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Rwandan Baptist leader pleads
for prayer, protest of violence

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press
4/28/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--"Please ask people to pray but also ask Baptists to protest to the Belgian government their help for the rebels in Rwanda."

This is the desperate cry of Eleazar Ziherambere, general secretary of the Baptist Convention of Rwanda and regional secretary for Africa of the Baptist World Alliance.

Speaking to the Baptist World Alliance by phone from a neighboring country where he and his four children have taken refuge, Ziherambere said he believes the Belgian government can appeal to the rebels to stop the killing.

"This is tribalism at its worst," he said, citing a mind-set of "If you are not of our tribe you are the enemy."

"Those who are killing each other today were sisters and brothers yesterday," he said.

A tired-sounding Ziherambere said, "I don't know whether I am alive or not. I went through the fire and I don't know how I escaped."

Ziherambere said at the time of the fighting he and a number of pastors were meeting in Butare and he believes protection by the Rwandan military is the only reason why they are still alive. (His wife was studying in London at the time.) Because of his friendship with the country's late president, Juvenal Habyarimana, Ziherambere said he believes he was a target to be killed.

Before he fled to a neighboring country, Ziherambere said he saw terrible massacres. "It was a blood bath," he said, "I saw people being slaughtered and thrown into the river when we finally crossed the border."

Ziherambere said the rebels had sent guns and other weapons into the villages, so the villages were well armed to carry out these terrible killings.

According to Ziherambere, many Baptist pastors and some church members already have died, especially in southern Rwanda. "I have a list in my hand here of many leaders who have died," he said.

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"We as Baptists have taken a stand to protect one another," Ziherambere said. In Butare, he noted, "I am proud to say that ... there was no violence where the Baptist Union (churches are) located. But all of the other communities around the Baptists have been involved in the fighting."

Before he fled, Ziherambere said he also got special permission to hold services in Butare. At that time he preached for peace and reconciliation.

"These are my people," Ziherambere cried. "I want to be as close to them as I can. I don't know what the Baptist World Alliance can do now but to pray. But I want to get back to my people just as soon as I can because I left our Baptist brothers and sisters not in good condition."

Ziherambere also reported some fighting has begun in Burundi where the Tutsi rebel troops have sent soldiers to Bujumbura in Burundi where a majority of Hutus live. "Already people are being killed," he said, "many people are being killed."

Once things cool down, Ziherambere said his country will need a lot of relief from the international community.

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After escaping Rwandan terror,
family faces uncertain future

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
4/28/94

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--Seven-year-old Laura Ingabire's American passport got her, her parents and brother safely out of the Rwanda blood bath.

But it may not get the family safely from Kenya to the United States.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees says Laura's father, Jean-Marie Vianney Higiroy, is not in danger in Rwanda because he is a Hutu -- not a minority Tutsi. Members of the Tutsi people are being slaughtered by the Rwandan army and Hutu gangs.

But Higiroy says the army is killing opposition political leaders too, and his outspokenness as a political figure put him on the death squad's hit list months ago.

"Certainly Hutus are killing Tutsi by the tens of thousands," Higiroy admitted. "But the Rwanda army has staged a coup, and that coup was aimed primarily at removing anyone opposed to 'pure Hutu' control of the country. The news reports have said this is an ethnic thing -- but Hutus are dying too."

Meanwhile, U.S. State Department guidelines say Laura, who was born in Austin, Texas, while her father was earning a doctorate in communications at the University of Texas, cannot claim her parents as dependents -- and qualify them for entry into the United States -- until she is 21.

Unless an exception is made, the family, including 7-year-old American citizen Laura, is headed for a refugee camp. That's better than dying in Rwanda, but it's hardly a place where the highly educated and articulate couple can be productive.

"If we go to a refugee camp someone will have to feed us and shelter us, but if we are allowed to return to the United States we can take care of ourselves," he insisted.

So Higiroy and his wife spend their days standing in lines: the line at the Kenya visa office, the line at the U.S. Embassy, the line at the U.N. refugee office, the line to use the phone.

Laura's passport was a ticket that got the family into one of the American convoys that drove from Rwanda to Bujumbura, Burundi, and onto a U.S. Air Force C-141 that flew them to Nairobi.

But the family was effectively stranded until a U.S. Embassy official asked Ron Hartell, a Southern Baptist missionary in Kenya who was picking up evacuated Rwanda missionaries, if he could help.

"They were sitting alone, just the four of them," Hartell said of his first encounter with the family. "No luggage, no money."

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Brackenhurst Baptist International Center, 25 miles from the Nairobi airport, already had been asked by the embassy to house evacuees if necessary. So Higiro and his family found themselves with a room at the center, eating meals with the 11 Southern Baptist missionaries who also had been forced to leave Rwanda.

One missionary couple, Stan and Marlene Lee, told their good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Foxworth in Fort Worth, Texas, of the family's plight. Foxworth promptly contacted Texas Rotary officials to see if the service organization could help sponsor the family in the United States. But like the request for political refugee status from the United Nations, that issue hasn't been resolved either.

After several days at the Baptist center, Higiro's wife, Laetitia Umusindarwejo, made contact with her sister, a student at the University of Nairobi. The sister, in turn, found a Rwandan family they could live with temporarily.

A few weeks ago the family didn't know if they would live at all.

