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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Billy Graham to address
SBC next June in Atlanta

By Jon Walker

Baptist Press
11/10/94

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--After making it a matter of prayer, Billy Graham confirmed he will speak to Southern Baptists "one more time," SBC President Jim Henry has announced.

Graham will address the Thursday morning closing session of the June 20-22 Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta's Georgia Dome, according to Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.

Henry, in a Nov. 9 news release, said he invited Graham to speak during a telephone conversation shortly after last year's convention. Henry quoted Graham as responding, "I would surely like to speak to Southern Baptists one more time . . . I will make it a matter of prayer." The evangelist now has officially accepted the invitation, Henry said.

Henry said, "I think all Southern Baptists join with me in cheering this opportunity to hear one of God's choice servants in all of Christian history . . ."

Henry said he told Graham during their initial phone conversation that he "epitomized the heart and soul of all who we are as Southern Baptists -- concern for evangelism, missions, the body of Christ, integrity and compassion . . ." The two men also discussed the significance of the SBC's 1995 sesquicentennial celebration during the SBC meeting.

A Southern Baptist for nearly 60 years, Graham, now 76, has spoken at several conventions and was even a messenger to the 1951 meeting in San Francisco. He has been a member of First Baptist Church, Dallas, since June 1953 and before that was a member of Curtis Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga.

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Graham was baptized and ordained at Peniel Baptist Church near Palatka, Fla., after preaching a revival at the church in 1938 while still a student at the Florida Bible Institute near Tampa. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., recently honored Graham by naming its evangelism, missions and church growth center after him.

Prior to the SBC, Graham will hold a "Global Mission," March 16-18, via satellite from a crusade in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 80 languages to an estimated 165 countries around the world. According to crusade officials, it is expected to be the most far-reaching evangelistic outreach in the history of the church and one of the most complex technical efforts ever attempted worldwide.

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Henry seeks nominees
for key SBC committees

Baptist Press
11/10/94

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Jim Henry, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has issued a letter to fellow Baptists seeking recommendations for people to serve on key committees for the 1995 annual meeting of the SBC, June 20-22 in Atlanta's Georgia Dome.

The committees for which Henry is seeking recommendations are the Committee on Committees, Committee on Resolutions, Tellers Committee and Credentials Committee.

Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., noted a form will need to be completed for those being recommended, and the forms may be requested by writing: "Form," Dr. Jim Henry, SBC President, First Baptist Church, 3701 L.B. McLeod Road, Orlando, FL 32805.

The 150th anniversary of the SBC's founding will be celebrated during the 1995 annual meeting. Henry, in his letter to Baptists requesting input for the committees' membership, also asked, "Continue to pray for me, our convention officers and our beloved SBC. Let us exalt Jesus Christ together."

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Estep's history reflects
sweep of foreign missions

By Bob Stanley

Baptist Press
11/10/94

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--"The Cahota is a fine vessel, and the accommodations are ample," the first corresponding secretary of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board wrote two new missionaries preparing to sail for China in 1846.

"She has a cow on board giving milk, several sheep and pigs for the use of the table, about one thousand fowls ... and an abundant supply of everything necessary for the comfort of the passengers."

The glimpse of early-day missions is just one of many contained in "Whole Gospel -- Whole World," a new 150-year history of the Foreign Mission Board expected in Baptist Book Stores by late November.

Its author is William R. Estep, distinguished professor of church history, emeritus, at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. Estep, commissioned to write the book as part of the board's sesquicentennial observance, spent three years researching and writing the 456-page volume. Published by Broadman & Holman, it sells for \$29.99.

In the months he spent reading through the historical records and minutes, Estep said he was "impressed again and again with the evident blessings of God upon the people called Southern Baptists."

Photos, maps and charts help show how Southern Baptist foreign missions grew out of the early work of William Carey, Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice and the Triennial Convention, so-called because it pulled together Baptists from throughout the country every three years.

The book uses "time line" graphs to relate major events of missionary history to the better-known happenings of world history, from 1730 through the 1990s.

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It was the Virginia Baptist Foreign Mission Society that issued a call for a "consultative convention" in Augusta, Ga., in May 1845, leading to the formation of a new Southern Baptist Convention with foreign and "domestic" mission boards.

The slavery issue had driven a wedge between Baptists from the north and south, but Estep notes it was "the missionary imperative" that really precipitated the call for the Augusta meeting.

When the Home Mission Society and the Boston Board of the Triennial Convention refused to appoint missionaries who were slave owners, southerners became convinced they had been shut out of the missionary enterprise.

But once the break occurred, the issue of slavery moved into the background as the new mission board set about finding and sending out its first missionaries.

The Foreign Mission Board's newly appointed board of managers spent months trying to fill the post of corresponding secretary to administer the new organization. Finally they turned to James B. Taylor, the Richmond, Va., pastor who, as president of the Virginia mission society, had signed the call for the consultative convention.

Taylor agreed to give two days a week for six months to the new board and, if necessary, make a fund-raising "journey to the south."

Back then, the corresponding secretary -- today called president -- was expected to do almost everything. He traveled to raise most of the funds for the board's work, interviewed missionary candidates, helped them buy their supplies and saw them embark for their overseas posts.

The board's first "designation" (commissioning) service took place in June 1846 at Richmond's Second Baptist Church. In his charge to S.C. Clopton and George Pearcy, recently appointed to China, Taylor warned them to "beware of strife among yourselves . . . Love as brethren, pray for each other regularly, bear each other's burdens, and provoke each other only to love and good works."

As new missionaries prepared to leave, Taylor often held a brief farewell service on the deck of the ship.

"He well knew, due to the nature and uncertainty of life, and perils of the voyage, that the possibility of ever seeing the young missionaries again was by no means certain," Estep relates.

Three years later, in Charleston, S.C., the Foreign Mission Board reported to the Southern Baptist Convention: "The young, ardent, and devoted Clopton, is no more. He had just begun to speak in the language of the Chinese . . . had secured the regard of the natives residing immediately near him, when he was suddenly arrested by the hand of death." He died of a fever.

