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Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

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**Advice for Here's Hope:
Don't get discouraged**

By Sarah Zimmerman

**Baptist Press
1/13/95**

ATLANTA (BP)--As Southern Baptists' first simultaneous witnessing effort gets under way, Darrell Robinson urged participants to not get discouraged.

Robinson, Home Mission Board vice president for evangelism, said he sometimes shares the gospel 15 or 20 times before he leads anyone to Christ.

When people do not make a profession of faith, Robinson said he gives them a gospel booklet and his phone number. He tells them to call him if they change their mind.

People's response to the gospel is a work of the Holy Spirit, Robinson said. "We can't determine that, but we can be a faithful witness."

The effort for Southern Baptists to share Christ every day for 60 days began Jan. 9 with the theme of "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now." While one goal is for people to make professions of faith, another goal is for Christians to obey the command to witness.

Last fall David Zimmerman, pastor of Atkinson Road Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta, trained members to share their faith by using the "Roman Road" material. The main thing members learned, Zimmerman said, was "they don't have to get people saved to be successful."

"Jesus said, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' Our job is to follow."

Zimmerman said he also wanted to teach his members they don't have to have answers to every spiritual question to share Christ. "All of us who come to Christ do so with many unanswered questions, and we still don't know all the answers," he said.

In a Sunday service at Atkinson Road, 60 people agreed to participate and another 17 committed to share Christ sometime in the 60 days.

By Wednesday night, members already were excited about their attempts to share Christ although they did not report any professions of faith, Zimmerman said.

"One lady was just pumped," Zimmerman said. "She said the words just seemed to flow right out of her mouth as the Lord made her sensitive" to a non-Christian she knew.

Mike Riggins, HMB associate director of Mission Service Corps and member of Atkinson Road, said he stopped for gas on the way to work the day after agreeing to participate in "Here's Hope."

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The convenience store is usually full of people, Riggins said, but that morning only the clerk was there. As Riggins talked to the worker, he shared a Christian tract. The store was soon full of customers, but the clerk agreed to talk to Riggins about the gospel again.

Riggins said making a commitment to "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" made him more intentional about sharing the gospel.

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ANALYSIS

Algeria conflict threatens
Christian work across region

By Mike Creswell

Baptist Press
1/13/95

PARIS (BP)--The deadly hijacking of a French airliner in Algeria Dec. 24 was just one skirmish in an Islamic religious war that threatens Christian missionary efforts across North Africa.

The four armed Algerians who took over the Air France plane were Islamic fundamentalists. They were possibly members of a group called the Armed Islamic Group, dedicated to setting up a fundamentalist Islamic government along the lines of Iran's. They killed three of the 227 passengers and released 63 others before flying to France on Christmas Day.

That afternoon French commandos stormed the plane, killing all four hijackers. The battle left 24 others wounded. French authorities said later that the hijackers had planned to blow up the wide-body Airbus in the skies over Paris with 20 sticks of dynamite -- raining fiery death down on the city.

For most Americans, the story slipped out of the newspapers and off the 6 o'clock news at that point.

But Christian workers assigned to North Africa say the hijacking episode was part of an ongoing, bloody struggle by Islamic fundamentalists to take political control in North Africa. Algeria already is caught up in civil war. The worsening struggle could destabilize Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt as well.

Algeria began its slide into civil war in 1992 when the Islamic Salvation Front, a militant Muslim group, was threatening to win enough votes to take control of the country. The front seeks to turn Algeria into an Iran-style nation guided by the Koran, Islam's holy book -- as interpreted by hard-line Shiite Muslim leaders. Most North Africans -- including most Algerians -- are more moderate Sunni Muslims who reject control by Shiite beliefs.

With a population of 28 million and an economy bleeding from high unemployment and runaway inflation, Algeria has become a hard place to live in recent years. Even before the current crisis, the capital city of Algiers had plunged towards poverty. Downtown department stores that once displayed the finest French perfumes had begun carrying cheap bubble bath in plastic jugs.

