteers will be needed as early as August 15 and as late as Labor Day," said Jim Furgerson of the Brotherhood Commission, on-site disaster coordinator for Midwest flood relief.

"Unfortunately, no one can predict when the river will go down," he said.

The Interfaith Flood Relief Team will coordinate the establishment of the CCCs throughout St. Louis. In addition to Southern Baptist representation, the team is comprised of various St. Louis denominations, World Vision, the St. Louis American Red Cross and the St. Louis Salvation Army.

Each CCC will be responsible for overall coordination of cleanup activity in its area. Special CCC teams will be organized to operate water pumps and power washers, to do plumbing, carpentry and electrical work, offer child-care assistance and do other general cleanup.

Furgerson said the linkage with the Interfaith Flood Relief Team will give Southern Baptists a clear and defined channel to respond during the weeks and months of cleanup that will follow the flood.

"It is estimated that 23,000 houses will have to be muddied out," Furgerson said. "With five-member teams cleaning one house a day, that would take 115,000 volunteer days. That means that more than 20,000 volunteers a week will be needed for the effort in St. Louis alone.

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"For safety and health reasons, cleanup work in the houses must be performed within five days after flood waters recede," Furgerson said. "I believe this will do more for the community of faith in the St. Louis area than anything ever before attempted," he said.

Under the CCC plan, Southern Baptists will provide a regional assessment support person and liaison in the headquarters of the Interfaith Flood Relief Team at Bonhomme Presbyterian Church in Chesterfield, Mo.

In addition, Southern Baptist liaison officers will be enlisted to serve at local CCCs.

Jim Albers of Jefferson City, Missouri Brotherhood director, will serve as the Southern Baptist regional assessment support person and liaison. Furgerson said, ideally, CCCs are congregations located in affected areas.

Furgerson is encouraging Southern Baptist churches in St. Louis to become CCCs. "That way, they will be there to do ministry following cleanup," he said. "That's why it's so important that local Baptist churches become CCCs."

Enlistment of CCCs starts Aug. 6 and will continue the following week, Furgerson said. Forty-six CCCs are needed in greater metropolitan St. Louis.

Southern Baptists churches or individuals wishing to volunteer to be a part of the CCC effort should call the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief desk at the American Red Cross headquarters in St. Louis at (314) 993-2764.

A special kick-off rally for denominations organizing the cleanup effort will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 15, in the St. Louis Arena, according to Benny King, pastor of First Baptist Church in Fenton, Mo., and executive director-elect of the St. Louis Metro Baptist Association. The rally is designed to tie the ecumenical volunteer effort together and underscore that churches care and are doing something.

The rally will include a 3,000-voice interfaith choir and messages from Robert Shuler, pastor of California's Crystal Cathedral, Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Rabbi Harold Kushner, author of "When Bad Things Happen To Good People."

Organizers hope to fill the arena, which seats 15,000. An offering will be taken to help pay for cleanup supplies.

Wayne Crull, pastor of First Baptist Church in Crestwood, Mo., said cost of the service is being underwritten by corporations. He said none of the speakers are accepting an honorarium. The main cost is renting the arena for the event.

In the flooded Midwest, Southern Baptist disaster relief units have served more than 500,000 meals since July 22. Units are continuing to work at the following locations: North Carolina, Hardin Middle School, Hardin, Ill.; Illinois, Calvary Baptist, Alton, Ill.; Kentucky, First Baptist, Quincy, Ill.; Indiana, Hillcrest Baptist, Davenport, Iowa; Missouri, Pisgah Baptist, Excelsior Springs and Edmundson Road Baptist, St. Louis; Oklahoma, Hannibal-LaGrange College, Hannibal, Mo.; South Carolina, Old Sears Catalog Store, Ste. Genevieve, Mo.

Contributions for disaster relief may be sent to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104, (901) 272-2461.

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South Carolinians respond
to Missouri flood relief call

By Russ Dilday

Baptist Press
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STE. GENEVIEVE, Mo. (BP)--It's August 5, "Crest Day" for flood-threatened Ste. Genevieve, Mo. Area residents scramble to fill and place sandbags along the threatened levee. Working among them are more than 80 South Carolina Brotherhood volunteers who have filled sandbags and prepared more than 1,000 meals a day since arriving July 27.

Officials predict the raging Mississippi River will reach its crest sometime during the night in this town of nearly 4,000, endangering many historic buildings. Ste. Genevieve residents claim it is the oldest settled town west of the Mississippi, many of the homes and businesses downtown listing pre-1750 construction dates.

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Leading the South Carolina disaster relief team is on-site coordinator Choice Watson, director of missions for the North Spartan Baptist Association. "This is a different kind of disaster than what we were prepared for because we are experiencing the disaster as it is happening," he noted.