The same report to the Southern Baptist Convention carried news of two missionaries in Africa, Alexander Jones and Frederick James, who died of unrecorded causes.

Despite such discouragement, Taylor's six-month commitment to help the fledgling board turned into a 25-year tenure as the chief administrator. He was the first of 10 men who would be elected to guide the board during its almost-150-year history.

The book takes the reader through the start-up years when the Southern Baptist Convention itself was little more than a missionary society, through board crises precipitated by J.R. Graves and the Landmark movement (which claimed that only the local church should examine candidates and send out missionaries) and by the Civil War.

Estep recounts the lean years of the Great Depression, when missionary appointments halted and several furloughing missionaries had to be dismissed or placed on leave without salary, and how Charles E. Maddry led the Foreign Mission Board to become the first convention agency to become debt-free.

The author devotes full chapters to the board's work under the leadership of the more recent FMB administrators -- Maddry, 1933-44; M. Theron Rankin, 1945-53; Baker James Cauthen, 1954-79; and R. Keith Parks, 1980-92. An epilogue contains material on the current president, Jerry A. Rankin, elected in 1993.

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Cauthen's 26-year tenure constituted "a remarkable era of missionary advance," Estep notes. He calls the growth from 908 missionaries in 33 countries in 1953 to 2,981 in 94 countries in 1979 "a phenomenal expansion unparalleled in the twentieth century."

It was Cauthen who challenged messengers to the 1964 Southern Baptist Convention to send out "no fewer than 5,000 missionaries." Twelve years later the Southern Baptist Convention adopted that as a key goal of Bold Mission Thrust, a Southern Baptist initiative to take the gospel to all the world.

Bold Missions also became the inspiration for the global vision of Keith Parks. Estep highlights Parks' far-reaching changes to develop strategies to reach World A, the people groups that have never had a chance to hear the gospel message. But he also notes that, in his second year as president, Parks put the Foreign Mission Board \$10 million in debt to provide a more equitable retirement plan for its missionaries. The debt was retired eight years later, in 1989.

The book deals forthrightly with Parks' concern that controversy in the convention was affecting foreign missions and chronicles the growing rift between Parks and the board's trustees during the final years of his presidency.

Summing up the missions progress of the Parks era, Estep notes: "Perhaps, Parks' greatest legacy was himself. As long as there are Southern Baptists on earth, his example of integrity and his understanding of the Baptist heritage will continue to challenge them to a reassessment of who they were in the last decade of the twentieth century and what they can be by God's grace in the twenty-first."

In the epilogue Estep notes a presidential search committee's unanimous recommendation of Jerry Rankin, a 23-year missions veteran, as president in 1993 was met with "widespread approval and thanksgiving."

From the start, Estep observed, "It was clear that his undergirding conviction was that he owed his new position not to any person or group, but to God alone -- the same God who called him to missionary service and endowed him with the gifts of the Holy Spirit."

With the approach of the 21st century, Estep says he believes Southern Baptists face unprecedented opportunity.

"The post communist world is a confused world that has lost its way," he writes. "At best, tribal and ethnic loyalties have replaced the challenge of the Marxist ideal and at worst, a vacuum has been created in the souls of mankind that waits to be filled and will be by the movement with the vision and spiritual vitality to seize the golden moment."

Can Southern Baptists -- whom Estep describes as "facing an identity crisis of their own" -- move into the vacuum with "the saving gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit?" he asks.

"Does not the answer to this question depend upon our willingness to walk together under the lordship of Jesus Christ who has redeemed us, made us brothers and sisters, and called us to be his disciples?"

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers Nov. 9 by the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet News Room.

Illinois Baptists repent
of racist attitudes

By Ferrell Foster

Baptist Press
11/10/94

ALTON, Ill. (BP)--Illinois Baptists passed a resolution Nov. 4 declaring "our corporate repentance before God for the sins of our forefathers and of ourselves" regarding racist attitudes.

On the final day of the three-day Illinois State Baptist Association meeting, messengers approved the resolution on racial repentance. Jim Woods, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Naperville, presented a resolution on the topic the afternoon before, and it was referred to the resolutions and Christian life committee. Woods is the great-grandson of a Confederate soldier.

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The committee brought back a resolution which said, "Illinois Baptist State Association, as a part of the church of Jesus Christ, has for years engaged in practices both religious and cultural, that have been rooted in racist attitudes common to the Anglo culture. ..."

It reaffirmed Illinois Baptists' "desire for unity and community throughout the Body of Christ."

Messengers approved the resolution with scattered opposition.

Albert Johnson, a black pastor in Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association who said he spoke on behalf of the African American Baptist Fellowship and about 54 predominately black congregations in CMBA, responded to the resolution.

"I'd like to say that we heartily, yet with humility, acknowledge acceptance of this declaration of repentance resolution," Johnson said.

Roger Ellsworth, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Benton, was elected by acclamation as president of the association. Ellsworth completed two years as vice president at the meeting.

Messengers to the annual meeting elected Eugene Gibson, pastor of Mission of Faith Baptist Church in Chicago, as vice president. Gibson received 245 votes, while Pat Pajak, pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church, Decatur, received 196.

More than 1,200 people attended the 88th IBSA annual meeting at Alton First Southern Baptist Church. Of that total, at least 776 came as elected messengers.

The theme was "Reaching People, Finding the Lost, Sharing the Gospel," and the various speakers kept evangelism at the forefront of the meeting.

Illinois Baptists adopted a \$5.1 million Cooperative Program goal. Of that amount, 59.25 percent will remain in Illinois for statewide ministries, while the 40.75 percent remainder will go to worldwide efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention, percentages unchanged from last year's budget.

Messengers also approved an IBSA budget that anticipates \$3.2 million in receipts from various sources, including the Cooperative Program, Home Mission Board, Baptist Building leases, the state missions offering and investments.

That budget also increases the staff salary scale by 2.5 percent. IBSA staff managers will determine individual salary increases based on merit.