Things were so bad that any prospect for change -- even change mirroring Iran's dubious model -- looked good to many people. Fundamentalist Islam appeals to the hopeless much as communism once did.

Algeria's military junta rejected the 1992 elections that favored the Islamic Salvation Front. It declared 1 million votes fraudulent, canceled the second round of elections and clamped down on the front and several other groups. Violence flared.

As the fourth year of conflict begins, no signs indicate peace is near. On the third anniversary of the military crackdown that started the civil war, 15 people died in attacks by suspected Muslim insurgents.

Between 11,000 and 30,000 people have died in the fighting. That includes nearly 80 foreigners -- favorite targets of Muslim extremists -- and more than two dozen journalists. The death toll estimates now run as high as 100 a day. Whatever the true numbers, the war is getting worse, not better.

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Many of the dead are simply murdered: That was the case Dec. 27 when four Roman Catholic priests were killed by six gunmen in Tizi-Ouzou, 60 miles east of Algiers. The priests, three French and one Belgian, were said to have been killed by one of the Muslim groups in retaliation for the deaths of the four plane hijackers. The Armed Islamic Group claimed responsibility, saying it was "carrying on with the extermination of Christian crusaders."

Tizi-Ouzou is the capital of the Kabyle Berber people. About 5 million Kabyle Berbers live in Algeria, part of the larger group of some 20 million Berbers spread across North Africa.

It's in this mountainous region of northern Algeria that response to the gospel of Jesus Christ has been highest in recent years. The response -- and other signs in the Mideast and North Africa -- has led some observers to wonder if Christian revival might be beginning in the region.

Southern Baptists have joined other evangelistic Christians in praying for the Berbers, designated by missions strategists as one of the peoples least exposed to the gospel. Radio programs, Christian videos and other materials have helped fan a small spark of response to the gospel across Algeria, among both Berbers and Arabs.

In December Christian workers in Europe received dozens of requests for Bibles and other helps from inside Algeria. "It has been almost 10 years since I have begun listening to your gospel program on the radio in Kabyle Berber," wrote one man. "Since I have started listening to your program, I feel more structured in my life."

A young woman wrote that she had discovered Jesus Christ through a friend. "To become a Christian, what must I do?" she asked.

Despite such responses, Christian workers caution that the Algerian civil war threatens their efforts just as it threatens every institution in the country. One worker dismissed press reports comparing the merits of different fundamentalist Muslim groups struggling for control in Algeria.

"They're all bloodthirsty terrorists," he declared. "And they will all kill Christians if they come to power."

Already Christians in Algeria have been targeted by the Islamists, especially in the west. Algiers, the capital city, is considered especially dangerous for Christians now.

Algeria's one Christian bookstore, in Algiers, shut its doors last March after workers were told they would "disappear" if they didn't close. At least one Algerian Christian leader reportedly has been "sentenced" to death by an Islamic mosque. Some believers say they have been threatened because of their faith. Others have fled Algeria for their lives, according to one report.

Even non-Christian Berbers likely will face more pressures if fundamentalist Muslims come to power. Last fall Algerian Arabs tried to force Berber schools to use the Arabic language instead of Berber. The Berbers responded with a boycott that shut schools throughout the region. Muslim militants also kidnapped Algeria's best-known Berber singer and announced: "Those who oppose us with the pen will die by the sword."

Algeria's strife also is spilling over into other countries in the region:

-- France: It was no accident that the airliner hijacked in December was French. France ruled Algeria for 132 years; Algeria became an independent country in 1962 after a bloody war. Today France backs Algeria's military-led government. About 4 million Algerians still live in France, many of them carrying dual French-Algerian passports.

Alarmed at prospects of a terrorist war on its soil, the French government deported more than two dozen Algerians it identified as militants in 1994. More recently the government has stepped up surveillance of Islamic groups, arrested fundamentalist leaders and worked to strengthen the hand of moderate Muslims, who make up the overwhelming majority of those following Islam.