Higiro was director of the Rwandese Information Office, a public agency that oversees Radio Rwanda, Rwandan television and government print media. He also was a highly visible member of the Republican Democratic Movement, a national political group.

Higiro introduced educational programs on government radio and television to inform listeners on issues, how to evaluate candidates, how to decode propaganda and the importance of non-violence. In his spare time he traveled around the country with videos teaching the same things.

"I also made sure that all viewpoints were allowed access to the government media, because people need to hear all sides if they are to make intelligent decisions," he explained.

The ruling party, the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development, was publicly committed to multiparty democracy after 25 years of one-party rule in Rwanda. But a month after Higiro was named to his position, the ruling party opened its own radio station.

Then last September, less than two months after his appointment, uniformed soldiers paid two visits to a house he had just moved from. They told his guard that Higiro was a member of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a Tutsi-army that launched a civil war in 1990. Then they went to Higiro's sister-in-law's house, where they beat the woman and her son.

Higiro also received late-night phone calls; the callers threatened to kill him.

"When I finished my doctorate I had a good friend from Tanzania who argued with me about returning to Africa," Higiro recalled. "He told me I should stay in America where my family and I would be safe. He told me the Rwanda government wasn't really interested in changing and if I went back and tried to change things I would die.

"But I was an idealist, I wanted to come back and make a difference. I wanted to use the media to educate a nation on how democracy works. Now, I have to wonder if maybe he wasn't right and I was the foolish one."

The real nightmare began at 9 p.m. April 6, when Higiro heard an explosion. He turned on the radio and heard the announcement that the president's plane had been shot down and was burning.

He thought it was "another rubbish story being put out by radical Hutus. They were always announcing wild things and having to come back later and apologize." But he called the director of internal security to check, only to be told, "I don't really know. I am no longer in control -- the army is in control." Finally, the director of aeronautics told him the president's plane had disappeared from the radar screen around 9 p.m.

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Attempts by the minister of information to get confirmation of the crash by visiting the site were blocked by the army. When Higiuro tried to set up a broadcast from the Rwandan prime minister to the nation, he was told the army had troops inside the studios and would not allow it. The prime minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, a member of the same opposition party as Higiuro, was later killed along with her escort of U.N. soldiers while trying to inspect the crash site.

"Less than two hours after the crash the army had soldiers controlling the radio and television stations," Higiuro pointed out. "How would they have been able to do that so quickly if the shooting down of the plane was not part of a coup plot? Journalists who tried to leave the station were beaten by soldiers and forced back inside. One carload that drove off were never heard from again."

In the pre-dawn hours the ruling party station broadcast a statement, supposedly from the minister of defense, with some details of the crash and names of some of those aboard. But Higiuro knew the minister, a civilian, was out of the country and could not have made the statement.

"That was when I knew for sure the military had decided to take over," he said.

A 6 a.m. call by Higiuro to the minister of information April 7 revealed he had been taken away by the Presidential Guard. Then word came that the minister of agriculture and the vice president of policy for the Social Democratic Party also had been taken. The deputy minister for foreign affairs had been shot, and one of his wife's fingers cut off.

It was obvious the purge would soon reach Higiuro. When a promised U.N. escort failed to arrive after 90 minutes, the family tried to run but returned to the house when they saw soldiers coming down the street.

Higiuro called a businessman friend who had contacts in the army and arranged for his family to be picked up. He then took off his shoes, put on his guard's clothes and took the guard's ID card before venturing outside again.

Not long after they fled, a houseworker told them later, five soldiers burst into the house with rifles aimed to shoot. Throughout the night soldiers returned to the house and searched it.

All day April 7 and 8 the family hid in the businessman's house, watching gangs looting and attacking people with machetes. Most of April 8 was spent trying to get a phone call through to the American Embassy and keeping in touch with friends and family. Another try by the businessman to get a military escort was rebuffed.

"If we had known who you had us carrying last time we would have refused," his contact said. "If our commanders find out what we did we will be in trouble. We can't help anymore."

They finally obtained the phone number of an employee of the American Embassy.

The resulting rescue would have been worthy of Hollywood -- except the bodies piling up in the streets weren't make-believe. Because Higiuro was so recognizable, his wife slipped onto the street, hiding behind parked cars, until the American Embassy vehicle turned onto the street.

She then stepped into the road so the driver could see her University of Texas sweat shirt. As soon as the car stopped she jumped in, followed within seconds by her two children and husband.

The family had to split up and ride in two different cars in the convoy. At three checkpoints angry crowds pointed and yelled at Higiuro, insisting, "He is not an American! He's a Rwandan who is fleeing!" But the soldiers waved him through. At the Rwanda-Burundi border he wrote his real name on the departure form, but listed his profession as "researcher" and gave the American Embassy as his address. Hours later they were at Brackenhurst Baptist International Center in Kenya.

Three weeks later, they're still waiting to find out if their daughter's American citizenship -- and their evidence of persecution -- will get them political refugee status.

"God has really been good to us so far, through all of this," Higiro said. "And we are so grateful for the American Embassy people in Rwanda. They literally saved our lives."

Now the question is: Where will those lives be spent for the next several years -- in the United States or in a refugee camp?

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet News Room.

Burundi missionaries lie low
as Rwanda cohorts plan visit

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
4/28/94

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--The fabled relationship between the frying pan and fire may prove true for Southern Baptist missionaries from Rwanda.

