

(BP)

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Historical Commission  
-- BAPTIST PRESS  
Nashville, Tennessee  
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE  
SBC Executive Committ  
901 Commerce #7  
Nashville, Tennessee 372  
(615) 244-23  
Herb Hollinger, Vice Preside  
Fax (615) 742-89  
CompuServe ID# 70420.

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522  
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232  
NASHVILLE 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300  
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151  
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

May 2, 1994

94-74

VIRGINIA -- World Day of Prayer focus: Hazara people of Afghanistan; photo.  
NASHVILLE -- SBC Cooperative Program gifts for year still up; top budget.  
ARKANSAS -- Clinton's church & pastor experience 'burden, blessing.'  
NASHVILLE -- Land affirms FMB response to Catholic-evangelical paper.  
HOUSTON -- Ed Young names members of Credentials Committee.  
HOUSTON -- Tellers Committee named by SBC President Ed Young.  
HOUSTON -- Parliamentarians named for SBC Orlando sessions.  
FLORIDA -- Tanzanian youth goes home with new arm, loads of love.  
FLORIDA -- FIRST-PERSON: Memory of Tanzanian teen touch family's restored calm.  
NASHVILLE -- Correction.

World Day of Prayer focus:  
Hazara people of Afghanistan

By Don Martin

Baptist Press  
5/2/94

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--In 1921, a missionary in Iran pulled a handful of grass from Afghan soil and turned it into a prayer network that seized the hearts of Christians worldwide.

Missionary William Miller swam across the Helmand River, which divides Iran from Afghanistan, and pulled the grass from the Afghan side before swimming back to Iran. He took the blades of grass and enclosed them in a letter to a Christian friend, urging him to pray for Afghanistan.

"Here are some of the first fruits of Afghanistan," Miller wrote. Miller also gave some of the grass to Christy Wilson, who would later follow God's call to missions in Afghanistan. Today Wilson is a respected scholar on Afghanistan, having worked in the country 22 years as a tentmaker and written five books on the nation.

"Miller started Christians praying for Afghanistan, which has lasted for more than 70 years," Wilson said. "God is still working there, but we need more prayer for the many people groups of Afghanistan, like the Hazara."

The Foreign Mission Board's prayer office now extends this same call to prayer to Southern Baptists as part of the 1994 Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization. From 6 p.m. May 20 to 6 p.m. May 21, Southern Baptists will join other "Great Commission" Christians in praying and fasting for the Hazara, an unreached people who live mostly in the central mountains of Afghanistan.

At most, only about 500 Christians live among the world's 2.5 million Hazara. Most people in Afghanistan are Sunni Muslim, but the Hazara are part of the Shiite sect, the branch of Islam that prevails in Iran.

The Hazara also differ from other Afghans in their cultural heritage. Some historians believe the Hazara are descendants of Genghis Khan's conquerors, who overran Afghanistan in the 13th century. After the invasions, the Hazara inhabited some of Afghanistan's choicé land, but over the centuries other tribal groups gradually pushed them into the mountains.

--more--

Today the Hazara live tough lives as mountain farmers, shepherds and goatherds in the central highlands of the Hindu Kush mountains. Christian researchers estimate they are one of Afghanistan's most impoverished ethnic groups. Because of their Mongolian appearance and religious differences with most Afghans, the Hazara generally suffer discrimination.

"They are labeled as Afghanistan's underprivileged ethnic minority," says one researcher. "The more privileged Afghans in Kabul marvel at how hard the migrated Hazara work on the one hand, yet deride them for doing the work of donkeys on the other."

Christians working among the Hazara offer these specific prayer requests:

-- Pray for Christians who live and work among the Hazara that they might learn the language in order to spread the gospel.

-- Pray for Christian workers' health and for strong spiritual discipline.

-- Pray for Christian workers who are now translating the Gospel of Luke into the Hazara language.

-- Pray for protection and divine guidance for Christian workers who are preparing radio broadcasts so the Hazara people can have an opportunity to learn of Jesus for the first time.

-- Pray for the war-ravaged country of Afghanistan -- that the Lord in his time will bring peace, even "the peace of Christ which passes all understanding."

-- Pray for various Christian agencies and workers assisting with reconstruction and rehabilitation in Afghanistan.

