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Haitians live 'like rats'
during political turmoil

By Mary E. Speidel

Baptist Press
7/19/94

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (BP)--As economic sanctions take their toll in the Western hemisphere's poorest country, Haitians are "becoming like rats."

Haitians use that phrase to describe "being tough and able to endure a lot," explained Mark Rutledge, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionary to Haiti.

It suggests the "positive characteristics of rats: They can live on hardly anything. They can make do with whatever they have. They're exceptionally resourceful about how they live and cope," the missionary said.

But it also suggests another condition common to rats: hunger. "Making do" gets harder by the day in Haiti.

"People can't continue to live this way. Many go to sleep without eating and knowing if there'll be food tomorrow," Haitian Baptist leader Joseph Ilné Elysee told Rutledge by phone from Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital.

Since leaving Haiti June 20, Rutledge and his wife, Peggy, from Murfreesboro, Tenn., and Glendale, Calif., respectively, have been staying in Hollywood, Fla.

While many Haitians worry about their next meal, Haiti watchers predict the U.S. military soon will invade the island nation to restore ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power. The United States reportedly has stationed about 7,500 Marines and sailors in 16 ships off Haiti's coast.

That show of force is the U.S. government's latest tactic to pressure Haiti's ruling military junta to step down. Earlier attempts to do that -- economic sanctions, an air transportation embargo, a freeze of financial transactions with Haiti -- so far have failed to dislodge the junta. But they have severely damaged the rest of Haiti.

"It's hurt everybody from the richest to the poorest," said Ilné of the trade sanctions. "Nobody has been exempt."

The poorest Haitians have paid the highest price. On July 7 a Haitian family brought their 8-month-old infant to a village medical clinic affiliated with Global Outreach, a mission agency based in Tupelo, Miss. The child was so severely malnourished by the time he arrived, health care workers couldn't save him. He died July 12.

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Two years ago another Haitian child died of malnutrition in the driveway of Southern Baptists David and Judy Heady. The Headys, from Owensboro, Ky., earlier worked as Foreign Mission Board volunteers in Haiti. Now they're Global Outreach missionaries who operate a conference center about 15 miles from Port-au-Prince. The child's family was bringing him to the center to try to get medical help.

"I said to my wife, 'We can no longer sit back and see children dying from malnutrition when we can do something about it,'" recalled Heady in a phone interview from Haiti.

In response, the couple helped start programs to feed 300 children, 25 senior citizens and 25 mothers in the area. They also lead a program that pumps about 6,000 gallons of clean water a day into several villages.

During the past year soaring fuel prices have forced them to spend \$32,000 on diesel fuel to operate these projects. They have applied for humanitarian fuel available through the U.S. government but haven't yet received it. They pay three times as much for food as they did a year ago.

The Headys work with the Baptist Convention of Haiti, to which Foreign Mission Board and American Baptist missionaries also relate. Haitian Baptist leaders were meeting the week of July 17 in Limbe, Haiti, to celebrate the convention's 30th anniversary.

In light of current conditions in Haiti, "the celebrations will probably be quite toned down," said Rutledge.

The Rutledges have phoned Haitian Baptists several times since leaving Haiti.

"They were encouraged that we called and that we're still praying for and thinking about them," Mrs. Rutledge said. "It's a very stressful time for them. They're requesting more prayer for what they're going through. They're hoping we'll be able to get back as soon as possible."

So are the Rutledges, who operate an agricultural program in Haiti's central plateau. Until they can return, they spend their days doing paper work. They also are contacting the U.S. Treasury Department to find out how the stoppage of financial transactions with Haiti will affect their agricultural work.

The United States has said humanitarian projects will be exempt from the banking freeze, but the Rutledges still haven't been granted exemption for their project. If they don't get it, about 25 Haitians working for the project will lose their jobs.

In addition, the missionaries are looking into ministry possibilities among Haitian refugees. But they aren't sure yet where they are needed. That's partly because of shifting U.S. policies concerning Haitian refugees and the government's change of plans for creating "safe havens" for refugees in other countries. Since July 1 the U.S. Coast Guard has rescued more than 15,000 Haitians fleeing the island nation by boat.

