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NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
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Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
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March 15, 1995

95-44

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Calif. Baptists minister
to storm-battered state

By Mark A. Wyatt

Baptist Press
3/15/95

WATSONVILLE, Calif. (BP)--While weather watchers rate the severity of California's most recent winter storms, Southern Baptists are once again providing help and hope to thousands affected by the state's latest natural disaster.

"A lot of people are very happy to see us," remarked Don Hargis, California Southern Baptist Convention Men's Ministries director. Hargis is coordinating Baptist aid to victims of the March storms which officials say eclipsed the intensity, damage and death toll produced by record bad weather in January.

Southern Baptist disaster relief stations were set up in two cities as the deadly storms battered California for several days beginning in early March. Extensive flooding -- described as the state's worst in more than 100 years -- triggered mudslides which swallowed houses in the Southern California community of La Conchita and collapsed bridges in several locations.

The worst bridge collapse occurred near Coalinga on Interstate 5, California's main north-south artery. At least six people died when several cars and trucks plunged 40 feet into the flood-swollen torrent. I-5 remained closed for several days while state and federal transportation authorities hurried to construct a temporary bridge which was expected to allow the freeway to be reopened about one week after the collapse. Replacing the temporary span with permanent bridges will take months to complete.

In saturated areas of northern California, predictions of more rainfall raised concern that additional storms could trigger renewed flooding, further endangering lives and property. By March 15 the statewide death toll blamed on the storms had reached at least 14, officials reported.

Damage estimates to structures and crops are running into the billions of dollars.

As torrential storms dumped record rainfall amounts across the state, American Red Cross officials requested assistance from California Southern Baptist Convention disaster relief workers, according to Hargis. Less than 24 hours after getting the call for help on March 12, Baptist volunteers were operating a temporary field kitchen in Watsonville.

"We're set up just about the same place we were in 1989," Hargis said, recalling extensive relief efforts conducted there following the Loma Prieta earthquake.

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Fifteen volunteers from churches in Fresno, Sacramento, Orange County and San Jose served 2,500 hot meals at the Watsonville site the first day. Among those seeking shelter and food were hundreds of field hands suddenly left without work or homes when the lush Salinas Valley was inundated.

"Most of these people came from the Monterey area, mostly Hispanic migrant workers who speak no English," Hargis explained. "About half of our volunteers are bilingual, so that helps," he said.

In the central California town of Clovis, nearly 100 residents -- most of them Hmong immigrants forced from their homes by flooding -- took shelter at an adult community center. Southern Baptist volunteers operated a kitchen at the center to provide hot meals for the evacuees.

Hargis said both relief centers would remain in operation for at least one week. But even when relief work at those centers is completed, there is more work awaiting Baptist volunteers.

Dennis Schmierer, CSBC business services director, said some volunteers likely will relocate to help with repairs and cleanup at Jenness Park, California Southern Baptists' state camp in the Sierra Nevada Mountains near Sonora.

Flood damage to grounds and structures at the 160-acre complex was expected to require several weeks and thousands of dollars to repair.

Hundreds of campers were turned away and thousands of dollars in revenue lost when storm-related power failures, flooding and water shortages forced the temporary closing of Jenness Park, Schmierer said. Two camping events had to be called off during the height of the March storms, but Schmierer was optimistic further cancellations would not be necessary.

Initial reports indicated little or no damage to Southern Baptist church structures across California. But in many communities, individuals and congregations pitched in to help residents affected by the storms.

"Southern Baptists have a good reputation and we want to keep it that way," Hargis said. "That's the reputation of Jesus."

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Zambia immigration officer ignores
ruling favorable to Baptist mission By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
3/15/95

LUSAKA, Zambia (BP)--Six more Southern Baptist missionary couples assigned to Zambia are looking at alternate ministry assignments after the country's chief immigration office ignored a judge's directive to extend Baptist missionaries' work permits.

Four of the couples may become illegal immigrants at the end of March, when their work permits expire, unless the Baptist Convention of Zambia and the Baptist mission (organization of missionaries) resolve a two-year-old dispute over who must approve missionary work permit requests.

That will be discussed again at a March 24 meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, between leaders of the mission and the convention. If the issue is not resolved then, both sides will examine future options.

Meanwhile, another couple is in the United States hoping to return to the central African country after furlough.