The Foreign Mission Board has developed an information packet to help individuals and churches pray more effectively for the Hazara. The packet includes a profile describing other needs of the Hazara, other prayer requests from personnel working among the Hazara and a video. To order it, call the Foreign Mission Board at 1-800-866-FMB1.

--30--

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

SBC Cooperative Program gifts  
for year still up; top budget

Baptist Press  
5/2/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for April were down 8.43 percent compared to April of last year but the year-to-date total still exceeds the previous year, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

Gifts for April 1994 totaled \$10,865,870 compared to April 1993 of \$11,866,373. For the seven months (October through April) of the SBC fiscal year, the totals were \$82,756,762, compared to the previous year of \$81,774,894, or a 1.20 percent increase for 1993-94.

"Southern Baptists continue to prove their faithfulness," Chapman said.

The Y-T-D totals also kept the SBC above the required figure for seven months of the Program Allocation Budget: \$2,119,833 over the budget need or 102.63 percent of the budget. The monthly requirement for the 1993-94 budget is \$11,519,561.

Designated gifts for the month of April 1994 also increased: \$10,015,320 compared to April 1993 of \$9,308,297 or a 7.60 percent increase. The Y-T-D 1994 figure for designated gifts exceeded 1993 by \$646,683, or a .72 percent increase.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions, world hunger and other special gifts.

--more--

State and regional conv ntions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from th churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining funds to the Executive Committee for national and international ministries. The percentage of distribution is at the discretion of each state or regional convention.

--30--

Clinton's church & pastor  
experience 'burden, blessing'

By David Smith

Baptist Press  
5/2/94

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--Bill Clinton was inaugurated as the nation's president more than a year ago, and the pastor of his church in Little Rock, Ark., is increasingly certain that Baptists and Christians must pray for the country's leader.

Rex M. Horne Jr., pastor of Little Rock's Immanuel Baptist Church, said that the primary failure in the United States is not in legislation, but a failure in evangelism.

"I still maintain that God is stronger than government and that prayer is more effective than politics," Horne said in a recent interview with Baptist Press. "I just believe that the spiritual is much more important than the political. I feel like the political has gotten an undue amount of time among many evangelicals and I believe there is a real danger there.

"No matter how the president responds, our responsibility is to pray. That is the thing that we are to do. It's just unmistakable. And for people not to pray is to be disobedient to Scripture."

Horne encouraged people to trust God and to have "great faith that God is in control."

"I think so often of that verse in Proverbs that the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turns it whithersoever he will," Horne said. "Obviously people enjoy politics. That's why so many are involved in it. But Jesus and the disciples were not too much involved in the political sphere in his day and I think that we can learn from that."

Henry Blackaby of the Southern Baptist Convention and evangelist Billy Graham both have indicated Clinton's presidency may reveal more about the prayer life of Southern Baptists and Christians than it will about Bill Clinton himself, Horne said.

"I don't think that Southern Baptists have taken that seriously," said Horne, whose church has a weekly attendance of 1,200 to 1,400. "Billy Graham talked recently about building a wall of prayer around the president. And again I don't think believers, many across the country, take that seriously.

"Through all this process I see so much my responsibility as a pastor and leader of a church to pray for the president, whoever he is. Regardless of the person who is serving (as president), I really feel a commitment that we should pray. The reason that I can say that is because I don't look on the presidential office in a partisan way."

Horne said he has had opportunity to visit in person and by telephone with President Clinton frequently since Clinton became president.

An article in the April 25 issue of Christianity Today quotes the president as saying Horne calls him "every Saturday night without fail." Horne conceded it has been more difficult in recent months to stay in touch with Clinton, because he is often out of Washington. He said Clinton's aides always make sure the calls get to the president. But when Clinton is away from the White House, Horne said he often just leaves a message and tries not to bother him.

He said he has noticed how Clinton has aged since becoming president, noting that "the burden and the weight of the job must be incredible."

--more--

"He still maintains a positive outlook," Horne said. "I think he still wakes up every day looking at how to tackle some situation. I think that's part of his personality. He continues to be strong. Though I do think the process of governing is something that really draws on your strength, kind of beating you down."