In the final financial decision, messengers voted that 1995 IBSA general fund income exceeding expense be allocated as follows: 65 percent for new work projects and 35 percent for capital expenditures.

Next year's annual meeting will be held Nov. 1-3 at the Gateway Center in Collinsville.

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Arkansas Baptist messengers
affirm Cooperative Program

By Trennis G. Henderson & Russell N. Dilday

Baptist Press
11/10/94

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--Arkansas Baptist messengers voted Nov. 1 to adopt a 1995 Cooperative Program budget of \$16.6 million, including a slight percentage increase for Southern Baptist Convention causes. They also adopted a resolution reaffirming support for the Cooperative Program as "the exclusive means to fund our mission endeavors."

The 1995 CP budget goal is a 4 percent increase over the 1994 CP goal of \$15.96 million. The budget includes 58.23 percent for total state programs and 41.77 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes. State convention executive board president Rich Kincl, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Magnolia, said the national CP allocation increase of 0.02 percent reflects the percentage of growth in CP gifts from local churches.

The resolution reaffirming Cooperative Program giving emphasized "firm support for the Cooperative Program as the exclusive means to fund our mission endeavors and express our resolve to oppose funding schemes and accounting methods by which funds to non-Cooperative Program entities are qualified as Cooperative Program giving."

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Responding to a question about the resolution's specific intent, resolutions committee member Mark Brooks noted, "There is no question what our interest is here. In light of what has recently been done in Texas to redefine what constitutes a Cooperative Program gift ... we wanted to simply clarify Cooperative Program gifts are monies given to our longstanding Cooperative Program ministries.

"We are not saying that a church cannot give as they desire to give," explained Brooks, pastor of Elmdale Baptist Church, Springdale. "The intent is simply to say what constitutes a Cooperative Program gift." Messengers adopted the resolution by a show of hands with scattered opposition.

During the Nov. 1-2 annual meeting at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, messengers also approved long-range plans proposed by the convention's "Directions 2000" committee. The emphasis includes detailed ministry goals through the year 2000 in such areas as worship, leadership training, social and ethical issues, family issues, cultural and racial issues, evangelism, mission support, discipleship and financial stewardship. The effort's five-year theme is "Arkansas Awakening," with annual themes focusing on Live the Word, Strengthen the Family, Build the Church, Touch the Community and Reach the World.

Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church, Hot Springs, was re-elected by acclamation to a second one-year term as state convention president. Rogers is a trustee of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary where he recently was elected to the presidential search committee.

Messengers also re-elected Jim McDaniel, pastor of First Baptist Church, Brinkley, as first vice president. McDaniel was elected by a vote of 364-249 over Bruce Tippitt, pastor of Fianna Hills Baptist Church, Fort Smith. McDaniel is a trustee of the Southern Baptist Education Commission and a former president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive board.

David Uth, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, El Dorado, was elected second vice president by a vote of 317-226 over David McLemore, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Russellville. Uth is a trustee of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia and second vice president of the state Christian Civic Foundation.

A flap over the pre-convention Arkansas Baptist Pastors' Conference spilled over into the convention's miscellaneous business session. A decision by Pastors' Conference president Wallace Edgar to invite independent Baptist pastor Jerry Falwell as the conference's closing speaker prompted a motion calling for the program committees of the state convention and the Pastors' Conference "to seek and secure on their programs only Southern Baptists."

Noble Wiles, pastor of First Baptist Church, Ash Flat, introduced the motion. "I've been going to conventions since 1950 and listened to some solid, sound Southern Baptist speakers," he explained. "We don't want Cooperative Program funds to pay the honorariums of non-Southern Baptist speakers. We are asking the (program) committees to secure only Southern Baptists and Southern Baptist supporters."

Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church, Springdale, spoke against the motion. "I would not find that favorable at all," he said. "The kingdom of God is bigger than the Southern Baptist Convention and there are some fine men who can ... stretch us and not bend us."

He cautioned the motion "would be a grave error to bind the Holy Spirit and to keep others of strong evangelical faith from our programs."

Ken Reese, pastor of First Baptist Church, Mayflower, noted, "In this time we are reading much about the erosion of the Cooperative Program, I have some trouble dealing with men who have been in competition with the Cooperative Program coming in competition for giving."

Barry King, pastor of Grand Avenue Baptist Church, Hot Springs, responded, "We understand we will not always agree with the particular stand of each speaker, but we need to respect the right of elected leaders to select" program speakers.

A proposal that the motion be voted on by ballot was defeated by a show of hands. The original motion to restrict Pastors' Conference and convention speakers to Southern Baptists then failed by voice vote.

In other actions, messengers adopted resolutions affirming the sanctity of human life and opposing homosexuality, pornography and gambling. Other resolutions affirmed the ministry of mission volunteers and "equipping the saints on moral issues" and endorsed a proposed administrative license revocation bill.

Resolutions also paid tribute to the memory of Shirley Moore and Glendon and Marjorie Grober. Mrs. Moore, the wife of state convention executive director Don Moore, died a year ago following an eight-month battle with cancer. The Grobers died in a July car accident. Grober had been ABSC Brotherhood department director and Mrs. Grober had recently completed five years of service as state Woman's Missionary Union president.

The 1994 ABSC annual meeting attracted a total of 1,081 registered messengers. Next year's annual meeting will be Oct. 31-Nov. 1 at First Baptist Church, Little Rock.

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Not-so-modern plagues
still killing millions

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
11/10/94

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--If the plague doesn't kill you, flesh-eating bacteria might. While you consider that cheery report heard on recent TV tabloid news shows, you better watch out for meteors from outer space, too. One might hit your house.

Deadly disease is nothing to laugh at, to be sure. The pneumonic plague that recently killed about 60 people in India was real, and it could have killed far more. The last major plague epidemic in India, in 1950, ended the lives of nearly 19,000 people. The panic the latest outbreak unleashed -- and the virtual quarantine imposed by the rest of the world -- was understandable.