Four of the missionaries who evacuated bloody Rwanda April 9 hope to fly to neighboring Burundi in early May "to survey areas we might could work with Rwandan refugees."

But their missionary colleagues in Burundi are spending their time at a mission guest house in Bujumbura, the capital, with other foreigners. They're staying off the streets and preparing to evacuate if necessary on the advice of the American Embassy. Gangs broke into the compound where the Baptist Union of Burundi has its offices and looted them.

In late April heavy fighting broke out in Burundi between the Tutsi-dominated army and the Hutu majority population. The Burundi government announced April 26 it had survived a coup attempt, but foreigners were still being advised to stay put.

That means no Burundi missionaries are out in the rural border areas where Rwandan refugees fleeing the slaughter in their nation are most likely to cross.

Meanwhile, missionary Rob Moor, who already was working in relief projects with Burundi refugees in Tanzania, has reported Rwandan refugees are showing up in the area too.

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Key SBC committee
appointments made

Baptist Press
4/28/94

HOUSTON (BP)--Appointments to two key committees to serve during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando, Fla., June 14-16, have been announced by SBC President H. Edwin Young.

Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Houston, announced the appointment of the Committee on Committees and the Committee on Resolutions April 28. The SBC bylaws require the president to announce the appointments "at least 45 days in advance of the meeting."

The credentials and tellers committee must be made public 30 days before the annual meeting, according to the SBC bylaws.

COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

The committee has 70 members, 2 from each of the 35 state or regional conventions qualified for representation on SBC entities.

SBC Bylaw 21 says the Committee on Committees "shall nominate all special committees authorized during the sessions of the convention not otherwise provided for." The usual responsibility of the committee is to nominate members of the Committee on Nominations, which, in turn, nominates trustees to serve on the 23 national entities of the SBC.

Young named Mike Hamlet, pastor of First Baptist Church North Spartanburg, Spartanburg, S.C., as the committee chairman.

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The committee includes two-thirds clergy or denominationally-related to one-third laypersons, the tradition which follows the seminary trustees' model. Young identified the nominees as either "minister" or "layperson."

ALABAMA--Mike McLemore, minister, Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham; Jimmy Jackson, minister, Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville.

ALASKA--Tim Clark, minister, First Baptist Church, Palmer; Marvin McBee, minister, First Baptist Church, Kenai.

ARIZONA--Joe Hall, minister, First Southern Baptist Church, Scottsdale; Don H llday, layperson, First Baptist Church, Chandler.

ARKANSAS--Terry Eaton, minister, First Baptist Church, Decatur; Mark Park, layperson, Lakeside Baptist Church, Hot Springs.

CALIFORNIA--E.W. McCall Sr., minister, St. Stephen Baptist Church, La Puente; Robb Zinn, minister, Immanuel Baptist Church, San Bernardino.

COLORADO--Julie Kendall, layperson, Central Baptist Church, Aurora; Phil Hotsenpiller, minister, Applewood Baptist Church, Wheat Ridge.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA--Paul Moore, layperson, First Baptist Church, Washington; Elaine Brown, layperson, Hillcrest Baptist Church, Hillcrest Heights, Md.

FLORIDA--Ted Traylor, minister, Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola; Sandra W aver, layperson, First Baptist Church, Panama City Beach.

GEORGIA--Danny Watters, minister, Beulah Baptist Church, Douglasville; Bill Britt, minister, Hebron Baptist Church, Dacula.

HAWAII--Iris Lazor, layperson, Nuuanu Baptist Church, Honolulu; Dale Clancy, layperson, Pukalani Baptist Church, Pukalani.

ILLINOIS--Kevin Ezell, minister, First Baptist Church, Marion; Harl Ray Lewis, minister, First Baptist Church, Valier.

INDIANA--Tom Raper, layperson, Fairview Baptist Church, Richmond; Mark Hern, minister, Grace Baptist Church, Evansville.

KANSAS-NEBRASKA--Phillip "Bo" Graves, minister, First Baptist Church, Haysville, Kan.; Abraham Aldape, minister, Calvary Baptist Church, Madison, Neb.

KENTUCKY--Robert Allen, minister, Second Baptist Church, Hopkinsville; Donald Lee Thompson, layperson, First Baptist Church, Louisa.

LOUISIANA--Diane Winders, layperson, Cedarcrest Baptist Church, Baton Rouge; Carrol Marr, Zoar Baptist Church, Baton Rouge.

MARYLAND-DELAWARE--Otis Doherty, minister, Ogletown Baptist Church, Newark, Del.; Roger Foster, layperson, Mason Dixon Baptist Church, New Freedom, Pa.

MICHIGAN--Mike Nelson, minister, Monroe Missionary Baptist Church, Monroe; Ray Shelton, minister, Friendship Baptist Church, Lincoln Park.

MISSISSIPPI--Jim Futral, minister, Broadmoor Baptist Church, Jackson; Henry Hed rman, layperson, First Baptist Church, Jackson.

MISSOURI--Fred Fishel, minister, First Baptist Church of Ferguson, St. Louis; Lindy Reed, minister, Birchwood Baptist Church, Independence.

NEVADA--C.O. Jackson, minister, Lakes Baptist Church, Las Vegas; Hoyt Savag , minister, Foothills Southern Baptist Church, Las Vegas.

NEW ENGLAND--Carlos Paz, minister, Island Pond Baptist Church, Hampstead, N.H.; John Kuesbert, minister, Hillside Baptist Church, Suncook, N.H.

