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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Baptists aid victims of  
Southern California quake

By Mark A. Wyatt

Baptist Press  
1/19/94

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Herb Hollinger, Director, SBC  
Nashville, Tennessee

LOS ANGELES (BP)--Baptist disaster relief crews in several states responded Jan. 17 to assist victims of Southern California's worst earthquake in 20 years. Feeding units operated by the California Southern Baptist Convention were among the first relief crews on the scene, arriving on-site in the Los Angeles area less than 24 hours after the Monday morning trembler.

The 6.6 Richter Scale earthquake that struck the San Fernando Valley in northwest Los Angeles caused more than 30 deaths and damage estimated in the billions of dollars.

Two California Baptist feeding units and one cleanup unit were activated Monday after the earthquake struck. A short time later, a 12-man disaster relief crew from Texas was mobilized. They were expected to arrive on-site early Wednesday, local time.

Meanwhile, the Baptist Brotherhood Commission also placed Oklahoma disaster relief workers on standby to await possible deployment.

The Home Mission Board contributed \$15,000 in hunger relief money and \$15,000 in disaster relief funds to the California Southern Baptist Convention.

Hunger relief funds are from designated gifts, not Cooperative Program or Annie Armstrong gifts. They are spent only on food. Disaster relief is part of the Home Mission Board's general budget and it is spent for items such as bedding and prescription medicines.

Although California Southern Baptist Convention offices were closed for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday Monday, disaster relief crews responded within hours of the pre-dawn earthquake. Don Hargis, CSBC men's ministries department and Brotherhood director coordinated the California convention's disaster relief efforts.

Hargis requested that all state conventions with disaster relief units remain on standby for now because assessments of damage and needs are still incomplete.

"We still don't know yet just how bad it is," Hargis said.

American Red Cross officials who provided overall earthquake relief coordination in the stricken area requested th California Baptist convention's largest feeding rig, a specially equipped tractor trailer, to provide 10,000 meals a day. That unit was initially set up at San Fernando Valley Red Cross Center in Van Nuys.

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The California convention's second relief unit, based in Orange County south of the area hardest hit by the trembler, was moved to Shepherd of the Hills Church in Porter Ranch, near some of the heaviest damage from the quake. A shelter also has been set up there, according to J.D. Andrews, director of the Home Mission Board's Mission Service Corps volunteers in California.

"We were just getting it set up last evening (Monday)," he said. "We were using power plant generators to furnish lighting."

In addition to feeding ministries, Andrews said he expects Southern Baptists to help the Red Cross and Salvation Army find housing for displaced families.

"As the authorities are going through the community, several buildings will be condemned, and those people will have to find other places to live."

Andrews said he will work with local churches to recruit volunteers to help at Shepherd of the Hills and any other Southern Baptist church that sets up a shelter. "We have a long job ahead of us."

Damage to roads and telephone equipment made contact with the area difficult even a day after the powerful quake hit. Local and network television showed the extent of damage to many structures including apartment buildings, shopping malls and private homes damaged by the earthquake or by fires triggered by the trembler and aftershocks. More than 100 aftershocks, some as strong as 5.5 on the Richter Scale, were reported during the first 24 hours after the main jolt.

Shepherd of the Hills Church in Porter Ranch apparently sustained "quite a bit of structural damage," according to Doris Moody. Her husband, Jess Moody, is pastor of Shepherd of the Hills.

Speaking by telephone from her home in nearby Chatsworth Jan. 18, Doris Moody said, "The whole place is just trashed. Our chimney is down and there's structural damage" to the home. She said electricity had been restored, however.

Later, Jess Moody told The California Southern Baptist damage to the church which is located just a few miles from the quake's epicenter could cost between "one half million and a million dollars" to repair. But despite the damage, Moody said the church was ministering to others in the earthquake ravaged community.

Youthful offenders from a nearby juvenile center damaged by the earthquake were housed and fed at the church the night after the trembler struck, Moody said. He praised relief workers who had a feeding center operating at the church within hours after the quake.

"I'm really proud of the Baptists," Moody said. "I'm so thankful for them. I didn't eat all day yesterday. When I drove up there and saw that big bunch of Baptists cooking that chili I could have kissed the ugliest one there!"