The devastation AIDS has wrought worldwide makes growing fear of exotic, even more deadly strains equally understandable. The Ebola virus, for example, makes AIDS look like a mild flu bug.

"Ebola kills nine out of 10 people who contract it (and) does in 10 days what it takes AIDS 10 years to accomplish," reports Richard Preston, author of "The Hot Zone," a new best seller about the appearance of Ebola in Africa. "It could wipe out a vast portion of humanity."

But while affluent readers and TV viewers shiver about what might happen, the world's poor people continue to deal with what is happening: ongoing suffering caused by mundane, quite preventable diseases.

"Diarrhea and dehydration -- that's the No. 1 killer of children in developing countries," said Van Williams, a physician and former missionary who now directs missionary health at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. "That and respiratory infections. Another big killer is malaria. We've eradicated it here in the USA, but in many of the developing countries it's gotten out of hand again."

Diarrhea-related diseases kill 3.2 million people a year, according to the World Health Organization and Harvard University's School of Public Health. Acute respiratory infections (usually pneumonia) kill 4.3 million people annually. Tuberculosis -- 3 million and rising. Hepatitis B -- up to 2 million. Malaria -- 1 million and rising. Measles -- close to 900,000.

Southern Baptist missionary doctor Rebekah Naylor, who works at the Baptist Hospital in Bangalore, India, saw a few unconfirmed plague cases during the recent outbreak. But the day-in, day-out killers she fights are more familiar.

"A lot of our patients have at least some degree of inadequate nutrition, which makes any disease more of a problem," she said. "We regularly treat cholera and typhoid, which are definitely due to poor food and water, and hepatitis. It affects all age groups, but the smaller children and the elderly are more vulnerable."

How does she deal with the threat of deadly new diseases?

"We've got so many treatable diseases here that we've not yet been able to control. I just don't give much thought to all those things that maybe we can't treat," she replied.

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"We have so much to do in public health work and education that it's difficult to get all bothered about things you don't really know about anyway. Even all this fear and anxiety about plague -- there are so many things we're subject to every day that are much more risky."

Naylor is just one of 229 physicians, dentists, nurses and other health care professionals assigned by the Foreign Mission Board in medical missions ministries around the world. That does not include at least 82 others whose jobs affect nutrition and public health. They work in such fields as agriculture (52 missionaries), veterinary medicine, community development, engineering, water resource development and human needs ministries.

Public health education and basic medical care are the keys to eradicating many of the age-old killers, Williams agreed. FMB medical missionaries emphasize those two areas wherever they work.

Naylor and Baptist Hospital workers, for example, take health clinics -- and the Christian gospel -- into rural areas around Bangalore. The Baptist hospitals in Yemen and in Eku, Nigeria, stress immunizations and community health outreach. Workers at the Wallace Memorial Baptist Hospital, a sprawling general hospital in the middle of Pusan, South Korea, have started numerous churches by extending health care into the community.

In one low-income area of Pusan with poor sanitation, Wallace hospital staffers helped people get better water and primary health care. They saw a major improvement in the overall health of the community.

"If we can prevent disease, it's a lot easier than trying to cure it once people have it," Williams said. "Most of our hospitals now have some type of primary health care outreach and are doing it very effectively."

Terrifying new worldwide epidemics could come, Williams acknowledged.

"I have no idea what's out in the future," he said. "Something could develop. Twenty years ago we didn't expect AIDS to come along, and now we're in the midst of it. There probably will be other things that will kill large numbers of people."

Until then, medical missionaries will fight the preventable diseases killing large numbers of people right now.

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(BP) photo (vertical) mailed to state Baptist newspapers Nov. 4 by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available on SBCNet News Room.

AIDS threat haunts
Thailand's future

By Martha Skelton

Baptist Press
11/10/94

BANGKLA, Thailand (BP)--The scourge of AIDS is affecting present and future generations in the Asian nation of Thailand.

Consider the statistics: In a nation of about 60 million people, estimates of the HIV-positive population range from 700,000 to more than 1 million. By the end of the decade one in 15 Thais could be HIV-positive, reports John Gibson, a Southern Baptist missionary doctor who ministers to AIDS patients at Bangkok Baptist Hospital in Thailand.

If America had a similar rate of infection, up to 20 million people would have HIV -- human immunodeficiency virus. Although some scientists have begun to dispute the association, most believe HIV infection causes AIDS, which kills by breaking down the body's immune system.

"Unless we deal with AIDS, we will be a society of orphans or old people," states one Thai observer.

A number of factors contribute to Thailand's AIDS problem -- not all of which originate in the country itself.

Many Thai men believe it's culturally acceptable to frequent prostitutes, many of whom are HIV-positive. Men who do so often contract HIV and take it home to their wives.

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"AIDS 'wives' feel reluctant to talk with their husbands about sex," says Prakai Nonthawasee, vice moderator of the Christian Church in Thailand and active in organizations such as End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism.

"The Thai (society) is very patriarchal. Wives feel powerless, intimidated," she explains. They don't know how to refuse relations with their husbands, even if they know or suspect their husbands are infected with the AIDS virus. Thai law doesn't allow them to divorce their husbands because of an affair, although a man may sue for divorce for that reason.

But the rapidly spreading AIDS crisis in Thailand and other countries in Asia has an international dimension: "sex tourism."

Foreigners often come to Thailand, the Philippines and other Asian nations for the purpose of having sexual experiences of all types. That includes sex with children, often lured into prostitution because of poverty. The number of boys and girls age 18 and under involved in prostitution reaches as high as 250,000 in Thailand alone, reports End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism.

Because prostitutes have a high likelihood of being HIV-positive, the demand for younger, untouched, presumably HIV-negative children has increased dramatically. The presumption is wrong, according to Nonthawasee.

"AIDS is everywhere. Children are not exempted," she says.

Bangkla Baptist Hospital sees two kinds of AIDS-related patients, says medical missionary Gibson. First are patients who show no signs but are found to be HIV-positive while being screened for other illnesses. He estimates 3 to 4 percent of obstetrical patients and new mothers fall into this category.