Unless the trend is reversed, the Southern Baptist mission force in the country, which numbered 45 in 1994, will shrink to six couples within a year.

"We certainly need everyone's prayers for the March 24 meeting," missionary Bonita Wilson, acting administrator for the mission, said March 15. "We need a miracle to work this out."

A Zambian judge ordered the two sides to meet without governmental interference and work out what he called an internal church matter that never should have been brought to court. At the same time he ordered the chief immigration officer to give longer extensions on work permits instead of the 30-60 days the officer had been issuing.

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But the chief immigration office refused to comply.

So by March 31 Ed and Linda Miller, Jim and Thelma Cooke, Dwayne and Betty Mitchell and Mike and Lindy Howard, all from Texas, will become illegal immigrants if they remain in the country with no solution to the problem.

The immigration office also has circulated a notice to its officers that John and Amelia Garrison, from Alabama, will not to be allowed to enter the country. They are in the United States hoping to return.

Zambia was the trendsetter in mission-convention relations in Africa before the decision by the Baptist Convention of Zambia's executive committee to ask the immigration office to get convention approval before granting work permits to missionaries.

For almost a decade a Zambia Baptist Council, with a majority of Zambians as voting members, approved all programs and budgets. Also, the mission was gradually turning over most properties and control of institutions by A.D. 2000.

Since the dispute, relationships have been severely strained, not only between convention leaders and missionaries but between Zambian Baptists. Some churches have withheld their contributions to the national convention and tension has arisen among pastors.

Attempts to broker agreements or urge reconciliation by several groups, including a Baptist pastor's organization and seminary students, have been unsuccessful.

The U.S. Embassy has protested the immigration office treating the mission differently than other registered non-governmental societies.

The mission and the convention are registered separately with the government, with the mission being the older legal entity of the two.

If the situation remains unchanged, after December 1996 only four Southern Baptist couples could legally work in the country.

Jerry and Dorothy Hubbard, from Alabama; Tom and Lucille Waddill, from North Carolina; and Fred and Joy Allen and Franklin and Paula Kilpatrick, all from Texas, have entry permits instead of work permits. That allows them to remain in Zambia as long as they are not absent from the country for more than six months at a time.

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Success means being 'available,'

Bowden tells Legacy Builders

By Steve Barber

Baptist Press

3/15/95

DULUTH, Ga. (BP)--Florida State head football coach Bobby Bowden told more than 200 Baptist men at the first-ever "Legacy Builders Rally" that all he's ever really done is made himself available to God and "he has just worked out everything."

Bowden, who led the Seminoles to the 1993 national title, said he'd never intentionally applied for any coaching job he ever got, including those at Florida State and, earlier, at West Virginia University.

"My objective always was to be a head coach at a major university," Bowden said, whose first opening came after the resignation of the WVU head coach in 1969.

"But my dad was over in Birmingham dying" after unsuccessful surgery, "so rather than stay around and campaign for the job, I took off for Birmingham," he said. "The next morning they called me ... they wanted me to take the head coaching job."

The March 11 rally in Duluth, Ga., was the launch event for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's new emphasis on Men's Ministries.

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"We wanted to communicate the objectives and share our new vision for what we believe can happen among men in their local churches," said Jim Burton, the agency's Men's Ministries director. "The rally itself is an outgrowth. The name Legacy Builders, for example, comes from our new Legacy Builders weekend retreat that will be available to local churches June 1."

Brotherhood Commission President James Williams said the rally is one result of dialogue with laymen, pastors and leaders in the men's ministry movement.

"It became obvious to us that we needed to capture attention and imagination of 'boomers and busters,' many of whom were not attracted to traditional Brotherhood programs," Williams said, adding the rally is one way to "capture the strength and help direct the energies of men outward, to a world desperately in need of the gospel."

The theme of "leaving a Christian legacy" for future generations was the focus of other rally session leaders, including Gary Rosberg, author of "Guard Your Heart," and Walter Mickels, a parental issues specialist from Dallas.

Mickels called on the men to "scuba dive" in God's Word to glean the values they should be vocally teaching to their children.

"The Scriptures are absolutely covered with the idea of living a trustworthy life, an honest life, a life of integrity. They're just loaded with them," Mickels said. "They're the true source of all these values. And these commandments have to be 'on your heart' at all times."