"We've been very concerned, watching the news and buying all the newspapers every day to try to keep up with what's happening," said Mrs. Rutledge.

She tells of a deaf Haitian woman she befriended in the rural area where the Rutledges live. Before the missionaries left Haiti, the woman died from severe diarrhea caused by a parasite. Mrs. Rutledge searched desperately for the simple medicine to treat the illness, but it wasn't available.

The medicine wasn't embargoed, she explained, but sanctions were partly to blame. In that rural area, suppliers eager to earn extra money had been shipping in embargoed items, so that other products had become scarce.

As a gift to her friend, Mrs. Rutledge sewed the woman's burial dress from just over a yard of fabric -- all the woman's family had.

"That was cathartic for me," she said.

**Missionaries still in Haiti
stay in touch, ask for prayer** By Mary E. Speidel

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (BP)--Twice each day, David Heady talks on his ham radio to fellow missionaries in Haiti.

"We're trying as best we know how to carry on our lives with as much normalcy as possible," said Heady, a Southern Baptist who operates a Baptist conference center about 15 miles from Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital.

Heady and his wife, Judy, from Owensboro, Ky., are among several hundred American missionaries who opted to stay in Haiti despite the U.S. State Department's call to evacuate in June. About 50 of them check on each other's safety each day by radio.

"Pray for our safety, that we would have godly wisdom, that we would be strong and of good courage," said Heady, who works with Global Outreach, a mission agency in Tupelo, Miss. "If there's ever a time Haitians need to see Christ in us, it's in this hour."

Most of the estimated 2,000 missionaries who work in Haiti have left the country, Heady said. Among those are Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries Mark and Peggy Rutledge from Murfreesboro, Tenn., and Glendale, Calif., respectively; Todd Lowe, a journeyman from Central, S.C.; and Ed Brentham, an International Service Corps volunteer from Belton, Texas. Brentham's wife, Mary, already was in the United States for medical treatment.

Foreign Mission Board missionaries Jim and Grace Ziler, who are transferring to Haiti from Brazil, were supposed to move to Haiti in July after finishing language school. The Zilers, from Avilla and New Haven, Mo., respectively, the Rutledges and Lowe are exploring temporary ministry options among Haitian refugees.

The Brenthams are to take a temporary agricultural assignment in Barbados.

Most of the 21 American Baptist missionaries assigned to Haiti evacuated in June. Five remain to operate the Good Samaritan Hospital, a Baptist facility in Limbe.

Among several evangelical groups contacted by Baptist Press, the Mennonite Central Committee and Free Methodist World Missions reported most of their personnel remain in Haiti. Groups whose missionaries have left the country or have been unable to return from furlough include the Assemblies of God and Church of the Nazarene. The staff of Campus Crusade for Christ International are staying in Haiti; its personnel are Haitians.

Heady explained why he chose to stay amid Haiti's political and economic turmoil:

"I've always believed that when God gives you a vision, you stay with that vision and do what God's called you to do. We're in the 'kingdom' business, not in the political government business. That's not to say I don't keep myself aware of what's going on," he said. Heady serves in his area as a warden for the U.S. Embassy in Haiti. Volunteer wardens keep other Americans in their area aware of developments affecting them and of messages from the embassy.

But he empathizes with missionaries who opted to leave Haiti because of their individual situations or whose mission agencies urged them to leave.

"I can imagine what would be going on in their hearts and minds with Haiti being at the top of the news," he said.

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U.S. embargo, military threats
killing Haiti's poor, Jones says

Baptist Press
7/19/94

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Haiti's poor can't wait for U.S. sanctions and embargoes to force the country's military rulers from power, according to Larry Jones, founder and president of Feed the Children.

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"There's an old African saying," Jones told The Daily Oklahoman in Oklahoma City, where the relief ministry is headquartered: "'If you give a rich man less food he becomes thin. If you give a poor man less food he dies.'

"If you try to put pressure on the rich with an embargo," said Jones, a Southern Baptist minister, "you slaughter the poor."

Instead of a military invasion of the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation to topple Haiti's military rulers, Jones told the newspaper, "We need a mission of compassion."

Jones visited Haiti for five days in June. He said he saw a country gutted by hunger, poverty and a 75 percent unemployment rate.

