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## -- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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NEWS ADVISORY: (BP) story titled "Baptist work among Kurds yields academy in Iraq," dated 5/9/94, was reviewed by the Foreign Mission Board prior to its release. However, since its publication, the Dallas bureau of Baptist Press has received an URGENT plea from a Christian in Iraq associated with the academy asking that the story not be published. He maintains that the article could endanger not only the work of the academy, but also the lives of students, faculty and administration. Editors are asked to consider his request.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

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16 Southern Baptist workers  
evacuate embattled Yemen

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press  
5/13/94

SANAA, Yemen (BP)--A Scud missile attack, the sound of sporadic gunfire for three nights running and the promise of no more scheduled evacuation flights caused 11 more Southern Baptist workers to leave embattled Yemen.

The latest evacuations brought to 16 the number of Southern Baptist workers who have left because of an intensifying civil war in the Red Sea nation. Thirty Southern Baptist personnel remained in the country as of May 13.

Months of clashes within the country's military broke into open warfare May 4 in the midst of feuding between the president, from the north, and his vice president, from the south. Yemen became a new nation in 1990 uniting northern and southern kingdoms under a democratic reform program, but its military has never unified and tensions between power brokers have persisted.

Six Southern Baptist workers hitched rides on a British Hercules transport plan out of Sanaa, the capital city, and landed in London May 12. Five others were to board a private oil plane to Cairo May 13. All expected to meet in Cyprus, an island nation in the Mediterranean Sea, for temporary assignment there.

On board the flights were the last five of eight Southern Baptist workers assigned to live in Sanaa. The other three evacuated May 7 and 9.

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Foreign governments were scheduling no more evacuation flights out of Yemen. But the only Southern Baptist workers left in the country -- 30 men and women working at Jibla Baptist Hospital in a remote mountainous area several hours south of Sanaa -- said they have enough cars and gasoline to make a run for Saudi Arabia if things h at up.

Officials for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, which owns the hospital, have been making contact daily with workers' families who live in the United States. "We're telling them what the status is on a regular basis," said Gerry Volkart, associate director for the board's Middle East operations.

Unl ss it becomes necessary to leave, the workers plan to keep the hospital in full operation. So far they have seen no cases of war injury. Fighting has been mostly limited to military action in a corridor between Sanaa and the southern port city of Aden, where southern forces have consolidated their power.

There were signs that could be changing, however. A Scud missile fired into a h avily populated area of Sanaa May 12 reportedly killed or wounded 53 people, dragging civilians into the war. Foreigners who evacuated said the blast blew out windows all over the city. Other Soviet-built Scuds had been fired by the south but had failed to explode.

This Scud, however, landed at about 1 a.m. and destroyed several mud-and-brick homes. The area of destruction was about a mile away from the homes of Southern Baptist workers Stephen and Kandi Edwards and Drew and Martha Whitson.

The Whitsons and their four children left Sanaa May 13. So did Al Lindholm, who had sent his wife, Edna, and their two children out May 9 while he packed for an early furlough. The Edwardses and their three girls were on the British flight May 12.

The Whitsons are from Dallas; the Lindholms, from San Luis Obispo, Calif., and Cadiz, Calif., respectively; and the Edwardses, from Calhoun, Ga., and Melbourne, Fla.

Apparent calm in the hospital region has been marred by the sound of gunfire throughout the night since May 9. It caused four Southern Baptist workers -- Peter and Donna Rush and Alan and Mary Ann Fite -- living in the town of Ibb not far from the Jibla hospital compound, to leave the country May 12 with their children. Two single workers -- Leslie Durham and Sherry DeVos -- living on the 22-acre hospital compound were to leave May 13.

The Rushes are from Redlands, Calif.; the Fites, from Macon, Ga., and Mexico, Mo., respectively; Durham, from Owensboro, Ky.; and DeVos from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Personnel evacuating earlier, besides Edna Lindholm, were Charles and Linda Renew of Blackville, S.C., and Barnwell, S.C., respectively; and Rodney and Diana Armstrong of DeSoto, Texas, and Irving, Texas.