Moody said church members have been going into area parks where displaced residents fearful of returning to their apartments and homes are camping out, inviting them to come to the church for a hot meal. The church also has opened up part of its 14 acres of land for use as temporary campsites. And Moody said up to 500 cots are ready to be set up in the church for use by those suddenly homeless after the earthquake.

Moody said because damage to his own home could exceed \$50,000, he can better relate to other quake victims. "I know how they feel," Moody said, his voice choking with emotion. "It's quite an interesting experience."

"The big-shot preacher sure got lowered. To see these people hurting like this is something else. But it also shows that Christianity works through the people. Everybody's pulling together to get through this," Moody said.

Various construction tradespeople and executives in the church are being organized into what Moody called a "sniff-out" team to "smell out charlatans" and scam artists who may try to take advantage of quake victims. And church space is being provided for insurance companies to help victims file claims.

Despite the destruction and pain, Moody maintained his characteristic optimism and wit. As another strong aftershock struck the area during the interview, Moody quipped: "When an aftershock feels good because it rocks you to sleep, you know you're going to be okay."

Reports of damage to other Baptist churches were sketchy during the early hours following the earthquake, although many churches were said to have sustained "cosmetic" damage.

About 30 miles from the epicenter, MSC volunteers Neil and Melinda Walker felt the earthquake in Monterey Park.

"It just about knocked us out of our bed," said Mrs. Walker. The two are involved in student ministries in Los Angeles colleges. "We have felt and been through several earthquakes, but nothing that has felt this great and as close to us."

The couple live two miles from the Los Angeles border and have power and water because they are on different utility systems from the city, she said.

As residents of Southern California for six years, Walker said previous earthquakes made their house feel like it was riding a wave. This one, however, was different. "This time it just felt like somebody had picked up the house and dropped it, and then the wave."

The general practice of standing in the doorways was avoided because the door frames creaked so much, she said. "I thought they were going to splinter or fall."

Andrews, who has lived in California 50 years, said this was the strongest quake he has experienced.

"We had a good, strong jolt here," said Andrews, who lives near Anaheim, about 40 miles southeast of the epicenter. He recalled being awakened at 4:34 a.m. by the shaking. "I didn't get back to bed."

Andrews said his drive Monday to Northridge was 20 miles longer than normal because of the damaged highways.

"Today will probably be another disaster because of the traffic," he said Tuesday. "It'll be months and probably years before it gets back to normal."

As damage and relief assessments continued, Cal Jones, Louisiana Brotherhood director, was named Southern Baptists' national on-site coordinator Jan. 18. Jim Didlake, Mississippi Baptist Brotherhood associate, was scheduled to arrive to assist Jones the following day.

Disaster relief is an outgrowth of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's emphasis on mission action. The Memphis-based SBC agency coordinates the initial stages of multi-state disaster response on the convention's behalf. The efforts include mass feeding and cleanup.

Greg Sumii, missions ministries director for California Southern Baptist Convention, said money and volunteers will be needed to continue disaster relief efforts.

People available to serve immediately as volunteers should contact the Brotherhood department at their state convention office. Volunteers interested in long-term rebuilding and relief efforts can call the Home Mission Board at 1-800-4SBC-AID.

Persons wishing to make donations in support of the disaster relief effort may send contributions to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104, (901) 272-2461. Please designate the contribution for disaster relief.

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(Steve Barber and Jim Burton of the Brotherhood Commission and David Winfrey and Sarah Zimmerman of the Home Mission Board contributed to this story.)

Iranian Christian released;  
execution said canceled

Baptist Press  
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BRUSSELS, Belgium (BP)--A man condemned to death by an Iranian court for converting to Christianity was abruptly released Sunday, Jan. 16, just days before he was to have been executed.

Two days later the Iranian, Mehdi Dibaj, was reportedly in Tehran, Iran's capital, where Christians met him, "singing songs of jubilation and thanking God for his release," according to Iranian Christian leaders in Europe.

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But j y was tempered by the fact that his release was conditional. He was released "with attachment and that the court is investigating his case," according to the Iranian state news agency. Iranian Christian leaders in Europe who have followed the case said Dibaj is still subject to recall by police at any time.