Jones said he also saw cardboard lean-to homes and abandoned, sick children left to die in hospitals.

"A mother offered me a child, and that's not the first time," Jones recounted to the newspaper. "They feel like if they can make it to the U.S. they might have a change of living. That's the depth of their love. They are willing to give their child up."

According to a report from Harvard, about 1,000 children die each month in Haiti -- but, Jones said, "When we talked with people in the clinics they said it was probably more than 1,000 a week."

There is no medicine for sick children in Haiti, Jones also wrote in a column in the Dallas Morning News. "After two years of embargo, the only hope for a sick child is to be abandoned at a hospital."

Jones said Haitians scoffed at the idea of a military invasion, asking him, "What's there to invade?"

Feed the Children's ministry in Haiti, one of 68 countries where it has relief programs, has included provision of food, clothing, medical and education assistance to more than 10,000 Haitian children; medical clinic work; and an agricultural development program benefitting 600 Haitian farm families. The ministry was able to get one flight of food into Haiti in June.

Jones told CNN July 16, "... literally thousands of people are depending upon us for food, but right now our warehouse is empty."

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Despite low inner-city turnout,
Centrifuge yields high returns By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
7/19/94

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Leaders of the new inner-city Centrifuge camps launched this summer refuse to be discouraged about the low turnouts. They have taken the attitude in this foundation-laying year that lives, not numbers, are important.

"Steve and I said from the first day if one teen-ager's life is impacted or transformed by Centrifuge, that's one more of our African American people who will stay alive," said Barbara Warfield, development director of the new African American inner-city Centrifuge camps. Her husband, Steve Warfield, is coordinator of the Centrifuge/Crosspoint section for the Baptist Sunday School Board which sponsors the events.

This is the first year Centrifuge has been offered for inner-city young people, said Joe Palmer, manager of the Centrifuge and Crosspoint programs. "For the past 16 years, it has been a suburban type camp. We have never tried to reach the inner cities."

Centrifuge is a one-week camp for seventh through 12th graders that mixes recreation, Bible study, worship and classroom tracks together for a complete worship experience, Palmer said.

"If we are going to reach African American kids, we have to reach the cities. And if we are going to reach those kids in the cities, we have to go where they are," Palmer said.

While Centrifuge has "great credibility" among white Southern Baptist churches, non-white Southern Baptists have not heard much about it, he said.

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"We are trying to break cultural barriers and tak Centrifuge beyond the doors of the traditional Southern Baptist church," Palmer said. "The worship at the African American camps is definitely culturally different."

Centrifuge camps in inner cities do take on a different beat. The music is more lively; the participants more limber; the "Amens" and "Praise Gods" and "Uh-huhs, brother or sister" more audible.

Relating to African Americans within their culture is necessary to reach the young people, Palmer and Warfield agree.

"If we as Baptists say we really want to reach our country, we have to reach our youth," Palmer said. "If you look at the death rate among teens, especially blacks, you will see that violent deaths -- shootings -- are the No. 1 killer. We have to keep this from happening, and the only way we will do it is to reach our kids."

Inner-city Centrifuge camps are being held in 10 locations this summer. The St. Louis camp marked the mid-point for the traveling team of 12 staffers and the Warfields who are going from one end of the United States to another. The staffers are all African American college students who were trained at the beginning of the summer to lead the camps.

The Centrifuge staff began its grueling journey June 13 with a camp in Louisville and expects to complete its travels with a camp in Los Angeles, Aug. 19. Camps also have been or are expected to be held in Milwaukee; Hammond, Ill.; Nashville, Tenn.; Houston; Dallas and Oakhurst, Calif.

"In every week, starting with Louisville, we have had professions of faith," Warfield said. "One young man in Louisville was really a fighter when he first began camp. But he hooked up with (two male staffers) and rode his bike in 100-degree temperatures three miles each way every day to camp."

"That week the kids went from fighting and bad language to 28 decisions being made," she said.

In Milwaukee, Warfield said three male teens gave their lives to Jesus. "Most people see young African American males as an endangered species," she said. "But it seems to give them hope when they see our young African American college students as role models.