Watson said Brotherhood relief teams are trained to respond to disasters such as hurricanes and tornadoes after they occur. "Because it's still a threat, we have had to remain flexible at all times," he said.

He described the need for flexibility. "Yesterday our folks cooked from 8 to 5 and were tired and were ready to quit for the day. That's when the call came from City Hall that they needed sandbaggers. We sandbagged 'til 11:30 last night in the 'desert,' but we don't mind. That's why we're here. To help." The desert is the local residents' name for a sand-covered downtown parking lot being used as a sandbag filling area.

The South Carolina team prepares food for distribution in a local business parking lot, using a long army-style tent as a kitchen. The end of the tent is almost in the street "for easier loading," said Watson. Two trailers, one refrigerated, are parked next to the tent and serve as food storage.

Behind the tent and trailers, the team operates a state-of-the-art, solar-powered water purifier on loan from the Tennessee Brotherhood relief team. It is capable of producing 10 gallons of pure water a minute. The town's water system has been contaminated for weeks by the Mississippi, which contains raw sewage from areas upstream.

Most of the team's food is distributed directly to rural flood victims through American Red Cross Emergency Response Vehicles along the river. Some of it also feeds townspeople in the American Legion hall across the street from the relief site. Feeding center leaders began asking Baptists for help when the operation ran short of meals.

Thomas Smith, pastor of Inman Mills Baptist Church in Inman, said the aid is making inroads into the community. "These are strong-willed, self-sufficient people," he said. "It's a miracle that they're even accepting the food, much less asking for it." He noted there is distrust toward Protestants among the predominantly Catholic residents.

Jeff Bryson, a member of Inman Mills church, stirs a three-gallon pot of spaghetti sauce for the evening meal. Despite the turbine fans circulating air in the confined tent, six propane stoves make work hot. Bryson said he and his wife answered a call for help from Smith. "We had attended a disaster training and Thomas asked us if we would be able to go. I said yeah, I'd like that. These people need our help physically as well as spiritually.

"When you've got that need, you've got to go to it," he said. "If we were in this predicament, we'd want someone to help us."

South Carolina women also are represented on the team. Sally Savarie, a member of Round Hill Baptist Church in Lexington, said women are helping "because it's a way of doing the Lord's work. Anything we can do to be of help, we'll do it. It's required of us by the Lord."

Brotherhood Commission national disaster relief coordinator Jim Furgerson, inspecting the feeding operations, had high praise for the South Carolinians.

"Since their beginning," he said, "they have become a paramount feeding unit. They've done a great job of recruiting and training, building two fine feeding units through their Brotherhood."

Furgerson described the South Carolina team: "They have brought to Southern Baptist disaster relief the strength of organization and an enthusiasm that is contagious."

Rayford Martin, a member of Honea Path Baptist Church near Spartanburg, S.C., lifts and drains a pot of spaghetti noodles in the tent. He came "because of the physical need" of embattled residents. "The people on the levees have been trying so hard," he said. "Without help like ours, I think they would have quit a long time ago."

He said he has seen the impact of the relief team on the community. "The people are overwhelmingly appreciative," he said. "They ask you where you're from, even though they're so busy. At least four or five times a day people have told me, 'Thank you for coming out to help.'

"People have stopped by and gotten food or voiced a need and our people have gone out to help," Martin said. "It's been real rewarding because when they've asked, they've gotten more than what they've asked for."

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(BP) photo available from the Missouri Baptist Convention public relations office.

**BSSB staff reductions likely
after study of overhead**

By Linda Lawson

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NASHVILLE (BP)--A study of corporate overhead costs at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board will likely result in a staff reduction of approximately 50 employees, according to President James T. Draper Jr.

In information shared Aug. 6 in the daily employee newsletter, Draper said he will make decisions by Aug. 13 in time to share information with trustees who hold their semiannual meeting Aug. 16-18 at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

"I received the report (overhead study) about 10 days ago. I am in the process of asking clarification questions and, in some instances, for more specific information," Draper told employees. "I hope to have the information today. Early next week, I will begin meeting with leadership of affected areas."

He said the study grew out of the need to keep the board in a competitive position and maintain financial stability.

"We seem to have higher overhead costs than other similar companies. Therefore, it is important that we look for examples of duplication of effort and services that don't represent value to the board. This is part of what must be a constant process of review and fine-tuning of our structure, organization and staff," he continued.

He said corporate overhead costs are centered in the non-revenue-producing areas of corporate services and finance and administration. Components include information systems, corporate market research, strategic planning, communications, production services, business and finance, facility management and human resources.

Affected components presently include 346 full-time employees. The board currently employs 1,760 persons on a full-time basis.

Draper said similar efficiency studies are being instituted in the revenue-producing areas -- church growth and programs and trade and retail markets. Results of those studies won't be finalized for several months, he said.