Devotion to intensive daily Bible study is the foundation.

"We ski on the surface when we talk about Bible study," he said. "We have a five-minute quiet time, and we're on our way. Maybe you'll have a 15-minute Bible study. That's just snorkeling, guys. If you're really going to get into Bible study, you're going to have to go scuba diving. We're talking about experiencing God. We're talking about a good, solid Bible study program."

"I started studying characters, like Joseph, Moses, Daniel and Jonah. If you start looking and digging into their lives, you see who they really are. They're nothing more than men, just like we are, but guess what: They were able to get the power of the Holy Spirit on their side because they had committed themselves to him."

Rosberg offered his view of keeping life in perspective with an illustration of five small dots representing major events in a man's life -- including birth, marriage, the birth of children and death -- followed by a much longer line, representing eternity.

"We're living for the dot, when we should be living for the line," Rosberg said. "We're missing the call if we don't shift our focus toward eternity. We've got to be 'salt,' we've got to be different, and it's happening. It's called revival."

The rally was co-sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission and the Georgia Baptist Convention's Brotherhood department and hosted by Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta.

The Brotherhood Commission's Burton said more agency-organized regional rallies in other parts of the country may be organized in 1996, but Georgia Brotherhood director Ray Newman said he already was considering repeating the event next year in his state.

"I have yet to receive a negative reaction," Newman said after the event. "Our exit evaluations were all positive and reaffirming. Our office has been flooded with calls from men across the state saying, 'We must do this again.' So, we are going to meet that expressed need in Georgia, and we've already planned smaller-scale rallies at the associational level."

His prayer to be a witness
gets ready answer from youth

By Ken Walker

SOMERSET, Ky. (BP)--When Garland Brinson prayed in January that he would be able to lead someone to Christ in 1995, he didn't know God would answer so fast.

About three weeks later, the assistant Royal Ambassadors leader at Rock Lick Baptist Church in Somerset, Ky., noticed a couple of boys talking during their Wednesday night RA meeting.

When he tried to get them to settle down, one youth who had been a Christian for a year told Brinson his friend wanted to know how to become a Christian.

"I thought they were doing the usual thing," Brinson said of the peppy 10-to-14-year-old group. Nevertheless, he took the boy into a quiet room and showed him what the Bible says about how to become a Christian.

"He knelt and said his own prayer: 'Lord, I'm a sinner. I want you to save me now. I don't want to go to hell when I die.' And he was sincere."

Afterward, the 13-year-old boy shared his decision with the other RAs, who were "overjoyed," Brinson said.

A longtime employee at a plumbing equipment manufacturing plant, Brinson said the experience has been good for the other boy who watched the witnessing session.

"He's quieter than he was and it seems he takes things a little more seriously," said Brinson, who just began assisting RA leader Roger Young last month. "We have two more boys in the class who are starting to ask questions, so maybe we'll have a chance to lead them to the Lord before the year's over."

The youth was the second teen-ager to become a Christian that week at Rock Lick Baptist Church, which averages 100 for Sunday morning attendance.

These commitments are exciting results for "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now," pastor David Evans said of the effort initiated by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Evans recently led his congregation in a witness training program. However, the only commitment he asked of the congregation was to pray for 60 days leading up to spring revival services April 2-9.

"It's been a blessing to see people coming to the Lord and doing what's right," Evans said. "I'm thankful for how the Lord has put it all together. It amazes me."

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SBCNet provides key link
for Minn.-Wis. Baptists

By Gomer R. Lesch

Baptist Press
3/15/95

ROCHESTER, Minn. (BP)--"I believe the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention is using CompuServe and SBCNet in a way unlike any other state convention." So says William C. Tinsley, executive director of the two-state convention.

Each state staff professional has been equipped with a notebook computer. Clerical support staff have desktop computers, and all are connected to CompuServe.

"Even when out of state, our staff members are always accessible via CompuServe without anyone having to track hotel phone numbers and whereabouts," says Tinsley.

This opinion is echoed by other M-W CompuServe users. Stan E. Weese, pastor of North Center Baptist Church, Brooklyn Park, Minn., says (by E-mail): "I'm rather new to CompuServe and SBCNet (for just a few weeks now), but I'm already using it almost daily. It facilitates communication with the state office, the association and other pastors."