NEW MEXICO--Cordell Akin, minister, First Baptist Church, Los Alamos; Jim Prock, minister, Central Baptist Church, Clovis.

NEW YORK--Ricky Armstrong, minister, Central Baptist Church, Syracuse; Mike Seaman, minister, Terrill Road Baptist Church, Scotch Plains.

NORTH CAROLINA--Joe Brown, minister, Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Charlotte; Woodrow Busch, minister, First Baptist Church, Murphy.

NORTHWEST--Sam Friend, minister, First Baptist Church, Bothell, Wash.; James Watters, minister, Japanese International Baptist Church, Portland, Ore.

OHIO--Stev Hopkins, minister, Whitehall Baptist Church, Columbus; Gene McBride, layperson, Hillsdale Baptist Church, St. Mary's.

OKLAHOMA--Ted Kersh, minister, Village Baptist Church, Oklahoma City; Dave Gillogly, layperson, Council Road Baptist Church, Bethany.

PENNSYLVANIA-S. JERSEY--James Luck, minister, First Baptist Church, Hershey, Pa.; Paul Broyles, minister, Emmanuel Baptist Church, West Chester, Pa.

PENNSYLVANIA-S. JERSEY--James Luck, minister, First Baptist Church, Hershey, Pa.; Paul Broyles, minister, Emmanuel Baptist Church, West Chester, Pa.

SOUTH CAROLINA--Mike Hamlet, minister, First Baptist Church North Spartanburg, Spartanburg; Homer Holcomb, layperson, Pinecrest Baptist Church, Charleston.

TENNESSEE--Randy Davis, minister, First Baptist Church, Morristown; Tim Miller, minister, Hohenwald First Baptist Church, Hohenwald.

TEXAS--Robert Jeffress, minister, First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls; Rick Lineberger, minister, First Baptist Church, Grapevine.

UTAH-IDAHO--Clyde Billingsley, minister, Southeast Baptist Church, Salt Lake City; Dan Walker, minister, University Baptist Church, Boise, Idaho.

VIRGINIA--Bob Reccord, minister, First Baptist Church, Norfolk; Gary Hollingsworth, minister, First Baptist Church, Alexandria.

WEST VIRGINIA--Eddie Rape, minister, First Baptist Church, Ceredo; David Jicka, minister, Highlawn Baptist Church, Huntington.

WYOMING--Jim Starr, layperson, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Rock Springs; Danny Francis, minister, Big Horn Baptist Church, Buffalo.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

The Resolutions Committee is composed of 10 members, three of whom must be members of the SBC Executive Committee. The committee, according to Bylaw 21, has the "duty ... to prepare and submit to the convention resolutions which the committee deems appropriate for adoption and to report on all matters submitted to it by the convention, with or without recommendation or amendments."

The bylaw also asks that proposed resolutions be sent to the committee 30 days before the annual meeting.

Young named Tommy D. Lea, professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, as the committee chairman.

Executive Committee members are David Hankins, Trinity Baptist Church, Lake Charles, La.; Forrest Lowry, Spring Baptist Church, Spring, Texas; and Anthony L. Jordan, North West Baptist Church, Oklahoma City.

Other members are David Dockery, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; D.L. Lowrie, First Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas; Harold Killian, Greenville, S.C.; James R. DeLoach, Fair Hope, Ala.; Timothy George, Be son Divinity School at Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.; and Danny Akin, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

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Nixon death gives Graham
millions for gospel message

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
4/28/94

YORBA LINDA, Calif. (BP)--In death, former President Richard Nixon gave evangelist Billy Graham his largest-ever live preaching audience.

In just the United States, according to the Nielsen ratings, more than 40 million people -- and perhaps as many as 49 million -- tuned in ABC, NBC and CBS for Nixon's April 27 funeral officiated by Graham.

Not counted nationally and internationally are additional millions who watched the funeral -- and Graham's proclamation of the gospel -- on PBS, CNN, other cable outlets or overseas TV networks or listened on radio.

Graham, a longtime friend of the Nixon family, asserted Nixon now is in heaven.

Nixon's wife, Pat, "went to heaven" after her death last year, Graham said, later affirming, "I believe that Richard Nixon right now is with Pat again, because I believe that in heaven we will know each other."

Graham also said, "There is hope beyond the grave, because Jesus Christ has opened the door to heaven for us by his death and resurrection. Richard Nixon had that hope, and today that can be our hope as well."

Beyond his references to Nixon, however, Graham spoke as if addressing one of his stadium-packed vangelistic crusades.

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"John Donne once said that there is democracy about death: 'It comes equally to us all and makes us all equal when it comes,'" said Graham, who also officiated at President Lyndon Johnson's 1973 funeral.

"I think every one of us ought to be thinking about our own time to die," Graham continued, "because we too are going to die and we are going to have to face Almighty God with the life that we lived here.

"There comes a time when we have to realize that life is short, and in the end the only thing that really counts is not how others see us, but how God sees us and what the record books of heaven have to say.

"For the believer who has been to the Cross, death is no frightful leap into the dark but is an entrance into a glorious new life," Graham said.

He quoted the apostle Paul's words in Philippians 1:21 in the Bible: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

"There's a gaining about death," Graham said. "For the believer, the brutal fact of death has been conquered by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"For the person who has turned from sin and has received Christ as Lord and Savior, death is not the end. For the believer there is hope beyond the grave. There is a future life."