The second group includes people who come in already exhibiting AIDS symptoms. The hospital averages three to five such patients a week. By the time they come to the hospital, they usually have a life span of three months.

Yet through such tragedy many people are hearing and responding to the gospel, and living a Christian witness before family and friends. About half of Gibson's AIDS patients have accepted Christ as Savior.

"(That) makes me more willing, open and aggressive in pursuing this ministry," he says. "I've really sensed the Lord speaking to me on this issue. The last several patients I've had that have accepted Christ have really been inspirational and motivational to me, and they would be to anybody who sees the regenerative work of Christ in their lives.

"When you consider this hospital was open for, like, seven years before we had one convert, we're seeing tremendous response now. Especially AIDS patients. (Christ is) the only hope and they know it."

The hospital's 30 years of service to the community has created a climate of trust. Hospital workers try to show Christ's love to all, but it shines through to AIDS patients who find little support elsewhere.

Many accept Christ in an environment "where we can have an ongoing relationship with them, where they can see we care for them, that we're not afraid of them, and we're not getting anything from them," Gibson says. "We're willing to minister to people nobody else wants."

That approach is how Bangkla hospital got started in 1964 by Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries -- by treating "untouchables," leprosy patients.

The Bangkla approach contrasts sharply with the general Thai attitude of disgust toward anyone with AIDS. The usual sentence for a family member with AIDS is banishment from the family -- or death by neglect.

"A typical response by a family member is: get that patient out of the hospital and take him home and let him die quickly," Gibson explains. The family feels "there's no reason to spend money on him because he's not worth anything. We need to hide him so the neighbors don't know and we need to cover our shame as best we can."

Because of that, Gibson adds, "I'm not real big on telling anybody but the patient about their condition."

Society's stigma is also the church's stigma, says one Thai Baptist woman, who asked to remain anonymous. Her younger brother died of AIDS, but even his death didn't end the shame. His widow also is HIV-positive, and the family refuses to test their infant son to see if the virus has been passed on.

An AIDS specialist the Thai Baptist woman consulted after learning about her brother's illness surprised her by assuming she would throw him out of the family. Instead, she tried to fulfill her traditional role as eldest child and her responsibility as a Christian. She shouldered the needs of her brother, protecting elderly parents who lived in a distant village. She also joined other believers in trying to help her brother, an inactive Christian, recognize his need for repentance and reconciliation with God.

His responses were typical of many AIDS patients. He rejected the diagnosis at first, getting numerous additional tests. He denied he had visited prostitutes. But he finally turned to God and died in peace.

His sister bore the brunt of both society's and the church's rejection. "It's a feeling I cannot even put into words, the depth of this embarrassment and sense of shame," she reflects. "I had to keep in mind that I was doing what I was doing because it was best for my brother."

When she went to the AIDS clinic on her brother's behalf, people in the waiting room looked at her as if she had AIDS. The embarrassment, ridicule and suspicion became a heavy burden, but she drew on resources provided by the government and a Catholic church in Bangkok that started an AIDS ministry.

"I didn't feel God was unfair in all of this. What happened to my brother was a result of sinful disobedience," she says. But she and her husband, also an active Christian, have learned from the experience. "While we have our health we should serve God to our greatest ability because we don't know how long we'll be healthy. On bended knee our family committed itself to serving the Lord because we came to realize that nothing in life is certain."

Many Christians in Thailand call for a Christlike response to the challenge AIDS makes on individual lives, families and society at large. Christians, they say, can get to the roots of the problem by taking strong stands on morality, faithfulness, responsibility and the love between husband and wife. And they can back up those stands with love.

"We have to live our faith," Nonthawasee says. "If we believe God created male and female to support each other, we must live it -- respect each other."

The sister of the man who died of AIDS urges churches and Christians to:

- love and encourage people suffering with AIDS and those who have family members with AIDS, and don't look down on them;

- help those who are ill both to be served and to serve others as they can, work with them in their daily walk with the Lord and help them continue to grow and to feel a part of God's family;

- encourage people to take care of themselves properly, to be as active and as healthy as they can for as long as possible.

Missionary Gibson sees an urgency for Christians wanting to respond to the AIDS crisis. "Eventually, 30-50 percent of all the patients we see are going to have AIDS and our resources are going to be limited," he predicts.

"Half of them will already be dead or dying by the year 2000, so the thrust of our ministry must be within the next five years. That's when the full brunt is going to hit. That's when the resources of the country will be overloaded, and that's when these people won't have anywhere to turn."

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(BP) photo (vertical) mailed to state Baptist newspapers Nov. 4 by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet News Room.

Medical missionaries running
higher risk of AIDS infection

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
11/10/94

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--With AIDS spreading through the developing world, more medical missionaries will contract the virus that causes it, predicts physician-author Patrick Dixon.

"Some have estimated that up to one in four surgeons working in high-incidence areas will be infected after 30 years on the field," Dixon wrote in the new edition of his book, "The Truth About AIDS," published in September.

"A large missionary organization with perhaps 50 doctors operating overseas may well see a colleague infected every couple of years" through contact with HIV-positive blood, he warned. "In previous decades missionaries were always at risk of dying from the illnesses they came to fight, but in our scientific age it is quite a shock when (they) make the ultimate sacrifice."

Dixon, founder of AIDS Care Education and Training, lists ways to cut down the risk of AIDS infection in Third World medical settings. He also urges mission agencies to put a high priority on supplying rubber gloves, clean needles and AIDS testing kits to their missionaries.

Estimates of HIV-infected people worldwide range from 13 million to 17 million. The great majority of them live in the developing world. AIDS has devastated Africa, and now it's rapidly spreading through Asia.

Medical missionaries know the risks. Southern Baptist missionary physician Rebekah Naylor, who works at Baptist Hospital in Bangalore, India, confirmed predictions that AIDS will "mushroom" in the south Asian giant.