About 50 individuals have access to the networks, including all state staff members, all six associational directors of missions, 20 pastors and several laypersons.

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The list is growing daily since free CompuServe kits were distributed at the Pastors and Wives retreat in February.

When a message was sent to the entire list asking for comment about their use of SBCNet, 14 replies were received out of 37 addressed. Twelve of the replies were received within 24 hours. The first came in 28 minutes after the request was posted.

Dennis Murphy's answer was typical: "I use the Net extensively for sermon ideas, worship planning, clip-art, Sunday School Extras, keeping informed on SBC news, and probably most importantly for prayer requests." Murphy is pastor of Gl n Lake Baptist Church, Minnetonka, Minn.

Tong Chong Vang, pastor of First Hmong Church, Minneapolis, is trying "every day ... to encourage Hmong pastors to be in the network" and has had conversations with the Sunday School Board to include Hmong literature on SBCNet in support of Hmong churches. He voices the belief anyone who does not upgrade to the new technology will fall behind in ministry.

There are downsides to the net. In the two-state area, only seven centers are available without long-distance charges. Still, the saving of time and avoidance of "telephone tag" and multiple long-distance calls to track down fellow ministers provides cost savings.

Also, some pastors, many of whom are bivocational, are not able to afford the monthly cost of the services.

Murphy says he desires "a better job in the clip art section." He also has a problem "in that I have a Mac and so much of the available programs are DOS based." He would like to see a Mac version of things like the On-Line Bible and Growth Spiral.

Gerald Palmer, retired Home Mission Board staffer who is serving as interim director of missions for the Northwoods Baptist Association in Minnesota, says he is happy instant communication with pastors takes place "in an area covering this much territory." He says he feels "the relationship through this medium makes one feel a part of the whole in a way nothing else can give. I feel I am 'in the loop.'"

Betty Lynn Cadle, M-W director of WMU/missions ministries, went to her church, Emmanuel Baptist in Rochester, Minn., one Wednesday evening to install CompuServe on pastor George Ray's computer. At 7 p.m., Ray came to ask for volunteers to fill in with a GA group whose leader had a family emergency.

Cadle replied: "I'll do it if you let us go in your office and get prayer requests off your computer!"

She took four of the eight GAs, they trooped off to the office, and the little ones sat in the chair with her to help pick out an "S" to Search CompassionNet for a country they had studied, then chose a "V" to View the request and a "P" to Print out the request they had chosen. "It was a big hit!"

Grant Hignight, pastor of Brown Deer Baptist Church in Milwaukee, and MWBC president, underscores the immediacy with which prayer requests and answers to prayer can be shared with a broad group of believers. "It is a blessing to know that those on CompuServe in our convention take time to personally involve themselves in these prayer matters," he says.

Hignight also provides youth, adult and children's Sunday school workers with the appropriate Sunday School Extra materials produced weekly by the Sunday School Board. "These workers do not feel their preparations are complete without the benefit of this added material," he reports.

George Watson's minister of music works at the University of Minnesota, and sometimes the pastor of Roseville (Minn.) Baptist Church has difficulty getting together with him on the order of worship.

"He has just begun to send the order of service for future worship services over E-mail," says Watson. "This eliminates trying to track each other down. Even though he is on Internet, it is certainly worth the (added) 15 to 20 cents we spend each week" for the service.

RTVC Lord's Supper display
curator Pauline Dooley dies By C.C. Risenhoover

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Pauline Dooley, curator of the Lord's Supper Display at the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, died March 10. She was 83.

Funeral services for Dooley were March 13 at Fleming Chapel of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, where she was a member. Graveside services were at Memorial Park in Ada, Okla., March 14.

Dooley was the only curator of the Lord's Supper Display during its 39 years in Fort Worth.

More than 10,000 visitors come to the RTVC annually to see the life-size wax interpretation of "The Last Supper," and over the years Dooley became a familiar figure to literally thousands of people.

"Mrs. Dooley was a lady whose commitment to Christ was evident in everything she did," said Jack Johnson, RTVC president. "There was never any doubt about her allegiance to him. None of us here will ever forget her beautiful smile and the joy she exhibited in doing her work. She leaves a very large gap in all our lives."