Southern Baptists work among Muslims in several locations in France. Workers there report that former Muslims who are now Christians are increasingly cautious. One congregation of former Muslims, fearing publicity, flatly turned down a request for interviews.

-- Morocco: This North African neighbor has banned Algerians with French passports. Some Christian workers assigned to Morocco worry that persecution of Christians -- a minority there as elsewhere in North Africa -- may increase as a way to appease militant Muslims pressing for a harder-line Islamic state.

Gilberto Orellana, a Christian worker from El Salvador, was arrested in Morocco with five Moroccans in December. He was convicted of "proselytization" Jan. 3 and sentenced to a year. A few days later he was released and allowed to leave. While such charges have long been a danger of working in North Africa, workers fear increase of legal harassment as tensions rise.

-- Egypt: The Egyptian government has been fighting fundamentalist Muslim groups in recent years. The groups have launched a highly publicized series of bomb attacks against tourist buses, police and government officials.

Fundamentalists such as the Islamic Group want to unseat Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and set up an Islamic regime. They also are said to support Algerian groups such as the Armed Islamic Group.

Egypt's government will launch an offensive against fundamentalist Islam this year, putting 10,000 private mosques under government control. That will cost \$15 million a year, mainly to appoint public preachers. A government official said the state will gradually take control of 140,000 private mosques to keep militants from using them as a platform to spread their ideas.

Christians in Egypt already have many problems with arrests, imprisonments and harassments. In one publicized case, Assemblies of God pastor William Gayyid spent 37 days in jail after he was charged with trying to convert three Muslim women to the Christian faith. Three of the four Coptic Christians in prison since last fall were released in recent weeks, including a woman who converted from Islam to Christianity and the minister who baptized her.

-- Iran: A look at Iran's track record on treatment of Christians shows what to expect if the Iranian pattern is repeated in North Africa. Several Christian leaders have been murdered; others held for years in jail. The Bible society and many churches have been closed. Late in 1994 a man regarded as the last prominent evangelical Christian leader alive fled to Europe after a death threat. Iran's future radicalism, one worker said, will be determined by whoever replaces the Shiite grand ayatollah, who died in December.

Some scholars, like Harvard's Samuel Huntington, predict the world's next big struggle will be between Islam and the West. A look at North Africa, the Mideast, Bosnia, and more recently, Chechnya, leads one to think the prediction has already come to pass.

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(BP) graphic illustration (horizontal) mailed Jan. 12 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Graphic and outline available on SBCNet News Room.

DivorceCare links local groups
with experts via video tapes

By Kelli Williams

Baptist Press
1/13/95

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--The divorce recovery ministry at Steve Grissom's home church in Raleigh, N.C., was struggling. The pastor and church leaders had tried yearly seminars and conferences on divorce and separation, but it simply wasn't enough. They needed an ongoing ministry that provided immediate help.

The result was DivorceCare, a set of 13 videotapes and instructional literature designed by Grissom to give churches the tools for effective divorce recovery ministry. The tapes, which are self-contained so those in need can find immediate help, are used to prompt small group discussion and personal application on such topics as "What's Happening to Me?" "Facing Your Anger," "Financial Survival," "Kid Care" and "Moving Closer to God."

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Grissom contacted experts in the fields of divorce counseling and family ministry -- N. Norman Wright, Archibald Hart, Larry Burkett, David Seamands, Bob Barnes -- the kind of expert team a church wouldn't be able to assemble on the local level.

In addition, each DivorceCare seminar incorporates the personal testimonies of people who have experienced separation and divorce. "It's one thing to hear an expert say something, but when it's underscored by somebody who's been through it, it gives participants somebody to relate to," said Grissom, who went through his own divorce in 1987 and has directed the DivorceCare program in his Raleigh, N.C., church since it began in January 1994.