Recounting that a band played "Amazing Grace," a hymn Nixon loved, as his body was escorted to the plane for its final journey to his California birthplace, Graham quoted the familiar words:

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.
Thru many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home."

Said Graham, "That hymn was written over 200 years ago by an Englishman named John Newton. He was a cruel man, a captain of a slave ship, but one night in a fierce storm he turned to God and committed his life to Christ. Newton not only became a preacher of the gospel, but he influenced William Wilberforce and others in Parliament to bring an end to the slave trade.

"John Newton came to know the miracle of God's amazing grace and it changed his life. It can change our lives as well," Graham said.

"And so we say farewell to Richard Nixon today with hope in our hearts, for our hope is in the eternal promises of God."

Graham cited another historical account: "Years ago Winston Churchill planned his own funeral, and he did so with the hope of the resurrection and eternal life which he firmly believed in. He instructed after the benediction that a bugler, positioned high in the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, would play 'Taps' -- the universal signal that says the day is over.

"But then came the most dramatic part, as Churchill had instructed," Graham noted. "Another bugler, placed on the other side of the massive dome, played the notes of 'Reveille' -- the universal signal that a new day has dawned and it is time to arise.

"That was Churchill's testimony, that at the end of history, the last note will not be 'Taps,' it will be 'Reveille,'" Graham said.

"There is hope beyond the grave, because Jesus Christ has opened the door to heaven for us by his death and resurrection," the evangelist continued. "Richard Nixon had that hope, and today that can be our hope as well."

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C.C. Risenhoover and Polly House contributed to this story.

ANALYSIS

Nixon death underscores
relevance of 'service'

By Jon Walker

During Richard Nixon's funeral, there was a lot of talk about service.

Service is not a word that's really taken seriously anymore. It's become a nerd word within our society, and those Dudley Do-rights who give their all for a cause are considered fools.

The presentation of the American flag to Nixon's daughters was, for me, the most poignant moment during the funeral. The military guard carefully folded a simple piece of cloth, yet that cloth symbolized the best of the American dream. Then in measured steps, an officer walked to Nixon's oldest daughter, leaning over to whisper in her ear.

I do not know specifically what he said, but I know the general words because I heard something similar said to my mother at my father's funeral. "Mrs. Walker, on behalf of the President of the United States, we express our appreciation for your husband's service to his country, and our deepest condolences for your loss." They were the most difficult words I ever heard because they summed up a man's life, and yet, they finalized his death.

Few people ever make it dry-eyed through such a presentation, and perhaps that is because, when faced with death, we are really looking for the same simple acclaim: Your service has been noted and appreciated.

Richard Nixon spent most of his life vilified and criticized. He certainly wasn't perfect, and I would never applaud the worst elements of his life. But how many of us, after our deepest and darkest sins have been exposed, would continue to serve the very people who hate us? Only someone committed to service as a goal and not a means.

There are lessons Christians can learn from a man once called "Tricky Dick." There will come a day when we also will face our death. There may not be a flag upon our coffin, but there will be a voice from the beyond saying, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." If we believe what we say we believe, then service is not only our goal, it is our reward.

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Young, others ask Clinton
to rescind pro-abortion cable

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
4/28/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President H. Edwin Young and 10 other evangelical Christian leaders have asked President Bill Clinton to overturn a recent U.S. State Department cable seeking greater support from other countries for liberalized abortion policies.

In their letter, the signers, who were led by Focus on the Family President James Dobson and Prison Fellowship Chairman Chuck Colson, criticized a March cable asking diplomatic and consular posts to request foreign governments to endorse the United States' call for increased availability to abortion.

The cable sought support for the United States' position in preparation for the United Nations-sponsored International Conference on Population and Development in September in Cairo, Egypt. The cable's distribution preceded a preparatory meeting earlier this month in New York City.

The proposed text for the Cairo conference, the State Department cable said, is "inadequate as it only addresses abortion in cases of rape or incest." The United States believes "access to safe, legal and voluntary abortion is a fundamental right of all women," the cable said.

The evangelicals' letter described the cable as an "unprecedented misuse of our diplomatic corps for political ends." The pressure by the State Department to support liberalized abortion policies often violates other countries' laws, the letter said. The targeted countries "deeply resent what they rightly regard as cultural imperialism," it said.

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In addition to their moral concern, the signers warned proper medical equipment and drugs are not available in some countries.

The letter reminded the president of his publicly professed desire for abortion to be "safe, legal and rare." It asked Clinton how he can square such statements with the cable and with his administration's financial support of agencies promoting abortion.

"A chasm exists between your public pronouncements and the quieter actions of your administration," the letter said. "We plead with you, Mr. President, not to make the United States an exporter of violence and death."

In mid-April, Clinton said he had asked to review the cable, The Washington Times reported. He also said the United States should not fund abortions on unborn babies able to live outside the womb or coercive abortions, according to The Times.

In addition to Dobson, Colson and Young, other signers of the April 22 letter were: Bill Bright, president of Campus Crusade for Christ; Chuck Swindoll, president of Insight for Living and recently-named president of Dallas Theological Seminary; Billy Melvin, executive director of the National Association of Evangelicals; James Kennedy, television preacher and pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Brandt Gustavson, president of the National Religious Broadcasters; Joseph Stowell, president of Moody Bible Institute; John Perkins, president of John Perkins Foundation for Reconciliation and Development; and Paul Cedar, president of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

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South Africa celebrates elections,
waits for what tomorrow will bring By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
4/28/94

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (BP)--The wedding is going great, but it's too early to see how enjoyable the honeymoon will be -- or how rocky the marriage.