Authorities in Ibb have issued a 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew. But it was unclear whether the gunfire was to enforce that curfew, or simply the sounds of practice sessions for police in Ibb.

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

Patterson: Racism not part  
of kingdom's citizenship

By Dwayne Hastings

Baptist Press  
5/13/94

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--There is no room for racial prejudice or bigotry in the pews and pulpits of churches, asserted Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Paige Patterson.

Sp aking during the last chapel service of the semester, Patterson pointed to the history of Southern Baptist churches, admitting, "Southern Baptists have a lot of makin' up to do.

"For our churches to harbor racist attitudes is inc mprehensible in light of the citizenship we have with God," Patters n said.

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Patterson pointed to the New Testament account of Simon Peter's visit with Cornelius at Caesarea as recorded in Acts, chapter 10, in which the apostle realized that both of them, one a Jew, the other a Gentile, had a common origin.

"It is a fact," Patterson noted, "we are all interrelated whether or not we like it.

"It has nothing to do with skin pigmentation; it has nothing to do with cultural origin. It has nothing to do with anything except that God created our original parents and from those two parents descended all the human race.

"The church is a raceless, classless institution," Patterson. "Every man is unique and wonderful. Every single man, woman, boy and girl in the world are the handiwork of God. No one is common."

Patterson said Simon Peter had "nailed this one down" in that God shows no partiality.

"This passage of Scripture, if there were no other supporting evidence, and there certainly is, would be sufficient to establish forever the racelessness of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ," he said.

So if Christians are true to their calling, he said, "the race issue ceases to exist." Christians must take the position with Peter that God shows no partiality and "in uncommon acceptance of everybody in the whole world, he reaches out to them."

Yet it is not simply a matter of accepting others equally because of Peter's example or even because he commands it, Patterson said. Rather, "we do it because we genuinely love the brethren."

While Patterson acknowledged it may be a "touchy issue" at times, a believer is negligent if he or she ignores the teaching of Scripture. "We have no other alternative," he said.

Patterson also addressed the matter of interracial marriages, saying there are some conditions under which such marriages "ought not to occur." These conditions are the very same under which a person of one race shouldn't marry someone of the same race, he said, noting, "What is prohibited in the Bible is marriage between a believer and an unbeliever."

Patterson continued by noting "on the basis of race alone, there is not one single biblical statement that can be fetched or even twisted to support a condemnation of interracial marriage."

He asked not to be misunderstood on the issue, saying, "I am not arguing it is always a wise thing for interracial marriages to take place, any more than I would argue that it is always a wise thing for someone from Brownsville, Texas, to marry somebody from New York City, regardless of what the racial situation may be."

Patterson noted many things go into making a wise decision on marriage, "most specially, the will and purpose of God."

He admonished those who "make up their theology as they go along. We have to take it like it is in the Word of God."

Patterson said he is "always amazed when people want to jettison the Genesis account of origins." He said, "If you make mythology out of the account of origins in the Old Testament, you disenfranchise somebody from the human race." Such a theology will give people reason to argue that another group of people "really didn't come from God," he said.

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'True Love Waits' part  
of Day of Prayer events

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
5/13/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--"True Love Waits," the sexual abstinence campaign initiated by the Baptist Sunday School Board, shared the focus during recent National Day of Prayer activities on Capitol Hill.

About 500 people filling a House of Representatives caucus room heard reports from three high school students on God's work among teen-agers in the areas of prayer, evangelism and moral purity.

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For those who believe all teens are out of control sexually, she was present to report "that is not the case," said Lisa Fox, a Southern Baptist. Many teens have made commitments to remain sexually pure until marriage through the "True Love Waits" campaign, she said.