"Some of our Christian male staffers have survived the very same thing these young teen-agers are encountering. At our camps they get a lot of encouragement, love, understanding and realness. These are things they don't get on a daily basis."

In Hammond, Ill., Warfield said a mother enrolled her 13-year-old daughter and pleaded with them to "do something for my daughter." By Wednesday of that week, the mother told Warfield her daughter was already a different person.

At the same camp, Warfield said six girls attending from a local group home made professions of faith.

"We might not have had 300 kids at each camp like we had hoped, but in each camp God has shown us that we can make a difference in the lives of those who do attend," she said.

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(BP) photos (horizontals) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press. The cutlines, citycut.txt, are posted in the SBCNet News Room.

African American camp team
ready to hit the road again

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
7/19/94

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Eleven of the 12 members of a traveling African American ministry team said they would definitely "do it" again next summer given the chance. The 12th and oldest member, 42-year-old Beverly Sonnier, qualified, "if the Holy Spirit leads."

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The grueling travel schedule is leading the team and its two directors from one end of the United States to another conducting inner-city Centrifuge camps. They began their journey June 13 in Louisville, Ky., and will complete their trip in Los Angeles, Aug. 19. In addition to the St. Louis, Louisville and Los Angeles locations, the team has or is expected to travel to Milwaukee; Hammond, Ill.; Nashville, Tenn.; Houston; Dallas; and Oakhurst, Calif.

This is the first year the Baptist Sunday School Board has sponsored inner-city Centrifuge camps for African Americans, according to Steve Warfield, coordinator of the Centrifuge/Crosspoint section in the discipleship and family youth-children-preschool department. Warfield and his wife, Barbara, are directing the staff of 12 and traveling with them this summer.

A week-long recreation and Bible study camp for seventh through 12th graders, Centrifuge has been around for 16 years, according to Warfield. However, he said the camps have not been offered in inner-city locations. Many black pastors have never heard of them, he added.

He expects that to change this summer. One thing he said he knows has changed is the spiritual makeup of the staffers.

"They are changing. There is a difference in them from when they began training May 26 to now," Warfield said. "There was a difference after the first week.

"Some of them didn't know what ministry was all about," he said, explaining some traditional Southern Baptist African American churches don't put what teenagers and young adults would term pizzazz in their worship. The result is restless young people who think church is a drag. They grow up without realizing ministry can be fun.

At mid-point in their journey, the Centrifuge staffers agree with Warfield they have grown from leading day camps for young people who live in the midst of inner-city turmoil.

Beverly Sonnier, or Miss "B," said she is like a mother to the other staffers, an opportunity that has been "life changing," while it teaches her patience.

A single mother of one daughter (Desiree), Sonnier said living with and traveling from city to city with the other staffers "is like having 11 Desirees."

Sonnier, who starts graduate school this fall at Howard University School of Divinity near Washington, said as she has learned to live with a group "with different temperaments," she has become "more aware of other folks' feelings."

As a former felony probation officer for the Georgia Department of Corrections (she quit her job in Atlanta and gave away all her possessions to start school), Sonnier said caring about the way others feel and viewing life with emotion is a recaptured experience for her.

"As a felony probation officer, you become hardened to the world around you. I have learned to cry easily here. I just let my tears flow," she said.

Since beginning Centrifuge, she said she has been led by God to go in a different vocational direction. As a part-time writer and conference leader for the Sunday School Board, Sonnier said she thought she might like to take her advanced divinity degree and start a publishing company. Now she knows her priority is to work with youth.

"In touching these lives this summer, I am beginning to see how badly youth leaders are needed. Most kids just want to know somebody honestly cares about them and likes them just the way they are. I'm just hoping we are planting some seeds this summer."

Camp pastor, Sheridan Nelson, a senior business management major at Norfolk State University in Virginia, said he is "definitely not the same person" he was when he started the summer camps.

He said the changes have come predominantly in his outlook of ministry. "I used to be very serious all the time, but I've learned through this experience that worship can be fun.

"I didn't realize how important recreation was until I experienced Centrifuge. I can now allow young people to be themselves and experience their kind of worship that includes a sense of high energy and creativity."

Nelson said he also will take back to his church at Second Calvary Baptist in Norfolk a greater heart for young people.