Horne visited with Clinton at the recent National Prayer Breakfast in Washington. He and Southern Baptist leaders, including SBC President H. Edwin Young of Houston, also met with the president last year.

"In the several meetings I've had with the president when other people have been present, there has never been anything that's been off-limits," Horne said. "In fact, I've encouraged those who've talked with him to do so and discuss whatever they want to. He's very open about that."

"He's visited with leaders of other denominations. I think that will continue. There are some people in our own convention that I would like for him to sit down with and visit with, as well. I think that there are people who may not be in agreement with his policies or his perceived policies that he will profit by hearing from them. He's been very open to hear divergent views and opinions."

Clinton has maintained his membership at Immanuel, Horne said, although the president frequently attends church in Washington. Often he attends with his wife, Hillary, who attended First United Methodist Church in Little Rock while Clinton was governor of Arkansas.

Horne said that Immanuel Baptist is doing well and growing even through some negative publicity while Clinton was running for president and since he has taken office. For weeks while Clinton was running for president, the church was the target of repeated demonstrations on Sunday mornings by an independent minister from Texas and his followers.

Those demonstrations ended after the election, but during the weekend of April 15-17, another group demonstrated at Immanuel. Randall Terry, former director of the anti-abortion group Operation Rescue, began a nine-city national tour in Little Rock that weekend calling for Clinton's impeachment. On Saturday, April 16, Terry and a small group of less than 30 met in front of the Rose Law Firm, where Hillary Clinton served as a partner before her husband became president.

On Sunday, April 17, the group demonstrated at Immanuel. Horne said he thinks Terry attended Immanuel's first service at 8:30 that Sunday morning. Horne chose not to meet with Terry and his group but said they apparently "conducted themselves fine, as far as I know."

At last year's Southern Baptist Convention in Houston, a motion was brought to unseat the messengers from Immanuel because of Clinton's policies on homosexuality. The SBC's credentials committee rejected the attempt and the motion never came to a vote of the messengers.

"It was out of the blue, and I was surprised and not surprised," Horne said. "I may have been more not surprised than surprised. The thing we realized is that was just one messenger from one church. So it's not like the whole convention was moving to do that."

"I think that the convention recognizes its role and its place (in such challenges) and it has really voiced that in this past year. The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention has met and addressed this problem and now, rather than a messenger making any kind of charge they want to, the burden of proof is placed on the messenger rather than the church. And I think that is proper."

Even a recent completely positive feature article on Horne in the largest newspaper in Arkansas, the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, has led to some negative publicity for Horne and Immanuel.

Horne said that apparently some newspapers across the country picked up parts of the article and took some comments out of context.

"They did a nice job on the article," Horne said. "But when you take something and just print a few things, people can interpret it wrong. What amazes me is how quick people are to think that they have all the facts in hand and quickly address what you're doing right or wrong. That gets a little wearisome, honestly.

"But on the other hand, we still maintain that it's an opportunity for us not as Bill Clinton's church but as Immanuel Baptist Church to show many, many people, more than we would have the opportunity to show, what we believe the Christlike life is and our belief concerning the teaching of God's Word.

"So it's been both a burden and a blessing," Horne said of his and the church's ties to Clinton. "But I choose to emphasize what I always emphasize publicly, the blessing part, though personally the burden part is heavy from time to time."

--30--

Smith is a free-lance writer in Little Rock.

Land affirms FMB response  
to Catholic-evangelical paper      By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
5/2/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Richard Land, one of the signers of a much-publicized document on Roman Catholic-evangelical relations, voiced affirmation of a response to the document by trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board.

Land, executive director of the SBC Christian Life Commission, noted that the FMB statement is a helpful attempt "to clear up misunderstandings largely created by erroneous and misleading reports in the secular press."

The 25-page Catholic-evangelical document, released March 29 under the title, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium," was signed by a number of leaders from both Christian traditions, including Land and Larry Lewis, president of the SBC's Home Mission Board.

FMB trustees, during their April 25-27 meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, unanimously approved an expression of concern that the Catholic-evangelical document "is subject to interpretations harmful to the work of foreign missions." The trustees rejected "any suggestion" that witness to unchurched populations is "'sheep stealing,' proselytizing or a wasteful use of resources."