"You have to be sensible and take proper precautions that you should take anywhere," she said. "But I'm called (by God) to be here. I've been given skill. I've been given training and education. That doesn't mean I'm not going to get something, but the what-ifs aren't things I feel we need to deal with. We're accountable for what we do with our professional skills and, more importantly, the gospel we have to give."

Van Williams, a physician and former missionary, directs missionary health at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. He urges all 4,000-plus FMB missionaries -- not just the 229 physicians, dentists, nurses and other medical workers -- to take precautions against HIV infection.

The biggest AIDS threat to missionaries and their family members living overseas is receiving transfusions of HIV-infected blood in a medical facility after an auto accident or other emergency, Williams said.

"We're trying to develop 'walking blood banks,' whereby missionaries know the type of blood their colleagues have, and we encourage them to use blood from a colleague or store their own blood" for medical needs, he said. "We have to educate people to protect themselves."

Medical researchers at Johns Hopkins University, in conjunction with a number of denominations affiliated with the World Council of Churches, have studied the question of whether missionaries are at increased risk of contracting AIDS. The researchers screened blood samples taken between 1967 and 1984 from 3,207 Protestant missionaries (none of them Southern Baptist) serving in 57 countries.

They found a 1.2 percent HIV-positive rate of infection. But confirming tests found all the positives to be false. In other words, none of the tested missionaries had contracted the AIDS virus up to 1984, when AIDS had begun spreading worldwide. However, the authors of the study have since found missionaries (again, none Southern Baptist) who are HIV-positive, Williams reported.

"Anytime I look at missionary health factors and think of what we could be seeing and what we're not seeing, I have to realize the Lord looks on us every day and protects us," he said. "We try to do the best we can to provide immunizations and information on how to live healthily overseas, but there are a lot of things you can't be protected from."

EDITORS' NOTE: Please update 11/9/94 Baptist Press' election coverage in the following ways:

-- In the story, "Conservative Christians play role in Republican takeover in Congress," please substitute the following paragraphs for the 12th paragraph:

A Christian Coalition official agreed "religious conservatives played a major role in the outcome of the election."

The most important messages from the election are "people disagree with the anti-family policies" of the Clinton administration and attacks on religious conservatives do not work, said Marshall Wittmann, the Christian Coalition's legislative director.

The "demonization of the religious right is something that the Democrats used to their peril," he said. During the summer, Clinton, Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders and California Rep. Vic Fazio criticized religious conservatives.

Even the secular media is beginning to realize the "so-called religious right is composed of moms and dads" who are involved in their children's lives and go to church on Sunday, Wittmann said. The election demonstrated people want lower taxes, safer streets and better schools, he said.

-- In the same story, please make the following corrections in the 13th paragraph:

"33 million voter scorecards" instead of "more than 30 million voter scorecards" in first sentence;

"A majority of the guides" instead of "Nearly all of the guides" in second sentence.

-- In the story, "Republicans control both houses first time in nearly 50 years" revise the third paragraph as follows:

In the House, Republicans had gained 50 seats for a 228-200 advantage by midday Nov. 10. Six races remained undecided awaiting the results of absentee balloting. One independent was elected.

Also, delete the last paragraph of the article and revise the next-to-last paragraph as follows:

In the House, the most noteworthy losses by incumbent Democrats were those of Speaker of the House Thomas Foley to George Nethercutt in Washington; indicted former Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski to Michael Flanagan in Illinois, and chairman of the Judiciary Committee and 42-year member Jack Brooks to Steve Stockman in Texas.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Conference urges churches
for gambling communities

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
11/10/94

LAUGHLIN, Nev. (BP)--Christians should respond to the drastic changes in gambling-impacted communities by planting churches that target casino employees and gamblers, speakers said during a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board-sponsored conference.

"Churches working in a gambling-impacted community must find a way to take the gospel into that community," said Ebbie Smith, professor of Christian ethics and missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Speakers at the conference, titled "A Church for Glitzville," said objections to gambling should not prevent Christians from trying to reach the non-Christians in that setting.

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"The church itself must come into the very heart of the gaming community just like the church in Caesar's house," said John Allen, adjunct professor of missions at Southwestern Seminary.

"The Holy Spirit is at work in gaming-impacted communities," Allen said. "And if he is there and he's at work, he wants us to join him in the work."

Speakers offered such models as church-sponsored Gamblers Anonymous meetings, Bible studies in casino employee lounges and creative worship services to reach new residents drawn by the jobs and action of casino gambling.

Evangelism, discipleship and ministry in gaming communities contrast the attitudes of some churches that have retreated from these settings, Allen said.

After Cripple Creek, Colo., approved casino gambling, the local Baptist church closed when members moved away, he said. "The town was growing. People were there. They were in turmoil, they were in trouble, they were hurting. But the church was not there to be found."

More churches will face gambling in their community as the industry continues to grow, an economist suggested.

In 1978, only Nevada and Atlantic City, N.J., offered casino gambling, said Bill Eadington, director of the Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming at the University of Nevada, Reno.

"We've gone from that extreme position to the other extreme of saying we should have gambling virtually everywhere in virtually every form," he said.

Casino gambling is allowed in at least nine states and Puerto Rico. In 1992, it generated more than \$11 billion in gross revenues, Eadington said. "The gambling industry has gone from an outlaw industry to a mainstream industry very quickly."

Factors that pushed gambling towards acceptability, he said, were the advent of state-run lotteries in 1964 and the investment in casinos by such respected corporations as Hilton and MGM.

Today many local governments see casinos and lotteries as a cure for economic woes, Eadington said. "A lot of people are basically saying, 'Let's go for that poor, old, stupid money that's coming out of these weak, degenerate gamblers.'"

Widespread gambling, however, means most gambling will attract only locals, at the expense of other area entertainment, such as restaurants and movies, he said. "It's foolish and deviant to argue that you can solve your major problems with gambling."

Smith noted while the Bible contains no explicit ban on betting, several passages imply gambling opposes both Christian character and God's design for the proper use of material wealth.