"I have such a deep, sincere burden for young people now," said Nelson, who plans to work with youth in his church when he returns to school.

Janet Hartness, a junior at Alabama State University in Montgomery, said she thought she was supposed to help the young people grow in spiritual maturity. "But instead they are helping me grow.

"I'm not the same person I was when I left school. It's easy to be a Christian around all these Christians, but at school it was harder," said the music education major.

"But now that I've grown, I think it might be easier. I feel like I've taken a shower for 20 years. I feel so refreshed."

Other members of the traveling team are Allen Todd Jr., a junior at Morehouse College in Atlanta; Orlando Dallas, BSU interim director at Chicago State University; Kantis Simmons, a junior at Norfolk State University; Doris Thomas, a junior at Howard University School; Chasidy Danielle Anthony, a junior at Hampton University in Hampton, Va.; James E. Jones, a senior at Norfolk State University; Dionne Wise, a junior at Norfolk State; Chris Suber, a junior at Norfolk; and Candace Polk, a senior at Chicago State.

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press. The outline, citycut.txt, is posted in the SBCNet News Room.

Georgia's worst natural disaster
floods Baptists with ministry By James Dotson

Baptist Press
7/19/94

ALBANY, Ga. (BP)--It began July 3 with the remnants of Tropical Storm Alberto moving in through the Florida Panhandle and across into Georgia. Coastal residents were relieved. Georgians rejoiced that another hurricane had not struck the Southeast.

But then the storm stalled over Georgia. And it stayed.

The Great Flood of 1994 -- now called the worst natural disaster in Georgia's history -- has occupied headlines nationwide for about two weeks. Reports of more than 21 inches of water in one day in Americus and similar volumes in other areas rocked Georgia as the scope of the crisis became apparent. The swirling storm appeared to be sucking mass quantities of water from the Gulf of Mexico and dumping it on central and southwestern Georgia, swelling the Flint and Ocmulgee Rivers and their associated lakes and tributaries to unprecedented levels.

As much as 10,000 square miles was covered by water, hundreds of homes and businesses were destroyed, and crop damage is estimated at \$100 million. At least 43 counties were declared federal disaster areas. Thirty people were confirmed dead.

President Clinton, in a July 13 visit to Albany, pledged millions of dollars in flood relief, made all the more essential by the fact most of the flood victims had no flood insurance -- they weren't supposed to need it.

But as in past disasters, Southern Baptists have responded well. Help came in the form of immediate assistance to friends and family, as well as through coordinated efforts of churches, associations and Southern Baptist disaster relief operations.

"I saw an amazing response from the local Baptists in their churches," said Rick Patchin, an associate in the Georgia Baptist Convention Brotherhood department and state on-site coordinator for disaster relief operations. "Before Georgia Baptist disaster relief even got there they were already responding -- setting up shelters, feeding people, meeting all kinds of needs, from the smallest church to the largest church."

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The flooding began soon after the storm hit Georgia.

In Macon, flooding that began July 5 ironically has caused a continuing emergency -- lack of drinking water. The city's water treatment plant lies adjacent to the Ocmulgee River. Early in the crisis, waters overran tanks and contaminated treated water. The city had only the water already in the system before running out.

Frank Broome, director of missions for Macon Baptist Association, said a week after flooding began the city had settled into a routine. Drinking and cooking water was available at sites throughout the city, often directly from tanker trucks. Water for other uses was transported in 30-gallon garbage cans, many of which were donated to the association for distribution. Water was trucked in from friends in nearby counties who had well water, and rainwater was trapped for flushing toilets.

"My family and I have taken a bath in three different homes," Broome said. "And then we bring back water from those places."

Churches mobilized to take care of their own members as well as others, he said. "I would say there's not a single member of a church that has been without water. So churches have done a good job."

Baptist volunteers have been active in working with coordinated relief efforts -- delivering water to residents, staffing the spigots at central distribution centers, helping answer phones and guiding tanker truck drivers to distribution points. "I'm a believer in trying to work through the system," Broome said.

The city has settled in for the long haul. Although officials hoped to have water service restored by the end of this week, it likely will not be fit to drink for at least several more weeks.