That pretty much sums up the feelings of most Southern Baptist missionaries in South Africa toward the nation's historic elections.

Missionaries who talked to Baptist Press as the elections progressed April 27 and 28 used words like "joyful," "euphoric," "guardedly optimistic," "kinda neat" and even "quiet -- except for a few bombings" to describe what they were seeing, hearing and feeling.

Yet while they celebrated the epochal event, the missionaries -- like most of the rest of the country -- anxiously awaited the results of the voting, expected to be released May 1.

"The die will be cast when the results are tabulated and announced," point out David Crutchley, a former South African citizen who now is a Southern Baptist missionary in Cape Town.

Missionary John Gordy agreed: "No one knows how different groups might react when the results are in. We're just praying for a balanced government that will be able to build on the feeling of peace and optimism most of the country is enjoying right now."

But they're reluctant to waste too much time on predicting the future. The wait to celebrate the nation's first all-race elections was too long and too hard not to concentrate on enjoying it as it happened.

"This is a time of real poignancy as many people have the opportunity to discover their destiny and dignity," Crutchley said. "Even the scattered bombings in other parts of the country haven't been enough to keep people from taking part in this election."

Missionaries Dwight and Lila Reagan, who work among the 500,000 Indians in Durban, spent April 27 visiting church people and other friends.

"Some people just walked right into the polling stations, voted and came right back out," Mrs. Reagan said. Others had to wait for an hour or two, but no one she talked to had seen any problems.

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Nelson Mandela, widely expected to be elected South Africa's first black president, voted in Bombai, a suburb of Durban. Bombai (an Africanization of "Bombay," the hometown of many of the original settlers of the area) has seen considerable political violence, often pitting African National Congress supporters against Inkatha Freedom Party partisans.

The Indian population, often lost in media analyses of blacks, whites and mixed-race "coloreds," is "glad to see this day come," Reagan said. "Like most South Africans they're tired of the rhetoric and were ready to vote and get on with a future they regard with 'guarded optimism.'"

At Baptist International Theological Seminary near King Williamstown, missionary Jim Ditty reported "complete calm." The area has been a high-tension spot, especially since the Ciskei homeland government aligned itself closely with the African National Congress in recent years.

Ditty even called Gordy and jokingly invited all the other Southern Baptist missionaries in the country to "drive on down" and visit.

About 45 Southern Baptist missionaries remained in South Africa for the elections, although several families left their stations for less volatile locations. About 25 missionaries accepted the Foreign Mission Board's offer of two weeks administrative leave, most traveling to Zimbabwe or Botswana.

Gordy and his wife, Pat, spent the morning of April 27 visiting several polling places. Despite two bombs in the area -- including one that morning at Jan Smuts International Airport about two miles from the Gordy's house and the Baptist mission offices -- they encountered joyful crowds waiting patiently for their turn to vote.

"We saw several people we knew, both blacks and whites, and visited with them and took video," Gordy said. "People of all races standing side by side in line for two to four hours to vote, but there was no anger or fighting -- just South Africans standing together bringing in the future."

Those feelings of brotherhood and anticipation offer the most solid hope for the future.

But huge challenges remain:

Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who refused to take part in the election until the last minute, has wavered back and forth in his support of the process. His opposition to election results could reignite black-on-black violence.

South African police have arrested scores of white supremacists and seized weapons and explosives in a bid to halt terrorist bombings. But the radical white right wing remains publicly committed to tearing apart the "New South Africa" before it can be put together.

Still, the power of millions of people embracing the ballot box inspired awe. They came in wheelchairs and in wheelbarrows; the old and infirm walked for miles alongside the young and the strong.

"The very fact that the masses have come out and voted bodes well," Crutchley said. "This overflow of humanity with this enfranchisement (shows) the desire of almost all South Africans to move on."

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

FMB tops 4,000 overseas, speaks
on Catholic-evangelical document By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
4/28/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board pushed its missionary force past the 4,000 mark for the first time and responded to a nationally publicized document on Catholic-evangelical relations at the board trustees' April 25-27 meeting in Fort Worth, Texas.

In other action, trustees elected new officers, reorganized their structure to match recent staff reorganization, expressed appreciation for a departing staff member and heard reports of overseas statistical growth "beyond all expectations."

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The record missionary total -- a milestone en route to a goal of 5,000 missionaries by the year 2000 -- came April 26 as trustees appointed 33 missionaries before a Texas Baptist crowd of 6,850 at the Tarrant County Convention Center.

Trustees also voted unanimously to express concern that a joint statement a group of evangelical and Roman Catholic leaders released March 29 "is subject to interpretations harmful to the work of foreign missions."

The historic document--"Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium"--calls for reduced conflicts between evangelicals and Catholics, avoidance of proselytizing or "sheep stealing" each other's converts, and more cooperation on commonly held convictions on social issues.

The trustee statement affirmed "missionary witness among populations and individuals characterized by nominal or former allegiance to any Christian denomination." It rejected "any suggestion that such witness should be characterized as 'sheep stealing,' proselytizing or a wasteful use of resources."