The wax interpretation was completed in 1956 by the mother-daughter team of Katherine and Katherine Stubergh. The Stubergh family has done wax sculpturing for more than 300 years, beginning in Germany. It was provided as a contribution to the religious culture of Fort Worth by the late William and Anna Maude Fleming. It was given to the RTVC by Howard F. and Mary D. Walsh, daughter and son-in-law of the Flemings, and is housed in a special room built to the dimensions of the scene.

Dooley was quoted as saying, "Through the years I have come to realize what an impact the display can have on visitors. It is not unusual for young couples brought in as children to return with their own children. One man who came told me he saw the display when he was 3 years old and had never forgotten it, so he came to see it a second time with his 3-year-old son."

Dooley is survived by a daughter, Dorothy Williams of St. Paul, Minn.; a son, Bob Dooley, who is a missionary to Brazil; and four grandchildren.

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EDITORS' NOTE: In (BP) story titled "Hispanic Baptist leaders protest Catholic/evangelical document," dated 3/13/95, please delete the fifth paragraph (about Larry Lewis being unavailable for comment) and add the following six paragraphs before the last paragraph:

Lewis, in a statement issued March 14, took note of the Hispanic leaders' concerns related to the evangelical-Catholic document and commended Hispanic Baptists for "dedication to evangelism and missions."

"However, as others have done, they appear to have misunderstood the intent and focus of ECT," Lewis wrote. "It does not prohibit, but rather encourages, evangelization of all who have not accepted Christ whether they are members of the Catholic church, a Baptist church or no church.

"The document does not imply all Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ any more than it implies all Baptists are Christian brothers and sisters," Lewis continued. "It says all those who truly profess Christ as Savior and Lord are Christian brothers."

Lewis noted that Hispanic Baptists "were not contacted about endorsement of ECT nor was anyone else because the signers very clearly stated we did not represent our denominations or constituencies. I signed ECT because I believe evangelical Christians must work with those who are in agreement with us on the vital moral and social issues which threaten our families and society.

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"Neither do I accept responsibility for misuse or misunderstanding of the document by Catholic priests, Baptist pastors or anyone else," Lewis said. "I have heard claims that the document has been used against converted Catholics or to prevent witnessing to Catholics, but no one has given me the name and address of a single priest, bishop or archbishop to substantiate such claims."

Lewis concluded, "I along with other signers of ECT have endorsed a clarifying statement which states emphatically that ECT does not imply acceptance of Roman Catholic doctrinal distinctives or endorsement of the Roman Catholic church system, but reaffirms our commitment to salvation by faith alone, and evangelism and missions of all people. I trust this clarification will resolve much of the misunderstanding."

EDITORS' NOTE: In (BP) story titled "Catholic-evangelical signers address areas of controversy," dated 3/13/95, please revise the seventh paragraph to read:

The clarifying statement also has been signed by Bill Bright, Campus Crusade for Christ founder; theologian J.I. Packer; TV evangelist Pat Robertson; Ralph Reed, executive director, Christian Coalition; and Richard Mouw, president, Fuller Theological Seminary in California.

Also, delete the final paragraph (about Land being unavailable for comment) and replace it with these three paragraphs:

Land was quoted in the Indiana Baptist newsjournal as commenting, "I'm delighted at the efforts of Dr. Colson and others which have resulted in clarifying any possible misunderstandings concerning the commitment of evangelical signers of Evangelicals and Catholics Together to justification by grace alone by faith alone."

Land described the original document as one which seeks to focus on common evangelical and Catholic moral concerns and enunciates far more areas of remaining disagreement between Catholics and evangelicals than it does areas of agreement." The clarifying document emphasizes that, he added.

H reiterated that the ECT acknowledges that people should witness "in any context to their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior."

CORRECTION: In the (BP) story titled "Brotherhood, Promise Keepers complementary, Burton says," dated 3/13/95, please make the following corrections:

-- In the 20th and 28th paragraphs, the name of the magazine cited is "Missions Today," not "MissionsUSA."

-- The 23rd paragraph's second sentence should read: A 1994 reorganization split the former adult division into a projects-oriented Adults in Missions department and Men's Ministries church-based programs.

-- In the 29th paragraph, the name of the accountability groups has been changed to "Encouragement Teams," from "Team Builders."

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