She believes "God wants us to give him every aspect of our lives, and this includes our sexuality," said Fox, a member of Columbia Baptist Church in Fairfax, Va. She knows she "can't do it alone," said Fox, 18, but she depends on the power of the Holy Spirit to enable her to keep her pledge. Fox led in prayer for moral purity among young people.

The campaign will culminate July 29 with a rally on the mall between the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument. Richard Ross, a spokesman for "True Love Waits" and BSSB youth ministry consultant, said he believes there may be more than the original goal of 500,000 covenant cards planted on holders in the mall.

"'True Love Waits' is now the most widely covered, positive story about teenagers in the history of journalism," said Ross, who attended the National Day of Prayer event. The potential impact on the moral consciousness of the nation could be profound.

"A precedent of every spiritual awakening has been a renewed emphasis on holiness and moral purity. Many of us are beginning to wonder whether 'True Love Waits' might be part of God's plan to morally purify hundreds of thousands of teenagers who could be at the forefront of a sweeping revival in America."

His hope for just such an awakening was increased during meetings with national youth ministry leaders and the "True Love Waits" council in Washington prior to the May 5 National Day of Prayer event. "True Love Waits," originally planned as a one-time event among Southern Baptists, not only has spread to 24 other denominations and ministries, but it will be an annual emphasis, Ross said.

In a time dedicated to prayer for various youth ministries, Ross and Dean Finley, assistant director of church growth and associational evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, were present along with 16 other leaders. In introducing Ross and Finley, Julio Hernandez, 18, and also a member of Columbia Baptist Church, asked for prayers of thanksgiving for "True Love Waits" and for prayers for the establishment of 300 new student Bible clubs on the country's secondary-school campuses.

The hope of revival also was the theme of popular author and radio host James Dobson during the prayer event in the Cannon House Office Building.

Dobson said he is "more hopeful now than I've been any time in the last 10 years, because of what I see happening."

Conservative Republican Pat Buchanan recently told him on a Focus on the Family radio program, Dobson said, in 1979 "it felt like there was no way on earth that we could win the Cold War." Buchanan recalled the Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan and it appeared communism would sweep Latin America, Dobson said. Now, communism has fallen in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and faltered in Latin America.

"I believe that's going to happen again" in the culture war, Dobson said, "and I believe there are a lot of real good reasons for optimism today."

He cited the prayer movement manifested not only in the increasing popularity of National Day of Prayer, but in such ministries as Moms in Touch, Concerts of Prayer, Promisekeepers and See You at the Pole.

"As the culture gets darker, as the moral free-fall descends on the culture, there are these lights that are coming up, and they are shining," Dobson said. "And I believe the Lord has really marvelous things in store for this country. The things that concern us most have opened the door to the gospel like wasn't possible 10, 12, 14 years ago."

He said he believes the "American people are now becoming aware that we really do need a revival and spiritual renewal," said Dobson, who led in prayer for the family. "I think that is a widespread perspective in this country among people of faith. ... and I believe there is a revival coming. That's what we need to pray for. Nothing short of that's going to save us. Nothing short of that's going to save our kids. That's what will heal our families too."

Dobson's wife, Shirley, is chairman of the National Day of Prayer Task Force.

During the Capitol Hill observance, congressional and Clinton administration officials, as well as others, also led in prayer for the government, pastors, the inner cities, the media, education and sports personalities.

On the eve of National Day of Prayer, Shirley Dobson led about 70 people in a 30-minute prayer meeting in Lafayette Park across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House. The participants prayed for guidance in decision-making for President Bill Clinton and other members of his administration, as well as for their families, said Michelle

Garland, National Day of Prayer media coordinator.

National Day of Prayer activities also included "Meet at City Hall" events in communities throughout the country. Citizens gathered at local government buildings during the lunch hour to pray.

Congress established National Day of Prayer in 1952. In 1988, an amendment set the first Thursday in May for the observance.

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Americans United targets  
National Day of Prayer

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
5/13/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--At least one church-state organization announced its opposition to National Day of Prayer, which was held May 5.