DivorceCare combines a weekly support group with expert biblical instruction so churches can provide an ongoing ministry. "People ache to know they're not alone," said Grissom. Some participants in Grissom's DivorceCare group drive an hour, two hours, even more to attend. "That shows the level of pain," he said. "They're hungry for help."

Crawford Moody, associate singles and single parents minister at First Baptist Church, Dallas, has seen that hunger as well. "I've seen the participants in our DivorceCare program grow personally, spiritually, emotionally and become more active in our church." Moody said he plans to take the program beyond the church into the community, conducting sessions in major downtown businesses during the workday.

"DivorceCare is a gateway to the community, an outreach and evangelistic tool, meeting people at their point of need. It's a church-equipping ministry," Grissom said.

Response to the DivorceCare program has been overwhelming, he said. More than 350 requests have come from across North America and as far away as New Zealand, crossing denominational lines as churches respond to the pain of divorce and separation with the love of Christ.

"One of the underlying principles premises of DivorceCare is that you can't heal from something as painful as separation or divorce without a personal relationship with Jesus Christ," said Grissom. "Divorce is a tearing at the soul level, a tearing of a 'one-flesh' marriage relationship, and the only person who can mend a soul is God."

Grissom left his executive telecommunications and broadcasting job to devote himself full time to the development of the DivorceCare program. "I felt the need to heal the hurt of divorce," he recounted. "When I went into my boss' office to resign, he just stared at me. Leaving certainly didn't make any sense in classic terms. They didn't understand how I could do this. All I could say was, 'The Lord's telling me to do this so I have to trust him.'"

After his own divorce in 1987, Grissom had helped organize a men's support group at his home church, Providence Baptist in Raleigh, N.C. In addition, the church hosted a Fresh Start conference on divorce twice a year but still felt they weren't ministering adequately to those suffering from the hurt of separation and divorce. Steve agreed. He and other divorce ministry leaders at Providence adapted the Fresh Start conference materials to a weekly format, but the curriculum still did not fulfill all the needs of the participants. "So I started thinking, how could we do this so that every church could afford to do effective divorce ministry?" said Grissom.

DivorceCare was the result. Along with his second wife, Cheryl, Grissom devoted nearly two years to developing the divorce recovery program -- interviewing, filming, editing the raw footage into tapes, writing the instructional literature, conducting research, doing publicity and marketing.

Where do they go from here? With a vision to equip churches to minister to people hurting from separation and divorce, Steve hopes to prepare 10,000 churches for ministry by the end of the year 2000.

"This was a huge step of faith for Cheryl and me personally. I left a dream job. Everybody thought we were nuts, but it's been amazing to see God expand this little vision that I had. It's turning out to be much different and much better than I ever dreamed. It's great to be along for the ride."

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Williams is a free-lance writer in Raleigh, N.C.

**Jan Johnsonius named to direct
Southwestern's public relations**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Jan Johnsonius, a former Southern Baptist missionary to Argentina, has been named director of public relations, news and information for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

She will come to her new position in early February after a year as a special assignment writer in the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's news and information office in Richmond, Va.

The announcement of Johnsonius' selection at Southwestern was made Jan. 12 by the seminary's president, Ken Hemphill.

Hemphill commented, "Jan's experiences as a missionary will be instrumental in her playing a leadership role in continuing Southwestern's strong heritage of missions and evangelism. Southwestern's communications with its students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and the public in general will benefit greatly from her broad background in public relations, journalism and fund-raising."

Appointed in June 1991 by the Foreign Mission Board, Johnsonius and her husband, Jim, served as career missionaries in Villaguay, Argentina, after completing language study in San Jose, Costa Rica. On Aug. 1, 1993, they were involved in an auto accident in Argentina in which Mr. Johnsonius was killed and Mrs. Johnsonius was seriously injured. After several months of recuperation, she returned to the United States in March 1994 to begin a work furlough for the FMB.