Land, in a statement released May 2, said, "Having been one of the people involved in the discussions that led to the release of the document, ... I can testify in the strongest possible terms that it was never the intent of the evangelical participants that anything in the document should be misconstrued as releasing every Christian from his or her responsibility to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and personal faith in him with every person in the world regardless of their denominational affiliation."

According to various news accounts, the historic Catholic-evangelical document 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 FMB statement listed three affirmations:

"1. We join in affirming our commitment to the Lordship of Christ and our fellowship with all who share a personal faith relationship with Him.

"2. We affirm our commitment to the authority and trustworthiness of the Bible, and we pledge to conduct our work in accordance with scriptural teaching.

"3. We affirm the appropriateness of missionary witness among populations and individuals characterized by nominal or former allegiance to any Christian denomination, and we reject any suggestion that such witness should be characterized as 'sheep stealing,' proselytizing or a wasteful use of resources."

Land devoted his column in the May-June issue of the CLC's Light publication to the Catholic-evangelical document.

--more--

"Unfortunately, some of the media reports have focused not on ... statements of agreement and disagreement (in the document), but rather on a small part of the document that explains the difference between 'evangelizing' and 'proselytizing,'" Land wrote. "The media have often left the erroneous impression that the document is an agreement not to evangelize among adherents of each others' faith communions. This is simply not true."

Citing various page numbers in the document, Land said it "simply says that once one has ascertained a person's personal commitment to Jesus as Lord and Savior and sought 'to persuade others that their communities and traditions are more fully in accord with the Gospel' that we then respect the denominational preference of 'the committed Christian' (p. 22).

"Nowhere does it say we should not witness to everyone," Land said.

"It also endorses a very baptistic view of soul liberty in proclaiming our joint commitment 'to full religious freedom' and denounces 'any form of coercion - physical, psychological, legal or economic --' in religion as a corruption of the Christian witness (p. 23) because 'religious freedom is the first freedom, the source and shield of all human freedoms' (p. 13)."

Land recounted that the document "arose out of two days of intensive discussions in New York between numerous evangelical and Catholic scholars who met to discuss common concerns on critical moral and social issues which we face as a civilization. During the course of the meeting, some remarkably candid and rather intensive theological discussions developed which brought into focus some major areas both of agreement and disagreement theologically. The common feeling was that, as the document puts it, we should 'reject any appearance of harmony that is purchased at the price of truth' (p. 4). Consequently, the document, written primarily by (Catholic thinker) Richard John Neuhaus and Chuck Colson in an editorial process of many months' duration, lays out the areas both of agreement and disagreement.

"While listing agreement on such social issues as being for religious liberty, the sanctity of human life, a reaffirmation of family and church in society, and being against abortion, euthanasia, pornography and racism, the document lists serious theological disagreements on things such as the nature and purpose of the church, the nature of Scripture's authority, the nature and definition of baptism and the Lord's Supper and the role of Mary," Land said.

"The document states forcibly," he said, "that on these and other subjects: 'Evangelicals hold that the Catholic Church has gone beyond Scripture, adding teachings and practices that detract from or compromise the Gospel of God's saving faith in Christ. Catholics, in turn, hold that such teachings and practices are grounded in Scripture and ... (t)heir rejection ... results in a truncated and reduced understanding of the Christian reality' (pp. 10-11)."

--30--

Ed Young names members  
of Credentials Committee

Baptist Press  
5/2/94

HOUSTON (BP)--Members of the Credentials Committee for the June 14-16 Orlando, Fla. meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention have been named by SBC President H. Edwin Young.

The committee will be chaired by Danny Strickland, pastor of Parkway Baptist Church in Orlando, according to Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Houston.

Other committee members are:

ALABAMA: Edward H. Givhan, layperson, First Baptist Church, Birmingham; Bill Hudgins, pastor, Hokes Bluff Baptist Church, Hokes Bluff; Randy Evers, pastor, First Baptist Church, Piedmont; Mike Cook, pastor, First Baptist of North Mobile, Saraland.

ARKANSAS: Bill Melton, pastor, Dove Circle Baptist Church, Holiday Island.

COLORADO: Larry Maxwell, pastor, Olivet Baptist Church, La Junta.