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, criticized the observance as a violation of the principle of church-state separation.

"I am a minister, and I believe in prayer," Lynn said in a prepared statement. "But I do not believe government officials have any right to tell Americans when or how to pray."

Lynn, formerly on the staff of the American Civil Liberties Union, is a United Church of Christ minister.

James Madison and Thomas Jefferson opposed the concept of proclamations designating days of prayer, Lynn said. President Bill Clinton issued a proclamation proclaiming National Day of Prayer, as have other presidents since Congress established the observance in 1952.

Lynn expressed concern the event had become in "many communities ... little more than a Religious Right rally. Government officials have no business catering to that sort of religiously divisive -- and often sectarian -- event."

Southern Baptist religious liberty attorney Michael Whitehead said, "At least Americans United is consistent. Other strict separationist groups who criticized 'civil religion' in the past cannot bring themselves to criticize President Clinton in the same way they did Presidents Reagan and Bush, but A.U. does not waiver from its principles. We simply disagree with A.U.'s strict separationist views.

"Strict separationists on the Religious Left seem to be on a search-and-destroy mission to remove the acknowledgement of God from public life," said Whitehead, general counsel of the Christian Life Commission. "Yet they say the Religious Right is dangerous for religion. We want government to accommodate both the Religious Right and the Religious Left, while keeping the institutions of church and state separate. Prayer proclamations are benevolently neutral accommodations of religion, recognizing the freedom of all Americans to pray or not to pray, as they choose."

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Race chaplain runs  
in the fast lane

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press  
5/13/94

TALLADEGA, Ala. (BP)--A shouting Baptist minister is nothing new unless he is trying to be heard over the roar of V-8 racing engines.

As chaplain to stock car drivers and fans, Frank Stark says his current job description parallels the one at his former pastorate in Strafford, Mo.

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"We're not organized as a church, but this is my field right here," he says, moti ning to the pits where drivers and mechanics pr pare for a race that aft rnoon.

"We have weddings here, counsel with the bereaved. Talk with people, listen to them, pray with them. Share their burdens and their joys," he says. "You do basically the same things. It's just that your congregation's a lot farther away from home."

Drivers describe Stark as a friend and confidant in an increasingly competitive profession. Often, more than 50 racing teams with \$60,000 automobiles compete for only 40 starting positions in a race, said Bob Loga, president of the Automobile Racing Club of America.

"He always has time to stop and talk," says ARCA driver Loy Allen Jr. "He's always uplifting when you meet him because he has such a positive attitude."

Part-time driver Jim Elliott agrees. "He's just been a good friend and a special person," says Elliott, who was married five years ago by Stark under his tent outside turn three at Talladega Superspeedway. "I always want to look him up as soon as I get to the race track so I can shake his hand and feel good."

Stark began hosting services for fans in 1982 after finding no worship service at his first trip to a NASCAR race. "Seeing 135,000 people with no church, I said, 'H re's a tremendous opportunity. Somebody ought to do something.'"

Four years later, Stark became chaplain to the racers, crews, families and officials of ARCA, the second largest sanctioning body for racing, next to NASCAR. In addition to leading a weekly worship service, Stark also staffs the infield care center during ARCA races.

Before the green flag drops, Stark often shakes hands with each driver during introductions, wishing them "Godspeed and God's safety." Before and after races, Stark roams the pits, offering a pastor's heart to those who can't get to a church on Sunday mornings.

"We've had some scary moments and some stressful times," says Kay Keselowski, wife of 1989 ARCA champion Bob. "Frank has helped me put that in perspective as far as putting trust in God."

Stark's sermon illustrations often include racing analogies. At Talladega, he compares knowing about Jesus and having faith in him to the difference between a fan knowing about cars and a driver who gets in one and races around the track, putting his faith in the work of his mechanics.

Stark's interest in racing began when he was young. "When I was just a small kid, dad used to take me to the old jalopy races back home."