To the southwest in Montezuma, downtown storeowners July 12 had spent about two days cleaning out what was left of their businesses. The thick stench of sewage filled the air as mud-covered workers pulled furniture and fixtures out into the street. The road was coated with the brown silt of the Flint.

Wayne Nelson, owner of Christopher's furniture store, said he lost almost his entire inventory, which was uninsured.

"We're in good shape," Nelson said nevertheless. "A friend of mine the other day wrote that he had cancer. So I don't have anything to complain about."

At Whitewater Baptist Church on the other side of the river near Oglethorpe, church members also kept up good spirits -- despite the near total loss of their small country church and parsonage.

Pastor Kevin Cone, only four months out of seminary, said decisions were still being made about how next to proceed.

Outside at a table were sandwiches prepared by church members, as well as hot meals provided by the Red Cross. In all likelihood, those meals were prepared by the Rehoboth Baptist Association disaster relief feeding unit based at Perry Elementary School -- one of five such units that by July 15 had provided more than 48,000 meals to flood victims and volunteers throughout the affected areas.

From the Red Cross Mass Care Headquarters in Columbus, Patchin and Ray Newman, GBC Brotherhood department director and communications coordinator for disaster relief operations, oversaw the network of volunteers.

In addition to Rehoboth association, Kilpatrick Baptist Association had a feeding unit in Cordele; a Noonday Baptist Association feeding unit and other volunteers manned a station at First Baptist Church in Albany; North Carolina had a feeding unit set up on the other side of the river in Albany at Sunnyside Baptist Church; and a unit from South Carolina was set up at First Baptist Church in Donalsonville.

Newman said by July 18 specially trained teams from Tennessee and Illinois were expected to be on site in Albany providing child care at shelters.

"The children are traumatized," Newman said. "They are very fearful and afraid ... so (relief workers) take the children and they create a light moment with them." Training for more child care workers was provided in Columbus on July 14 and 16.

Many churches have responded in various ways, whether by collecting cleaning supplies, volunteering for cleanup, or opening their doors as shelters. He hesitated to list churches operating shelters because there were so many.

Patchin said feeding and cleanup teams likely will remain in place for another few weeks, although the need for volunteers to assist with reconstruction probably will continue for more than a year.

In comparing the floods to last year's disaster in the Midwest, he said Georgia was fortunate in that the waters receded relatively quickly, minimizing the damage and cleanup needs. No new feeding teams will likely be called in from other states. Other teams were operating in affected areas of Alabama and Florida, however.

The Americus area was the deadliest of the flood sites, with 15 of the 30 deaths occurring in Sumter County -- primarily due to a series of small dam failures. First Baptist Church members Becky Kerlin and Kathi Elliott are coordinating the cleanup efforts, which involve sending teams to assess a home's condition and then assigning work crews. The church served as the initial Red Cross shelter and a gathering point for volunteers.

Reed Crumbliss, pastor of the church, expressed appreciation for the volunteer spirit. "Basically, Americus is taking care of itself," he said.

Sherwood (Ga.) Baptist Church opened its facilities as both a feeding station and shelter housing 250 people ranging in age from a newborn to a 102-year-old man. Church hostess Eydie McDaniel, coordinated the food service, which provided three meals and two snacks to between 250 and 300 guests and volunteer workers. Most of the food, as well as the volunteer staff has come from the Sherwood church family.

Mike DeLoach, director of the Sherwood shelter, summarized the desire of many in this devastated, yet hopeful community.

"We are pulling together. We are crossing racial barriers and seeing give-and-take between different denominations," he said. "I hope we have learned a lesson. This is going to be a long-term problem and we need to stay together."

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Sarah Zimmerman, William Neal and John Pierce contributed to this story.

**BSSB church growth group
reorganization continuing**

By Charles Willis

**Baptist Press
7/19/94**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Continuing reorganization of the Baptist Sunday School Board's church growth group has resulted in a redesign and renaming of one division and beginning redesign work in another, according to Gene Mims, vice president.

The board's leadership, ministry and worship division has been redesigned and renamed church leadership services division to better reflect its overall relationship to church staff and lay leaders, according to Mike Miller, division director.