--more--

FLORIDA: Wil Mowdy, layperson, First Baptist Church, Orlando; Lee M. Sheppard, pastor, Arlington Baptist Church, Jacksonville; Jerry Garrard, pastor, Celebration Baptist Church, Tallahassee; Don Hicks, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Sanford; Bill Faulkner, pastor, First Baptist Church, Winter Garden.

GEORGIA: Lester L. Cooper Jr., pastor, Valley Hill Baptist, Riverdale.

INDIANA: James M. Bullock, pastor, Colgate Baptist Church, Clarksville.

KENTUCKY: Michael Routt, pastor, Easter Gate Baptist Church, Shepherdsville; Kent Workman, pastor, Second Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.

LOUISIANA: Charles W. Holloway, layperson, Oak Grove Baptist Church, Eros.

MISSISSIPPI: Roy V. Sims, layperson, First Baptist Church, Jackson.

NORTH CAROLINA: Jeff Isenhour, pastor, Arran Lake Baptist Church, Fayetteville.

NORTHWEST: George A. Jones, pastor, Trinity Baptist Church, Springfield, Ore.

OHIO: Doug Surber, pastor, Miami Shores Baptist Church, Dayton.

OKLAHOMA: Steve Bass, layperson, Berryhill Baptist Church, Tulsa; Donna Powell, layperson, First Baptist Church of Moore, Oklahoma City; Joe Dan Fowler, pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Shawnee.

SOUTH CAROLINA: Thomas M. Knotts, director of missions, Aiken Association, Graniteville; Jerry G. Long, pastor, First Baptist Church, Landrum.

VIRGINIA: M. David Myers, pastor, Union Chapel, Lynch Station; Mike Adams, pastor, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Gloucester.

--30--

Tellers Committee named  
by SBC President Ed Young

Baptist Press  
5/2/94

HOUSTON (BP)--H. Edwin Young, SBC president, has named members of the Tellers Committee for the June 14-16 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando, Fla.

Rex W. Horne, Jr., pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark. will be the committee chairman, according to Young, pastor of Houston's Second Baptist Church.

Other members of the committee are:

ALABAMA: Steve Loggins, pastor, Beechwood Baptist Church, Mt. Olive.

ARIZONA: Bruce Coe, pastor, First Baptist Church, Chandler.

COLORADO: Ron Rogers, pastor, Mountain Crest Baptist Church, Leadville.

FLORIDA: Bill F. Billingsley, pastor, Sheridan Hill Baptist Church, Hollywood; Don R. Lilly, layperson, First Baptist Church, Jacksonville; David Malheiro, pastor, Skycrest Baptist Church, Merritt Island; Hayes Wicker, pastor, First Baptist Church, Naples.

GEORGIA: Glenn E. Cox, pastor, Concord Baptist Church, Clermont; Ray Simpson, pastor, First Baptist Church of Gracewood, Augusta.

KENTUCKY: Paul R. Blizzard, pastor, Reidland Baptist Church, Paducah.

LOUISIANA: John Saunders, layperson, First Baptist Church, Farmersville.

MINNESOTA-WISCONSIN: Grant Hignight, pastor, Brown Deer Baptist Church, Brown Deer, Wis.

MISSISSIPPI: Phil Hanberry, pastor, Juniper Grove Baptist Church, Poplarville.

NEW MEXICO: Timothy M. Marrow, Sr., pastor, Taylor Rancho Baptist Church, Albuquerque.

NORTH CAROLINA: Allan Blume, pastor, Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Charlotte.

OKLAHOMA: Clayton Spriggs, pastor, First Baptist Church, Edmond; Wendell Lang, pastor, First Baptist Church, Pryor.

SOUTH CAROLINA: Skip Owens, pastor, Pinecrest Baptist Church, Charleston.

TENNESSEE: Joey Smith, layperson, First Baptist Church, Lawrenceburg; Lamar Moore, pastor, Lookout Valley Baptist Church, Chattanooga.

--more--

TEXAS: Sam Jones, pastor, First Baptist Church, Pittsburg; James Miller, pastor, Parks Heights Baptist Church, San Angelo; John Powers, pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Beaumont.