Dibaj, an Assemblies of God evangelist, had spent nine years in prison for becoming a Christian several decades ago. He spent the night of his release in Sari, the city in northeastern Iran where he had been imprisoned.

Iranian officials deny Dibaj faced execution. Christians have followed Dibaj's case throughout the nine years he was in prison, including two years spent in solitary confinement without lights in a 3-foot by 3-foot cell.

The Iranian news agency quoted sources in Iran's Judicial Forces as stating, "The propaganda of the Western media claiming that a death sentence has been issued for Mehdi Dibaj is untrue. ... His (Dibaj's) convictions are not so much that they should result in his execution."

Ayatollah Yazdi, chief of Iran's Judicial Forces, was quoted as saying: "Dibaj's guilt does not come to a point to justify capital punishment and ... claims about an execution order are totally groundless."

Iranian Christians say that account does not tally with the facts. They earlier released Dibaj's case number, verdict number and court number in trying to rally support for him.

In response, the U.S. State Department called on Iran to abide by human rights agreements in regards to Dibaj. Human rights agencies also took up his case and called for Christians in many countries to pray for him and write appeals for his release.

After receiving the death sentence in early January Dibaj had written a will and asked the court to expedite his sentence. He said he was prepared to die.

A statement he gave as defense in his Dec. 3 trial for "apostasy," or abandoning the religion of Islam, was carried in full in the Jan. 18 issue of The Times, one of England's leading newspapers. That statement was a ringing affirmation of his Christian faith.

A statement by Iranian officials acknowledged the role of publicity in Dibaj's release. "During the past 48 hours the Western media and the Zionist radio have started an extensive propaganda campaign saying there has been an execution order on Mehdi Dibaj because of his conversion to Christianity and they claim there has been a violation of human rights and the dissatisfaction of the religious minorities in Iran," it said.

Iranian Christians declined to speculate on precise reasons why Dibaj was released. They expressed gratitude for the support they received in the case, but urged continued prayer that all religious persecution in Iran be stopped.

One statement by Iranian Christians urged Christians to send appeals to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran requesting that it:

- quash Rev. Mehdi Dibaj's execution order and clear him of all charges;
- discontinue the arrest, imprisonment, interrogation and torture of Muslim converts;
- allow them to attend church and reopen all churches, including the ones in Mashad, Sari and Ahwaz, (all closed in 1988), Kerman (closed in 1992), Urumieh and Gorgan (both closed in 1993);
- reopen the Iranian Bible Society (closed in 1990) and the Garden of Evangelism (closed in 1989).

Hossein Soodmand, an Assemblies of God pastor, was executed in Iran Dec. 3, 1990. He also was a convert from Islam. Soodmand was reportedly tortured during two months of imprisonment before his death; his body was never released to his family. Soodmand was accused of spying, while Dibaj had been accused only of apostasy, or turning from Islam.

"It is feared that, unless pressure is continued to be exerted by human rights organizations, government officials, the press and personal appeals, there will be a backlash on the Muslim converts in Iran in particular, and the church as a whole," one Iranian Christian group said in a press statement.

Dibaj was "overcome with joy," and "expressed his deepest gratitude to the Lord for his release and to all churches and Christians for their solid support and prayer which resulted in his release," one Christian leader said.

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Minimal damage to  
GGTS' Brea campus

Baptist Press  
1/19/94

BREA, Calif. (BP)--Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary's Southern California Campus, located in Brea, sustained minimal damage in an earthquake that devastated portions of the Los Angeles area early January 17.

Repairs have already been made to shelving in the campus' library, according to Rick Durst, director of the Brea campus. Campus buildings show no signs of structural damage although there are some cracks in the plaster, he added.

The Baptist Book Store branch located at the campus sustained some damage, mainly collapsed shelving and broken glass, Durst said.

The seminary's Brea campus is located in Orange County about 50 miles from the the quake epicenter, with about 200 students attending.

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SB pastor learns  
about suffering

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press  
1/19/94

NORTHRIDGE, Calif. (BP)--Jess Moody said he was already awake and typing at 4:30 a.m. when the Jan. 17 earthquake in Los Angeles sent him scrambling to get under his desk.

"The books were just flying everywhere, and I thought it was the building coming down. I thought we were dead," said Moody, pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Church, three miles from the quake's epicenter.