But the trustees also affirmed the Foreign Mission Board's "commitment to the Lordship of Christ and our fellowship with all who share a personal faith relationship with Him." It affirmed "commitment to the authority and trustworthiness of the Bible" and pledged to conduct mission work in accordance with scriptural teaching.

Two Southern Baptist leaders signed the Catholic-evangelical document: Larry Lewis of the Home Mission Board and Richard Land of the Christian Life Commission. Both have said nothing in the document should be misconstrued as diminishing the need for Southern Baptists to share their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior with others.

Leon Hyatt of Pineville, La., retired church extension director for Louisiana Baptists, was elected trustee chairman in a 57-22 vote over Hoyt Savage, a pastor from Las Vegas. Hyatt, who had served as first vice chairman, succeeds John Jackson, a pastor from California, who received a standing ovation from trustees for his two years as chairman.

Gary Burden of Newport News, Va., was elected first vice chairman by a 46-34 vote over Phyllis Randall of Blacksburg, Va. Robert Oxford, a layman from Lakewood, Colo., was elected second vice chairman, 42-38, over Pat Bullock of Corpus Christi, Texas. Reed Lynn of Shawnee, Okla., was elected recording secretary unopposed.

The reorganization included realignment of several trustee committees and their responsibilities, expansion of official trustee business sessions to three (including the appointment service) and addition of an executive session forum. The executive session will allow for confidential interchange between trustees and the board's senior executive team of President Jerry Rankin, Executive Vice President Don Kammerdiener and Senior Vice President for Overseas Avery Willis.

In other developments, a search committee named to find a successor to Alan Compton, retiring communications vice president, had no report but is seeking suggestions from Southern Baptists.

Trustees also voted an expression of appreciation for Irma Duke, associate vice president for communications support, who is leaving the board after 19 years to become executive director of the North Carolina Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

The 4,000-missionary mark "reflects a missions priority on the part of our Southern Baptist churches," Rankin said.

The board recorded previous appointment milestones in 1955 when it topped 1,000; in 1965 when it surpassed 2,000; and in 1979 when it went past 3,000. If Southern Baptists are to reach their Bold Mission Thrust goal of having 5,000 missionaries overseas by A.D. 2000, the board must appoint from 450 to 480 mission workers annually from now until the end of the century, according to statistician Jim Slack, the board's church growth consultant. The board's record appointment years were 1993, with 498, and 1985, with 429. Those figures include career, associate and two-year mission personnel.

Slack said the 4,000 mark came despite negative growth years in 1989 and 1992 and "spells good prospects for reaching the Bold Mission Thrust goal" of 5,000 by A.D. 2000.

"We're not in a position to say there's been enough impetus in the last two years for us to reach it, but it sure is looking better than it did the two years when we had a lull," he said.

Slack noted the Foreign Mission Board has appointed 12,091 missionaries since 1845. More than half of those have come since 1976, the year the Southern Baptist Convention set its Bold Mission Thrust goals.

In a report to trustees, Slack said "God is blessing Southern Baptists beyond all expectations" in overseas statistical growth.

During 1993, he said, Southern Baptist foreign missionaries reported record growth in total churches, new churches constituted in one year, membership, baptisms, Sunday school-Bible teaching enrollment, preaching points and missionaries assigned to World A, that portion of the globe that has had little or no exposure to the gospel.

Following the three-day board meeting, 35 ministers of missions and other church staff members took part in the fifth Creative Access Projects Conference.

The conference, aimed at helping large Southern Baptist churches become more involved in Foreign Mission Board projects worldwide, drew representatives from churches in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and some from as far away as Kentucky.

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Foreign missionary force
tops 4,000; 5,000 goal next

By Mary E. Speidel

Baptist Press
4/28/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The Southern Baptist foreign missionary force has topped 4,000 for the first time, moving the denomination closer to its goal of having 5,000 missionaries overseas by A.D. 2000.

The total climbed to 4,011 when 32 new missionaries were appointed and one reappointed during a meeting of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's trustees April 25-27 in Fort Worth, Texas.

The new count includes 3,493 career and associate missionaries and 518 two-year workers in the board's International Service Corps. About 50 missionaries are expected to be appointed in June during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Orlando, Fla.

Reaching the 4,000 mark reflects "a missions priority on the part of our Southern Baptist churches," said Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin in an interview.

The accomplishment also affirms that Southern Baptists place "a high level of confidence" in the mission board, he added. "It reflects the hope that support (of missionaries) will continue to be solid. Overseas, it implies we will be able to walk through doors of opportunity that are opening -- unprecedented opportunities in new places."

Currently the missionaries work in 129 countries and assist in 24 others. That's a 37 percent increase from 1979, when the missionary count first topped 3,000. At the end of 1979, 3,008 foreign missionaries worked in 94 countries. The total first climbed over 2,000 in 1965 and 1,000 in 1955. Today Southern Baptist mission workers labor in such new fields as Albania and republics of the former Soviet Union. Others serve in countries where missionaries long have worked but where political climates have changed drastically since 1979.

Who is missionary No. 4,000? David Thompson, an accountant from San Angelo, Texas. Thompson and his wife, Janey, also from San Angelo, will serve in Malawi, where he will work in the mission business manager's office. She will be a church and home worker.