Draper told employees they will receive by Aug. 13 information "about the number of positions and affected components. We anticipate that decisions about specific positions and employees will be made and communicated by the end of the month. Affected employees will be talked with privately before information is given to everyone else."

He emphasized efforts will be made "to place as many as possible somewhere in the organization." Career transition and outplacement assistance, along with severance pay, will be provided to any who cannot be placed within the board.

"Letting people go will be our last option," he said.

He said overhead, work processes and fine-tuning of the board's organization and staffing were identified through the board's strategic planning process as priority issues needing attention.

In a related development, E.V. King, vice president for finance and administration announced his resignation Aug. 3. He cited the board's corporate overhead study and the changing role of the chief financial officer. King will remain in a salaried consultant role through December 1994.

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A major study of the structure and organization of the board was conducted and implemented in 1992. An early retirement option was accepted by 159 employees in the fall of 1992.

Draper said evaluation and fine-tuning of structure and staff will be a continuing process.

"A company that does not continually study how it does business will be out of business," Draper said. "We are living in a world of constant change. Nothing is more harmful than maintaining inefficiency."

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Besieged FMB trustee Duncan
tells missionaries of hope

Baptist Press
8/6/93

By Martha Anderson & Marty Croll

MANILA, Philippines (BP)--A Foreign Mission Board trustee leader accused earlier this year of moral wrongdoing told Southern Baptist missionaries in the Philippines to hang on when discouragement comes.

"You may ask yourself, 'Is it worth it?' Yes, it's worth it," said Rodney Duncan, chairman of the trustee committee for Asia and the Pacific. Duncan spoke recently at a breakfast meeting with missionaries in Manila as part of a 13-country, 59-day swing through Asia and islands in the Pacific.

"You may not understand everything, but sooner or later you'll see the Lord's hand in it," said Duncan.

Duncan left home in North Pole, Alaska, on schedule for the summer tour, despite his failure in June to salvage a 17-year teaching career at North Pole High School.

In March a student's parent accused Duncan of soliciting pornographic material from her son. She also wrote a letter about Duncan to the Fairbanks daily newspaper accusing him of making sexual advances toward male students. Duncan denied any wrongdoing. Police investigated, but criminal charges were never filed. But school district officials undertook a far-reaching investigation into the most personal aspects of Duncan's life.

Caught in a cross fire of differing views of the teacher-student relationship, religious freedom issues and local politics, Duncan was permanently fired by the school board in a 5-1 vote.

Duncan told missionaries the only charges the school board could verify against him during a four-day closed hearing stemmed from the fact that he shared his Christian faith "while in the employment of the school system."

Duncan's attorney filed an appeal with Alaska's Fourth Judicial District Superior Court July 6. The appeal asks the court to reverse the school board's decision. Also, a pending motion filed in the same court asks it to force the school board to consider the evidence again.

Hundreds of students, past and present, rose to Duncan's defense during the ordeal as well as many in the community at large. He acknowledged times when he was discouraged but said he learned to depend on God, not himself.

Duncan isn't sorry to have gone through the experience because God "taught me so much," he said. When he was first charged, a former student told him God must "love you a lot to put you through this," he added.

One Sunday while singing in church, Duncan was struck by the words, "To see his hand of love in all that comes my way." In a flash, he saw what the former student meant. He has seen good things come from the difficulties, even within his own family, bringing them all closer together.

"I've seen God's hand at work," said Duncan, who also serves as minister of youth and music at Cross Roads Baptist Church in North Pole, a Fairbanks suburb.

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Once during the three-month ordeal when he was asking himself "if it's really worth it," he received a telephone call from a former student he had led to faith in Christ. The man, who lived in a distant city, called to offer support. "Then he put his 8-year-old son on the line," Duncan said. "The boy said, 'You don't know me but my dad has told me a lot about you. I just want to say thank you for telling my dad about Jesus.'"

Duncan had always been proud of his teaching career, he admitted. He has repeatedly received awards and recognition, including the 1992 "teacher of the year" award at the high school -- out of 45 teachers -- and a listing in "Who's Who in Teaching."

"But God has dealt with that pride," he said. "Security is not in a job, but in the Lord."

Duncan said when he went into the hearing that sealed his fate at North Pole High School, he experienced a peace he knew was "of God." One student questioned in the hearing was asked whether he was unduly influenced by Duncan. "The student replied, 'Oh no, it was God that changed me when I gave my life to Jesus,'" Duncan recalled.

Duncan hasn't given up teaching. This fall he will teach English at a Fairbanks Christian school. And he hasn't given up his concern for missions.

"If the Lord leads, I would like to continue my mission involvement," Duncan told the missionaries.

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Martha Anderson is Southern Baptist missionary press representative for Luzon, Philippines. Marty Croll is a Foreign Mission Board staff writer.

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