VIRGINIA: Linda S. Strode, layperson, Spotswood Baptist Church, Fredericksburg.

--30--

Parliamentarians named  
for SBC Orlando sessions

Baptist Press  
5/2/94

HOUSTON (BP)--President H. Edwin Young has named four parliamentarians for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando, Fla., June 14-16.

Contracted by the SBC and named chief parliamentarian is C. Barry McCarty, pastor of the Lakota Christian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, and adjunct professor at Northern Kentucky University.

Also on the parliamentarian team will be Joe Reynolds, attorney and member of Second Baptist Church in Houston; Jimmy Jackson, pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala.; and John L. Sullivan, executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention in Jacksonville.

All four also served at the SBC annual meeting last year in Houston.

--30--

Tanzanian youth goes home  
with new arm, loads of love

Baptist Press  
5/2/94

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Although he is only 14, John Meguliki has survived a lifetime of experiences.

But with help of a host of people from Tanzania to Jacksonville, Fla., his most harrowing experience has been somewhat redeemed by a new arm.

The odyssey began just over two years ago in the small Masai village of Kiria, about 50 kilometers south of Mt. Kilimanjaro in northern Tanzania. As young boys do, he and a couple of friends took a break from tending cattle to swim in a pond. A crocodile attacked and John's right arm was severed just below the elbow. Villagers say he was fortunate to survive.

That afternoon, Southern Baptist missionary Tim Tidenberg, passing through the area on his way back to his mission station, was stopped by a tribesman and told of the incident. Tidenberg went to the village and found John in a state of shock, still bleeding from the injury three hours earlier. John's parents are members of the Kiria Baptist Church in the village.

Tidenberg took the lad to Moshi where he received emergency treatment. The injury required surgery and skin grafts over a period of several months. After returning home, however, the bone in his arm continued to grow, which resulted in constant ruptures of the skin and infection.

Shortly thereafter, Florida and Tanzanian Baptists entered into a three-year missions partnership. Last summer, while visiting the region to work out details of the partnership, Florida Baptist Convention officials learned of John's plight through Tidenberg.

Upon their return to Jacksonville, Jim Goodson, director of the missions division, told Bill Mason, president and chief operating officer of Baptist Medical Center, about the young Masai. Mason, a former missionary to Tanzania, put together a network of physicians and services to not only correct the physical problem but provide a prosthesis -- a new arm -- for the boy.

Last October, Florida Baptist Witness editor Jack Brymer and Lance Anderson, a layman from DeFuniak Springs, visited in Kiria where they met John and his parents. Tidenberg explained to the parents that Brymer lived in Jacksonville and would be responsible for his welfare. They consented.

--more--

There was a hurdle to overcome, however. John could speak no English and the care givers in Jacksonville could speak no Swahili, the boy's language.

So, Tidenberg took a couple of weeks vacation and brought John to Jacksonville to get the process under way. Also, he arranged for Tanzanian pastor Elimbesi Mrema, who had ministered to the family when the accident occurred, to travel to Jacksonville. Mrema, pastor of Moshi Baptist Church, was proficient in the language and the plan was for him to stay until the treatment was complete and take John home.

Medical complications arose, however, and pastor Mrema was forced to go back to Tanzania. Tidenberg contacted John's parents for permission to let him remain until the treatment was completed.

During the five-and-a-half-month ordeal, John underwent surgery twice, saw his physician 36 times, underwent more than 40 two-hour treatments in a hyperbaric chamber and spent 16 days in Wolfson Children's Hospital at Baptist Medical Center.

Orthopedic surgeon Bruce Steinberg of Jacksonville Orthopedics Institute, provided John's medical care. Don Vaden with J.E. Hanger Co. provided the prosthesis. Hugh Jones, president of Baptist Health Care System Foundation, coordinated the services.

From his arrival Nov. 1 until pastor Mrema returned home Feb. 11, John resided at the Ronald McDonald House. After that, he lived during the week with Gary and Carolyn Nichols and their two daughters, Molly and Beth. Nichols is an associate in Florida Baptists' discipleship training department.

In addition to her duties as "momma," as John called her, Mrs. Nichols made frequent trips to the doctor's office and Baptist Medical Center for John's treatments.