While a pastor in Springfield, Mo., Stark often spent Friday nights with a deacon who managed the local fairgrounds track. In time, Stark was asked to giv the invocation before races and to help minister to drivers' families after wrecks.

Stark began vacationing at Talladega and other tracks, hosting worship services and Saturday night country singings with people trained to share their faith.

In 1985, he left his church to begin Raceway Ministries Inc., establishing a nonprofit organization and becoming a Mission Service Corps volunteer with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

His decals include a portion of Acts 20:24, "If only I may finish the race." He adds, "One driver said, 'That's been my prayer all season.'"

Raceway Ministries has attracted the attention of others, and Stark has trained several groups to develop similar ministries at local tracks or on other circuits.

He says he wants local congregations to adopt race tracks and host the worship services for fans because they are better prepared to meet the ongoing ministry n eds of those they reach. Of the 18 NASCAR tracks, 13 now have locally lead ministries to fans, he says.

"The most difficult part is trying to get the church to see that this is a mission field," he adds. Racing's reputation prevents some churches from being involved in such ministries, says Bill Brannon of Atlanta, who sometimes assists Frank in his work.

"The race fan has a reputation as being a hard drinker and so forth, but he's one of the few that loves God and country," Brannon says. "Racing is one of the few major sporting events that is opened with an invocation."

Most unique ministries take time to gain legitimacy, Stark says. "You have to build a good track record," he says. "No pun intended."

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(BP) photos (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Color slides are also available to papers. Cutlines are on SBCNet. Frank Stark will be at the following locations for his chaplaincy ministry to ARCA: May 15, Louisville, Ky.; June 11 and July 16, Pocono at Long Pond, Penn.; June 18, Brooklyn, Mich.; Aug. 7, Odessa, Mo.; Aug. 21, Springfield, Ill.; Sept. 25, Salem, Ind.; Nov. 12, Atlanta.

Catholic bishop touts benefits  
of Baptist volunteer training

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
5/13/94

DALLAS (BP)--Volunteer chaplaincy training provided by the Baptist General Convention of Texas proved so beneficial that a Catholic Bishop in central Texas donated \$1,000 to the program.

"He said his people had benefited so much from the training, he wanted to contribute to it," said Clayton Watkins, director of volunteer chaplaincy for the BGCT's church ministries department.

About 300 Texas pastors and laypersons representing "every denomination you could name" will have completed volunteer chaplaincy training by early summer, according to Watkins, a retired hospital chaplain from Terrell, Texas.

Enhanced self-esteem, improved personal relationships and a new vision for ministry are among the benefits participants in the Texas Baptist volunteer chaplaincy training have received, Watkins said.

"It's mind-boggling to think about. After a study on human relationships, I had a group of young black men come up to me and say that for the first time they understood why they felt as they did toward Anglos," he said.

"So many people say, 'I came to get training to minister to others, and the personal benefit to me has been so great.'"

Participants receive training in listening skills, and the program provides insights into interpersonal relationships, personality development and emotional problems.

The 42-hour course generally is offered on seven consecutive Saturdays in six-hour installments, but the scheduling varies from one locale to another.

"We've had no problem with attrition," Watkins said. "In fact, we generally gain students from one week to the next."

Training is made available at no cost to participants through the Cooperative Program and Texas Baptist gifts to the state missions offering.

Although designed primarily to equip Texas Baptists for volunteer service, the training is open to Christians of all denominations.

Six retired chaplains with more than 150 years combined experience in military, hospital, industrial and criminal justice chaplaincy form the training and development team for the Texas Baptist volunteer chaplaincy program.

In addition to Watkins, the other five Mission Service Corps volunteers are Newton Cole of Houston; Howard Linton of San Antonio, Texas; Emmett Solomon of Huntsville, Texas; Gilbert Thornton of Longview, Texas; and Hylon Vickers of Elgin, Texas.

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