"Suddenly, the books started hitting me and I said 'Hey, that's not supposed to be happening because I've got the desk over me,'" he said. "And I looked up, and the desk was clear across the room. It had left me."

The pastor of Los Angeles' largest Southern Baptist church said he's heartened by the volunteers' response and humbled by the love he has received.

"Southern Baptists have done a magnificent job," he said the day after the quake hit. "I'm very proud of the disaster relief people. Baptists are the only ones here."

Moody said this is the first time he's understood the suffering associated with tragedy.

"During disaster, I've always stood up and said, 'I know how you feel and I love you.' But that's not true. I didn't know how they felt," he said.

"This is the first time I have known how people feel who are hurting," he said. "When I drove up to the church last night and saw the Baptist feeding station and I saw great big cauldrons of chili, I just cried. I said, 'Thank you God for something to eat.'"

More than 160 aftershocks, some registering higher than previous earthquakes, continue to rumble through Los Angeles, causing further damage, he said. "I was in Britain in 1947, and it wasn't hurt any more than this."

One aftershock put a hole through one of the church walls, adding to the damage, which Moody estimated at \$1 million. About 800 of the church's 2,000 families have damaged homes, he said. Moody, 68, estimates his own house received at least \$50,000 worth of damage.

The church set up 500 cots for those who found themselves homeless, but "they are just loath to come into any building," he said. "The parks are full of tents."

Volunteers at the feeding stations are taking the opportunity to witness to those who come for food, Moody added.

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Workers have a "Hope in Crisis" tract that explores such questions as "Why do bad things happen to good people?" and "Did God do this?" as well as the way to become a Christian, he said.

"It's a wonderful little tract for the people at this time," he said. "About 50 or 75 people were out there eating their breakfast, and when they were finished they were all reading this tract.

Members of Shepherd of the Hills have already begun working, Moody said. "The people in our membership whose homes have not been damaged are going to form clean up teams to clean up the homes that are damaged."

Moody said he wants to offer four other projects:

-- A group of glaziers, masons, carpenters and contractors to offer lower rates to victims.

-- Tables for insurance people.

-- Tables for government assistance loans.

-- A group to help people "sniff out the phonies." Volunteers would check with the city to see if workers are certified by the city to do construction work.

"Ask the people to pray for us," said Moody, adding that he hopes the church building is stable enough to hold worship services. "We need the prayers of everybody, because it's a very serious matter here."

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Southern Baptist layman  
composes earthquake poem

Baptist Press  
1/19/94

ATLANTA (BP)-- A Southern Baptist layman and freelance writer/poet was moved by the recent California earthquake to compose a poem.

Michael Gregory, a member of Morningside Baptist Church, Atlanta, told Baptist Press he feels God may be using natural disasters to "get His people's attention and call us back to Himself."

Gregory, writing under the pen name Michael N. Joy, expressed those feelings in the poem titled, "Decision".

Rocks Do Rock

Beneath our feet  
And from the mountains above;  
In rumbling and crumbling,  
And shattering, quaking  
Shaking our sleeping  
In darkness awaking  
Our souls in its pleading:  
"O, Stop!

Look!  
and  
Listen!  
Before  
It's

Too

Late!

They make us "Be still"  
And call us "To hear"...  
So quakened, awakened  
With shaking and breaking;  
"Respond now! dear people!  
Respond

To

God's  
Love.  
-- Michael N.

Joy

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Gregory, a native Texan, was led to accept Christ in 1973 by a student from Southwestern Seminary ministering in the Ft. Worth city jail. He provides maintenance services for an apartment complex in downtown Atlanta while writing greeting cards and a book.

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North central states host  
HMB commissioning service

By Bill Webb

Baptist Press  
1/19/94

OAK BROOK, Ill. (BP)--More than 700 leaders from the seven north central states witnessed a Home Mission Board commissioning service and heard challenges to win their states to Christ in their triennial meeting in Oak Brook, Ill. Jan. 11-13.

They represented five state conventions -- Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota-Wisconsin and Ohio -- and one state fellowship -- Iowa -- and met as part of the 19-year-old North Central States Mission Thrust.