"Every aspect of gambling expresses materialism and greed rather than responsibility, productivity and service," Smith said, citing Ephesians 4:28, Isaiah 65:11-16 and Matthew 6:24 as discouraging gaming. "Gambling cannot reach the biblical ideal of honest, productive toil with its social and moral values."

Native American Christians often find conditions far from the biblical ideal on reservations, which were authorized to have casinos by the 1988 Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, said Jimmy Anderson, a Creek Indian in Oklahoma.

Reservations have seen both new economic independence and social problems as a result of casinos, said Anderson, a home missionary.

"Our churches have got to get involved and we've got to do something We need your prayers. It's destroying our Indian people," he said. "The ones who can't afford to gamble are the ones who are doing it."

While some Christians may oppose being a part of a "sin city," Allen compared church starting and ministries in these areas to the early efforts in Rome, China or Russia. "We've had 2,000 years of history of opening up closed communities to the gospel."

Smith agreed. "Don't be afraid to try to invade the strongholds that look so sinful. Don't be afraid because we have the Holy Spirit on our side and we can win."

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(BP) photo (horizontal) of a casino mailed Nov. 9 to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines are in the SBCNet News Room.

EDITORS' NOTE: The following could be adapted as an information box to accompany the other stories on Southern Baptists' response to gaming-impacted communities.

Churches urged to respond to gambling in America

LAUGHLIN, Nev. (BP)--Southern Baptist churches can respond five ways to gambling in America, John Allen said during a conference on starting churches in gambling-impacted communities.

"I'm calling for a national response from all of our churches," said Allen, missionary-in-residence and adjunct professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. "Every church in the Southern Baptist Convention can do these five things."

Allen asked churches to:

- Use their influence to discourage the growth of casino gambling in new areas.
- Urge all Christians to abstain from all forms of gambling.
- Seek to minister to compulsive gamblers -- estimated at 5 percent of the population -- and the dysfunctional families the behavior creates.
- Pray for success in fulfilling the Great Commission to disciple all people, including those in gaming communities.
- Support, through missions gifts, church planting efforts in gambling communities.

"A lot of times when you think of gambling, all you think about is getting out the vote," he said in explaining the expanded role available to any church.

"These five things any church anywhere can do and ought to do as a foundation upon which we ought to launch."

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Miss. pastor left pulpit
to minister in casinos

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
11/10/94

GULFPORT, Miss. (BP)--While many Southern Baptist pastors in Mississippi were still adjusting to the invasion of dockside casinos, John Landrum was preparing to minister to those involved in the gambling industry. Landrum left Biloxi's Popp's Ferry Baptist Church in September 1992 to offer an outreach to casino employees, gambling addicts and their families. The 54-year-old pastor said his ministry centers on loving the hurting, not preaching against gambling.

"We don't judge the people in the industry," he said. "We don't even get into the politics of it. We just get into the need of helping hurting people."

Landrum's work involves 14 casinos along a 34-mile stretch of the Mississippi's Gulf Coast. Reachable by phone or beeper, he and his wife walk through the gaming halls at all hours, nodding to a blackjack dealer or chatting with a security guard.

"Our standard line is, 'If you run into anybody who needs a minister or a friend, we are available and we are free,'" he said. "We try to have at least one employee in each casino who will keep our (business) cards on the employee bulletin board."

Casino employees have the same problems as other residents but are often more lonely, Landrum said.

"Most of them don't have anybody to turn to unless it's a clinical psychologist or a bartender," he said. "We deal with people who don't have a clue that the Lord loves them. They don't even know who the Lord is sometimes."

Many employees are from Atlantic City, N.J., or Las Vegas, Nev., and don't have the same religious background as native Mississippians, he said.

"We have to constantly define Christianity," he said. "They have a religious concept of Christianity but not a relational concept of Christianity."

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Some Mississippi pastors have ignored the casinos after a losing political campaign to keep them out, Landrum said.

"Many people feel if you try to minister to the industry you condone the industry," he said. "We say you can keep your doctrinal integrity and still minister to hurting people. And boy, there are a lot of hurting people in the industry."

Landrum said he averages at least one counseling session a day. One segment that is growing, he said, are gambling addicts. "Most of the gambling addicts we deal with are Christians, and we didn't expect that."

More churches will become involved in gambling-related ministries as they realize the impact it has on their congregations, he predicted.

"It's taken a year for churches to believe there are Christians working in the casinos," he said. "Many (churches) are going to be forced into ministry because of problems that develop because of their own members being involved in gambling."

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HMB offers booklet
on gambling ministries

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
11/10/94

ATLANTA (BP)--A guide to starting ministries in gambling communities is available from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's special ministries department.

The booklet was designed to help directors of missions and pastors who want to minister to people in the gaming industry, said author Tommy Starkes, chaplain on the Las Vegas Strip and pastor of Tropicana Christian Fellowship.

While some may be uncomfortable doing Christian work in such settings, Starkes said many people see the need for a witness there. "They've decided the battle has been lost to keep gaming out and maybe it's time to do something for the people moving in and the guests coming through."

The booklet offers information about the growth of gambling in America and some facts to help readers understand the industry.

"You need a glossary of terms when you get into a casino because their terminology is a bit different," Starkes said. "The first year I was here I got lost."

Starkes, who has observed casinos for 10 years in Las Vegas, also includes dos and don'ts for ministering in a gaming setting.

The high professional level of service in casinos requires ministry also be performed in a first-class manner, Starkes said.

"All services in the casinos are geared towards the guest, and people are expected to perform in a manner of excellence," he said. "You can't go in there half-prepared or shoddy-looking and expect to be respected."

Starkes visits seven casinos regularly and has access to more than 50 others, where he offers emergency counseling or other services. He currently is leading Bible studies in five casinos.

He said the greatest misconception about a gambling community is that it is full of corrupt people intent on importing evil.

"In essence, employees of casinos are just plain folks who have families at home and bills to pay," said Starkes, who has been chaplain on the strip for seven months.

"They are people with the same set of problems as someone in a factory or industry," he said. "They need salvation, they need counseling, they need listening ears."