Karen Dodge, secretary in the partnership office of Florida Baptist Men, coordinated John's schedule, which included numerous excursions and weekends with friends. Highlights included Disney World, the Kennedy Space Center and the Nutcracker Suite Ballet during the Christmas season.

On the Sunday before he left for home, John was baptized -- at his request -- by Brymer at Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church. He made the request through pastor Mrema before he left.

According to the boy, he had made his profession of faith before the accident but had not been baptized. Brymer urged John and Mrema to wait so his family could witness the event in his village, but John insisted and it was done.

The mercy mission also attracted the attention of local media. The Jacksonville Times-Union carried two lengthy features on the mission -- one when John arrived and the other the day he received his new arm.

At a "goodbye party," dozens of people came, some from out of town, who had met him in the hospital or at the Ronald McDonald House. Television cameras followed the teen with his new arm when he gave a small picture of himself, provided by the Nicholsons, to the doctors and nurses who had cared for him.

Repeatedly, he was hugged and told, "I love you, John."

"If you love people, and if you are moved by life's extremities, particularly when it involves a young person, then John Meguliki would move the hardest of hard hearts," said Cecil Seagle, Florida Baptist Men director. "I was moved by his need and challenged by the possibility and felt that God could do some great things through John beyond the restoration of his arm and his receiving the prosthesis.

"The truth is, the Lord used John Meguliki in a marvelous way to define what this partnership is all about, and it's about people," Seagle said.

--30--

Jack Brymer contributed to this story.

EDITORS' NOTE: Carolyn and Gary Nichols opened their home to Tanzanian Masai 14-year-old John Meguliki during two months of his stay in Jacksonville, Fla., for medical treatment for a severed arm. This article is Mrs. Nichols' reflections on their experience.

#### FIRST-PERSON

Memory of Tanzanian teen

touch family's restored calm      By Carolyn Nichols

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Gary and I knew from the first night with John Meguliki that quiet evenings with our two daughters, Molly and Beth, were gone for awhile.

John went to bed each night in the same high gear he awoke. After talking with other parents of boys, though, we decided it was not so much "African" as it was just "boy." Everything our girls played, he played harder and louder.

His grasp of spoken English was amazing, learned from hours of "Sesame Street," Discovery Channel and John Wayne movies watched from hospital beds and at the Ronald McDonald House.

He soon learned "neighborhood English," which included words like "gross" and his favorite, "gimme a break!" Still, he didn't understand when Beth wanted to sign up to study "spinach" (Spanish) in the seventh grade.

For most of his months with us, John received daily treatments at Baptist Medical Center. He would arrive home just in time to ride his bike to meet the middle school bus. He hurried the girls through their homework to get to swimming, soccer, Nintendo, softball and basketball.

At one time John developed an infection in his index finger from a splinter under his fingernail. When asked why he didn't tell us earlier that his finger hurt, he answered, "That my play Nintendo finger." After doctors removed the splinter and bandaged the finger, he came home and within two hours had burned the remaining three fingers on the gas grill. It was just as well he had to go to the hospital every day. He kept them busy.

He ate almost hourly. Aside from three meals a day were a daily half-dozen fruits, ice cream bars, yogurt, cheese and Coke floats. Special treats were daily mangos, a taste of home. I seldom refused him anything, for I didn't know if he would ever again be able to have all the food he wanted.

John is back home in Tanzania now and our evenings are back to the quiet norm, but our family will never be exactly the same.

We will never read news reports from Africa about civil wars, famine or disease with the same casual concern. And we will be more diligent in praying for the missionaries who serve in Africa. There is a beloved child there whom we have entrusted to our Heavenly Father's care.

--30--

---

CORRECTION: In the (BP) story, "Key SBC committee appointments made," dated 4/28/94, under the listing for Ohio please change Gene McBride to "pastor" of Hillsdale Baptist Church, St. Mary's.

Also, in the (BP) story, "Commission, committee nominees announced," dated 4/27/94, under American Baptist Seminary please change in the second paragraph the name of Frank D. Garley Jr. to Frank D. Farley Jr.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

---

HOUSE MAIL

**(BP)**

**BAPTIST PRESS**

901 Commerce #750

Nashville, TN 37203

Southern Baptist Library and  
Archives