Born and reared in Springfield, Ohio, Johnsonius earned the bachelor of arts degree in journalism from Murray (Ky.) State University. After graduation, she worked as reporter, copy editor and photographer for the Paris (Tenn.) Post-Intelligencer where she met her husband. She considers First Baptist Church in Paris her home church.

Johnsonius worked as public relations director at Cargill Associates, a capital stewardship firm in Fort Worth and served as copy editor for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram while her husband worked toward the master of music degree at Southwestern. Her other public relations experience includes work as public relations director for the Virginia Opera in Norfolk and public relations director at Methodist Hospital in Dyersburg, Tenn.

"I see my coming to Southwestern as an opportunity to help Southern Baptists catch the vision that Southwestern has for missions and evangelism and to give them a sense of personal involvement in the seminary," Johnsonius, 37, said. "I also see this as an opportunity to help those men and women who are called by God to ministry to realize that Southwestern can provide training they need to serve the Lord in the United States and around the world."

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**McCartney retires from RTVC
executive v.p., CEO posts**

By C.C. Risenhoover

**Baptist Press
1/13/95**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Richard T. "Dick" McCartney retired as executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission effective Jan. 1.

Jack Johnson, RTVC president, said McCartney will continue serving the Baptist agency as an adviser and consultant.

"Dick McCartney has always been on the leading edge of communications technology," Johnson said. "His contributions to Christian broadcasting have helped pave the way for all those who use mass media to proclaim the gospel. And in all his doing, and in what he will continue to do, he has provided a legacy of integrity coupled with faith in God that is a model for every Christian communicator."

Johnson said for many years McCartney has been a bold voice for Christ in a media culture that has become increasingly perverted with gratuitous sex and violence.

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"His voice has grown ever stronger in advocating that Southern Baptists and other evangelical groups produce quality Christian family values programming as an alternative to the sleaze that dominates much of the secular television and movie industries," the RTVC president said.

The father of three and grandfather of six, McCartney has been especially vocal in calling on television executives to rid children's programs of excessive violence. In 1994, he spoke before the Federal Communications Committee hearing in Washington, regarding violence in children's programming and asked that the television industry do a better job of policing itself.

McCartney's concern for quality programming over the years has been constant, not gradual. He set high standards of morality and quality programming for himself as a young radio announcer in the late 1940s, a commitment that carried over into his television experience in the '50s.

The omnipresent reason for McCartney's choices in life has been his relationship with Christ, a relationship that led to his accepting a call to preach in 1941.

That call led not only to the pulpit but to a career in religious journalism as well. His early broadcasting experience proved to be a valuable foundation for a lifetime of work in Christian communications, which has culminated with his service to the SBC Radio and Television Commission that began in 1987.

McCartney was born in Franklin County, Ark., but spent much of his childhood in Maryland and, then, most of his life and ministry in the Southwest.

His college experience was at John Brown University, Siloam Springs, Ark., here he earned a B.A. degree. He earned bachelor of divinity and master of divinity degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. McCartney has been on the board of trustees for John Brown University since 1980 and was chairman from 1985-87.

His professional experience includes director of public relations, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1958-62; director of public relations, Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1962-68; president, Arthur Davenport Associates, Inc., Oklahoma City, Okla., 1968-76; president, McCartney & Associates, Inc., Oklahoma City, 1976-77; director of public relations and assistant to executive director, Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1977-79; director of communications, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, and editor, The Baptist Messenger, 1979-87.

Early in his ministry, he was pastor of churches in Noel, Mo.; Muskogee, Okla.; and Cooke County, Texas.

Over the years, McCartney has had a strong leadership role in both denominational and secular public relations. He is a member of Texas Baptist Public Relations Association and was president of Baptist Public Relations Association in 1964. A member of Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), he was a member of the national board from 1973-74 and the national board of ethics and professional standards, 1975-77, and chairman in 1976. He was named "Public Relations Professional of the Year" by the Oklahoma City chapter of PRSA in 1983.

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