Miller said the redesign of components in the division has resulted in the elimination of six positions in the pastor-staff leadership department and five in the music department. Four people will retire in the music department, and the remaining personnel will receive severance pay based on years of service, along with outplacement assistance. Specific personnel decisions in the pastor-leadership department are not yet firm.

In a related announcement, Mims, also interim director of the Bible teaching-reaching division, said work has begun to reduce operating expenses in that division through a reordering of priorities that is expected to eliminate 24 to 30 positions from the current 224 jobs in inventory. A number of those positions are vacant.

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In a meeting of BT-R division personnel July 18, Billie Pate, associate division director, said while the study will not be completed until mid-August, two managers have announced their retirements. Myrte Veach, a 25-year employee and senior manager of the youth ministry development section, and Larry Shotwell, an 18-year employee and senior manager of the adult ministry development section, have said they will retire later this summer.

Pate said financial and changing workplace realities require division leaders to undertake actions in five areas: re-evaluate work and identify priorities, including products; allocate resources to priorities; refine the organization to focus on priorities; clarify and move accountability lower into the organization; and focus attention on church and people needs in a more efficient manner.

In a July 18 announcement, Miller said the church leadership services division will include four departments designed to relate to church staff and lay leadership.

The pastor-staff leadership department, directed by Joe Stacker, will relate directly to church staff people in a variety of specialties and will include products and services of the former church leadership department and those of the church recreation program, including drama.

The ethnic and black church growth department directed by Ramon Martinez will be renamed multicultural leadership department.

The music department, to be led by Mark Blankenship, will include Genevox Music Group and the products and services of the former church music ministries department. Blankenship assumes the church music development program, succeeding Wesley Forbis who retired in June.

Mancil Ezell will continue to direct the church services department and also will fill the role of associate division director. Church architecture services, led by Davis Byrd, and the church media library program, led by Dennis Conniff, will compose the church services department.

Included among retiring personnel in the music department are Bill Anderson, a 26-year employee and editor of "The Church Musician," and Fred Kelly, an 18-year employee who has been a music ministries consultant in the church music ministries department.

Downsizings earlier this summer in the church recreation program and ethnic and black church growth department eliminated a total of 19 positions. Elimination of the 10 positions in the music and pastor-staff leadership departments brings the total number of positions in the church leadership services division to 148.

Miller said the assessment and reorganization of programs in the church leadership services division is being done as part of the ongoing study of the church growth group to achieve "greater economy while retaining the most effective field services and materials needed by churches."

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Mark Blankenship to direct
new BSSB music department

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
7/19/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Mark Blankenship, a 20-year employee of the Baptist Sunday School Board and senior director of Genevox Music Group, has been named director of the board's redesigned music department, effective immediately.

According to Mike Miller, director of the board's church leadership services division, Blankenship, 51, will lead the department to include sections providing products and services for churches as well as Genevox, the trade music publishing company.

Blankenship said positions relating to church music and Genevox will be blended into four sections for organizational and management structure, but that Church Literature, Convention Press and Genevox products will maintain their identities.

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Combining components will result in a reduction of staff by five positions -- one management and four professionals. Four people will retire, including Bill Anderson, a 28-year employee and editor of "The Church Musician," and Fred Kelly, an 18-year employee who has been consultant and special projects coordinator for church music ministries.

In assuming direction of the SBC-assigned program of church music development, Blankenship succeeds Wesley L. Forbis who retired in June.

A native of Chicago, he came to the board as editor of youth and adult music in 1974 from North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church where he was minister of music. Earlier, he served in similar positions at First Baptist Church in Midland, Texas, and First Baptist Church in Belton, Texas. He was manager of the youth/adult/general materials development section in the former church music department before assuming his present position in 1992.

He earned the bachelor of music degree from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, and the master of music degree from the University of Texas at Austin.

Blankenship has had more than 300 copyrighted choral works published with Genevox and other publishers. Among his choral works are "Kneel at the Cross," "The Followers," "Stearns and Company," "Praise to the Trinity," "'Til Millions Know," "Christmas Adoration" and "Room in the Inn."

In addition to being a prolific composer, he is an arranger, orchestrator, singer and conductor.

He is a frequent leader of conferences and workshops on composition, choral techniques and church music ministry.

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