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Also appointed April 26 at the Tarrant County Convention Center in Fort Worth were Shaun and Amal Shorrosh, born in Jordan and Syria, respectively, who will work in church planting in Egypt. Shorrosh, son of a retired Southern Baptist home missionary, assisted Southern Baptist relief efforts among the Kurds in northern Iraq after the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Most recently the couple worked with Arabic-speaking congregations in Texas.

Two other new missionary couples are assigned to Croatia, which has been embroiled in the violence tearing apart the former Yugoslavia. Another couple will work in what once was East Germany. Another will plant churches in Ukraine. A single woman will work in publications for Lebanese Baptists from a base in Cyprus.

These new missionaries bring the board's total appointments to 158 so far this year. That figure, which includes two-year workers in the board's International Service Corps, is "very, very strong," said statistician Jim Slack, the board's church growth consultant.

But if Southern Baptists are to reach their Bold Mission Thrust goal of 5,000 missionaries overseas by A.D. 2000, the board must appoint from 450 to 480 mission workers annually until the end of the century, Slack estimated.

The board's record year in missionary appointments was in 1993 with 498. The previous appointment record was set in 1985 with 429. Those figures include care and associate missionaries, reappointees and two-year service corps workers.

Slack expressed surprise the board hit the 4,000-mark at this time, given the fact its mission force had negative growth years in 1989 and 1992. From 1988 to 1989 the missionary force fell from 3,867 to 3,780, a 2.25 percent drop. The total climbed 2.19 percent to 3,863 in 1990 and rose to 3,906 in 1991. In 1992 it fell again to 3,893, but record appointments in 1993 moved the total to 3,954 at last year's end.

Surpassing 4,000 now "spells good prospects for reaching our Bold Mission Thrust goal," said Slack. "We're not in a position to say there's been enough impetus in the last two years for us to reach it, but it sure is looking better than it did the two years when we had a lull."

The Foreign Mission Board, established in 1845, appointed its first 11 missionaries in 1846. In its 149-year history, the board has appointed 12,091 missionaries and reappointed 476. Since Southern Baptists launched Bold Mission Thrust in 1976, the agency has appointed 6,315 mission workers and reappointed 359.

"Whether or not the (5,000-missionary) goal is actually reachable, I believe we're going to see continued progress toward that goal because we have reduced attrition," Rankin added. "We are reaching the peak in retirements, so that will be less. And we have a phenomenal number of candidates in consultation with us."

Historically, the annual missionary attrition rate -- which includes retirements, deaths, resignations and completions of service -- has stayed under 5 percent. That's below the rate at most other missionary-sending agencies, according to Slack. The Foreign Mission Board's current attrition rate is about 3.9 percent.

At the end of 1993, the board had "active" files on about 3,400 prospective missionaries, according to Lloyd Atkinson, director of the personnel selection department. That figure was up from about 2,700 a year earlier, he said.

The personnel department also maintains a prospect list -- people whose names have been suggested as possible missionaries but who haven't initiated contact with the board -- that numbers about 1,400 families. Atkinson's staff contacts and nurtures these prospects, some of whom eventually become active missionary candidates.

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Atkinson hopes for at least 250 career missionary appointments during 1994. "Career appointments" -- which include career and associate missionary appointments and reappointments -- totaled 223 in 1993, 205 in 1992 and 209 in 1991. Two-year service corps workers sent out during those years numbered 275 in 1993, 209 in 1992 and 191 in 1991.

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

**New leader, expanded services
planned for church architecture** By Charles Willis

**Baptist Press
4/28/94**

NASHVILLE (BP)--A new leader and expanded services for the Baptist Sunday School Board's church architecture services are expected to provide more fully for meeting church facilities needs, according to Mike Miller, director of the board's church leadership, ministry and worship division.

Davis Byrd, who has been the board's master planner, will assume leadership of the architectural service in June, Miller said, when Gwenn McCormick, who has led the service since 1983, retires.

As part of the year-long plan for Byrd to succeed McCormick, who will be 65 in May, the two have worked together in planning a more complete range of services to be offered the approximately 3,000 churches who use varied services each year.

Using the theme, "From Dream to Dedication," church architecture services now offers help from needs assessment and early planning through the entire process of construction documents and construction. Fees for services are negotiated on an individual basis.

Byrd, whose background includes partnership in an architectural firm, said today's service offers "not only a broad base of education and experience in church life and architecture, but also the expertise of Sunday School Board leadership in areas of church growth, worship, education and recreation. These additional resources place us in the forefront of planning and designing church buildings and property.

"We tailor our services and approaches to the needs of each church, whether serving as consultant and project architect singly or in association with local architectural firms," he continued. "Our goal is to make the expertise of church architecture available to every church so their buildings fully support their unique mission and ministry."

A native of Memphis, Tenn., Byrd earned the bachelor of arts degree and the bachelor of architecture degree from Rice University in Houston. He also earned the master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Prior to coming to the board in 1993, he was vice president of Danzinger-Byrd architectural firm in Louisville. Earlier, he was director of facilities planning and management at Southern Seminary for 12 years.

McCormick said he sees "evidence of providential direction in Davis Byrd's education, training and experience that have given him extensive preparation for this leadership role. His background as a practicing architect, combined with the logical training and a wealth of personal gifts, uniquely equip him to lead Southern Baptist church architecture into a new century of service."

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A complete list of architectural services available from the Sunday School Board is posted in the SBCNet Newsroom. (BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press.

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