The laymen, church starters, pastors, directors of missions and state leaders also heard testimonies from their peers and participated in several how-to seminars, but the keynote service of the three-day rally was the commissioning service for 47 newly-appointed home missionaries.

Gihwang Shin, commissioned with his wife Hye Sun, to serve in Indianapolis, told of being stricken with polio as a baby and with being healed of spiritual blindness.

"I accepted Christ and started a new journey," he told an enthusiastic crowd. "We go with great joy because we have the love of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

Shin's parents traveled from Seoul, Korea, to be present for their son's commissioning.

Said another of the new missionaries, Don McMurray, "We all have one thing in common; we've all been touched by the Lord."

McMurray and his wife, Norma, from Missouri and North Carolina respectively, serve in Dayton, Ohio.

Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis gave the charge to the candidates, citing the parable of the great banquet in Luke 16, and telling them if they wanted to fill the church, "Here's how you do it."

That parable included an invitation -- "come, all things are ready and the price has already been paid;" an exhortation -- "go to the highways, that's where people gather in great numbers;" and an affirmation to go quickly -- "Jesus was talking about the urgency of the day."

"Missionaries, I charge you, just do it," Lewis said.

The chairman of the North Central States Steering Committee, Wyndell Jones, executive director in Iowa, told Baptist Press that the first commissioning service ever held in one of the seven north central states was significant for Baptist work in the region.

"I thought it was significantly important to have the commissioning of missionaries in this area," he said, because it gave symbolic evidence that the Home Mission Board acknowledged the area had come of age in its Baptist witness.

"There are not many states that have joined together for events such as this," Jones told participants. The missions thrust had produced a "spirit of oneness in reaching people and starting churches" in the region, he said.

Several of the missionaries commissioned in the service either come from the area or have been assigned to missionary positions in one of the seven states, which together account for 25 percent of the population of the United States.

Robert Wilson, executive director for Michigan Baptists and the dean of present executive directors in the area, said the 19-year partnership between Baptists in the north central states and the HMB, Baptist Sunday School Board, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood, has been at least twofold.

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"It has been an undergirding for each other," he said. "The fellowship is important. Many of them are scattered across our state. It gives them the feeling that they are part of something bigger."

Referring to the long-time North Central States goal of doubling the number of churches in the seven states, Wilson added: "To me it has helped us keep a focus on what we are all about in Michigan and in all of the area, that is establishing churches in every city and community that will aggressively share Christ with the people."

Said Jones, "I think it has given visibility to the national convention to recognize the needs and opportunities in these states."

Released to participants in the rally was a history of the missions thrust from 1975 to 1990, written by E. Harmon Moore, formerly on the Illinois staff and later executive director in Indiana for 22 years.

Wilson credited Moore and Noel Taylor, former executive director for Illinois Baptists, with providing the "heart for sparking" the North Central States Missions Thrust at its beginning. Both were recognized from the platform for their contributions.

Other speakers on the program included Baptist Sunday School Board President Jimmy Draper, SBC Executive Committee President Morris Chapman, Brotherhood Commission President James Williams and Ann Brack from the national WMU office.

Draper urged participants to be sure the growth in their churches was also "kingdom growth," explaining that while church growth can be by biological and transfer additions, the "only way the kingdom grows is by conversion."

"Church growth begins with the sovereignty of God," he said. "And we need to have a resurgence of an emphasis on the lostness of man."

To fully accomplish kingdom growth, Christians need to recall the "strategic place of the church and denomination in all this," Draper added. "Lone ranger Christianity is out of place."

Chapman, referring to the release of God's power at Pentecost, told participants, "Our generation has yet to see an outburst of Pentecostal power. We have not had a spiritual awakening in our time. We have not yet known Pentecostal power.

"The disciples paid the price of Pentecost," he explained. "It was the price of prayer.

"Spiritual awakening could begin in your church," Chapman said. "It could. Whether it does or not, will I be able to say, 'Lord, I was ready when you poured out your power.?'"

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Argentine evangelicals  
can run for president

By Mary E. Speidel

Baptist Press  
1/19/94

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (BP)--Argentina's Congress has passed a bill calling for constitutional changes allowing evangelicals to run for president for the first time.

The proposed changes will end a requirement that the country's president and vice president be Roman Catholic. Argentines will elect a constitutional assembly April 10 charged with reforming the country's 140-year-old constitution. The assembly will meet in June.