The guide, "Developing Ministries to Gaming Communities," order number 631-112F, can be obtained through HMB Customer Services at 1-800-634-2462.

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Zambia, Zimbabwe missions
face work permit crisis

By Craig Bird

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--The future of Southern Baptist mission efforts in Zambia goes on trial -- literally -- Nov. 11, while another longstanding issue in Zimbabwe over missionary work permits continues to simmer.

The Southern Baptist missionary organization in Zambia informed government officials Nov. 9 that it would proceed with its lawsuit over the refusal of immigration officials to issue or renew work permits to missionaries without the concurrence of the Baptist Convention of Zambia, a separately registered society.

The court case is expected to take about a week. The most extreme potential outcome: All Southern Baptist missionaries would have to leave the country and all mission property -- including cars, houses and institutions -- would be turned over to the convention.

In Zimbabwe, meanwhile, Southern Baptist mission officials have requested a meeting with President Robert Mugabe over increasingly restrictive work permit policies that are decimating the Southern Baptist mission force there.

The situations in both African countries have been the subject of repeated prayer requests issued by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in the past several months.

The U.S. Embassy in Zambia has taken the position that the Zambia Baptist Mission -- a society legally registered with the government for 35 years -- should be treated like any other such society by the Zambia immigration office. That means another group should not be allowed control of work permits.

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, a popular friend of Zambia as well as an active Southern Baptist, has been asked to intervene. Information about the dispute has been sent to the Carter Presidential Center in Atlanta.

In Zambia, mission spokesmen declined a Zambian government mediator's suggestion that the mission immediately begin working under a joint committee of five missionaries and six members of the Baptist convention's executive committee -- and be bound by its decisions. The mission appealed to Baptist beliefs on autonomy.

"While we are willing and anxious to continue to work with our Christian brothers and sisters of like faith and belief, we must remain true to our understanding of what God teaches us through the Bible," explained missionary Bonita Wilson, acting mission administrator.

1 "For 35 years we have been teaching that individual Baptists and individual churches have the freedom to seek and act on God's will independently, and all cooperation is voluntary for mutual goals, she stated.

"We cannot accept, as a matter of church polity, that the executive committee of the convention has the right to unilaterally control the activities of another Baptist organization. And we do not accept, as a matter of law, that one registered society has the right under Zambian law to interfere with the relationship of another registered society with the government."

The government mediator earlier told Zambian Baptist pastors wanting to speak in support of the mission that they could not even have a meeting of churches to discuss the issue without approval of the convention executive committee. The mediator also reversed an earlier position that the mission didn't need a cover letter from the convention executive before their work permit requests could be considered by the Zambian immigration department.

But he denied he was trying to allow the convention executive to act as a "synod" over Baptist churches and missionaries.

That method of church government is the standard in the United Church of Zambia and in Catholic, Anglican-Episcopal and Presbyterian churches. But historically it has been steadfastly opposed by Baptists and other denominations in the free church tradition.

"What happens to you from now on is your fault," the government official warned the Southern Baptist mission. "Even if you win the court case, you have made people angry and hurt because you won't cooperate and those people might rule on your work permits."

Despite assurances by the chief immigration officer last spring that no one could be forced to leave the country as long as the appeals process was under way, the Zambia missionaries also were told they would have to leave the country when their work permits expire.

Two missionary work permits expire Nov. 23. Six more expire the first week of December. No Southern Baptist missionary holds a work permit that runs beyond December 1996. Currently 47 missionaries are assigned to Zambia.

Other missionaries have re-entry permits that are not legally subject to revocation unless the permit holder is out of Zambia for more than six months. But already one missionary couple holding such permits has been ordered by the immigration office to leave the country.

The Zambian Baptist pastors' conference had asked the government to allow the Southern Baptist mission to continue working in the country, as it has since 1959. Numerous churches have protested the convention executive committee actions both in writing to the government and by withholding their contributions to the convention. Other churches have sided with the convention.

Until two years ago Zambia was the model for cooperation between Baptist conventions and missionaries in Africa. Both sides cooperated voluntarily in the Zambia Baptist Council, which included a majority of Zambians and a chairmanship that rotated between the convention and the mission. The missionaries had started a turn-over of property and institutions, scheduled to be completed in the year 2000, under the guidance of the convention.

The mission organization also requested no new mission personnel without the approval of the convention. But the renewal of work permits had always been handled solely by the mission.

The convention executive committee charges the mission with being unbiblical by taking the issue to the courts. The mission feels the convention introduced the matter into the secular arena by unilaterally blocking work permits. Both sides say the other has failed to respond to reconciliation overtures.

The dispute erupted when Zambian Baptist churches were reporting the most impressive response ever to their presentation of the gospel. In two years the number of churches had increased from 500 to 575. Last year another 40 churches were started and 3,581 new believers baptized.

While the Zambia case is limited to Baptists, the Zimbabwe issue concerns broad government policy that affects many foreign mission organizations.

The Zimbabwe Baptist Convention has teamed up with Southern Baptist missionaries in urging the government to issue work permits for new missionaries and renew existing permits. But the government is reluctant to issue visas for expatriates whose primary job is to preach the gospel or teach the Bible.

Instead, government spokesmen say they want missionaries who can assist in the country's development -- doctors, agriculturists, teachers and the like.

Other groups such as Youth With A Mission, Australian Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists and Team -- as well as groups working under the ecumenical umbrella of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches -- also have asked the government to ease the restrictions.

With the exception of a one-year permit just granted to a short-term worker, the Southern Baptist mission organization in Zimbabwe has had no new work permits approved since 1992. As a result, the number of Southern Baptist missionaries in the country has dropped from 63 to 46. Six more missionaries will transfer to other countries this year when their work permits expire.

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EDITORS' NOTE: In (BP) story titled "Southern Baptists look anew at cooperation in diversity," dated 11/9/94, please correct the 10th paragraph to read:

Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, adds another SBC underpinning: "Southern Baptists"

Thanks,
Baptist Press

(BP)

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