Besides allowing non-Roman Catholics to run for president, the reforms also will cancel the president's "right of patronage" regarding the Roman Catholic Church, said Arnoldo Canclini, Argentine Baptist historian and pastor, in a telephone interview.

This constitutional clause -- which Canclini said already was technically obsolete -- has given Argentina's president some rights in the government of the Roman Catholic Church.

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But Canclini cautioned that the changes aren't very significant for evangelicals, who have pushed for constitutional reforms for many years. Compared to other religious liberty issues not addressed by the changes, "this is not really very important," said Canclini, president of the National Evangelical Commission for Constitutional Reform. "I don't think we're going to have an evangelical president in Argentina for many, many years," he added, since no Argentine evangelicals now have enough political experience or clout to run for president.

A key religious issue the changes don't address: Argentina's constitution currently allows the government to provide economic aid to the Roman Catholic Church. Argentina has no official state religion, but the government gives money to the Roman Catholic Church to support some bishops and seminaries, Canclini said.

"The Roman Catholic Church wants it to stay that way because of the symbolic value (in this support)," he said.

The reforms will pave the way for Argentina's current president, Carlos Menem, to run for re-election when his term ends in 1995. Menem's administration has spearheaded the constitutional reform, designed primarily to drop a clause barring the president from serving two consecutive terms.

Menem, a Peronist, and his predecessor, Raul Alfonsin of the opposition Radical party, signed an accord in November calling for the constitutional changes. Both houses of Argentina's Congress approved a bill in late December authorizing the election of a constitutional assembly to carry those out.

Meanwhile, evangelicals continue to oppose a proposed religious liberty law before Argentina's House of Deputies. The law, already passed by the Senate, changes some requirements of a current government registry for all non-Roman Catholic religious groups.

Because they believe it limits religious freedom, Argentine Baptists have led criticism of the registry through the years. They oppose the new religious liberty law because it's "discriminatory" and doesn't eliminate the registry, Canclini said.

"It's a way to control churches," he said. "We feel that nothing of this kind is needed."

In November Canclini was part of a group of evangelicals invited to address a house committee studying the bill. Since Congress is in recess until early May, the constitutional changes will probably be in place before this bill is addressed again.

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Australian Baptist leader  
killed in car accident

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press  
1/19/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--Ollwyn C. Abbott, National Secretary of the Baptist Union of Australia, was killed in a car accident Jan. 10, while driving from Brisbane to Melbourne with his wife, Winsome, following the National Baptist Family Convention.

Winsome Abbott is currently in the Grafton, New South Wales, hospital suffering from a broken arm and severe bruises. Doctors are concerned about internal bleeding. Following a conversation with her, Tony Cupit, director for Evangelism and Education and Study and Research in the Baptist World Alliance, reported she is very appreciative of the prayers and interests of people around the world and is calm in the face of her husband's death.

"The news of his death came as an enormous shock to Baptists everywhere, for Ollwyn Abbott's influence was felt at every level of Baptist church life," Cupit said.

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"Ollwyn Abbott worked tirelessly in the local church, for the state and national Baptist unions, and at the international level," said Cupit. "As an Australian representative to the BWA Council his input was valued and it was offered with strength and conviction but always with grace. His was a challenging voice, even as his life of disciplined Christian ministry was itself a constant challenge and example."

The news was particularly painful for Cupit who just one day before had said goodbye to the couple who had taken him to the airport after a short visit to Australia.

BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz said: "Ollwyn was a great friend of the BWA. He possessed great skills that helped us financially and in future planning. Ollwyn was prophetic. We will never forget his warning to Baptists of the world in Harare, Zimbabwe. Commenting on the poor response of Baptists to the needs of the world he challenged us, 'This is pathetic. We must do more!' We shall miss him very much."

Before serving as the national secretary for the BUA, Abbott was a general manager of the National Bank of Australia. He also served as treasurer of his local church, Ashburton Baptist, for many years and served as treasurer, then as chairman of the Baptist College of Victoria. He served 15 years as chairman of the executive council of the Baptist Union of Victoria.

Since 1990 Abbott has been an Australian representative on the general council of the BWA.

HOUSE MAIL

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