

(BP)

- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522, CompuServe 70420,250
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232, CompuServe 70420,115
NASHVILLE Linda Lawson, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300, CompuServe 70420,57
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151, CompuServe 70420,72
WASHINGTON Tom Strade, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223, CompuServe 71173,316

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

May 17, 1995

95-83

HAWAII--Looking for fellowship, bonding? Try a hurricane; photo.
HONOLULU--Hawaii: Paradise for some, mission field for Baptists; photo.
HONOLULU--Hawaii Baptists: an overview.
HONOLULU--International students find Baptist friends in Hawaii; photo.
NEW ORLEANS--Baptists help residents after rain of 'biblical proportions.'
UTAH--Jim Harding named to lead Utah-Idaho convention.
GERMANY--Larry Cox named associate to Europe area director; photo.

Looking for fellowship,
bonding? Try a hurricane

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
5/17/95

ELEELE, Hawaii (BP)--If you want your congregation to grow stronger in fellowship and missions, a hurricane might do the trick.

At least that's what happened for pastor Mel Campos and the Eleele Baptist Mission after Hurricane Iniki.

"What it did for our congregation was provide the occasion for our members to be on mission together," says Campos, a native of the island of Kauai who lived 21 years in North Carolina.

"It was like one big mission trip," he says. Members "discovered that they had skills that they could render for ministry in times of crisis."

Since then, the church has grown, both in attendance and in ministry participation, he says. "I think it's opened the door for them to be on mission when they're not in crisis."

When the storm hit on Sept. 11, 1992, Campos was where many island residents would love to have been: six time zones away in the mountains of North Carolina. It took him two weeks to get back to the island and to his wife and children, who hid in the church building's storage room during the storm.

Campos, a former minor league baseball player and media professor, had been with the mission six months before the storm. "It drove us closer together. We knew we had people in our congregation with big needs."

Initial help arrived from neighboring islands. Subsequent volunteers came from California and as far away as the church Campos attended in Poplar Springs, N.C. "We had always said, 'You need to come to Hawaii to do mission work,' and now it was for real," he said. "It was like a big reunion."

Campos coordinated most of the work from the Eleele church. "It was hard work, but it was one of those things where you get up in the morning and can't wait. It was a lot of fun."

From feeding to rebuilding, Southern Baptists' work impressed church members and community residents alike, Campos says. "I think the volunteers' efforts did more than we could ever do to get the word out and show who Southern Baptists really are."

Residents "couldn't believe that these were volunteers who were paying their own way to come out here and help," he adds. "It was a wonderful witness."

Their work drew the attention of others. The Hawaii carpenters' union contributed \$50,000 to Hawaii Baptists' recovery work.

--more--

Workers ministered to many residents swindled by builders who never completed their jobs, he recounts. "There were a lot of elderly people who got ripped off by contractors and didn't have any money left."

Campos notes the congregation was still faithful to the morning worship service despite the work to be done. "So many people were still working on their homes and they could have easily taken Sunday to do that."

Others were also attracted to the services. "We just grew during that time," he says. "I don't know if it was because of what was going on or people spiritually searching."

The church, which constituted last September, has grown from about 25 before the hurricane to an average attendance of 75.

"The bulk of the growth came after the volunteers being here," he says, adding it has impacted their willingness to do other kinds of missions work.

The congregation's Brotherhood group recently raised \$264 to buy one of 2,500 water filters being sought by the Brotherhood Commission, Campos said.

The hurricane rebuilding proved that members, not the building, define a church, he says. "It wasn't so much what we were doing, it was the church saying to folks, 'We have something going on and you need to come be a part of it.'"

--30--

(BP) photo of Mel Campos (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines in SBCNet News Room.

Hawaii: Paradise for some,
mission field for Baptists

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
5/17/95

HONOLULU (BP)--With year-round temperatures in the 80s and soft, tropical breezes, it's hard to think of Hawaii as a mission field.

But for the 100-plus congregations here, Southern Baptist work is diverse, challenging and, sometimes, misunderstood.

"We'd probably get 15 to 20 letters a month from people saying they felt called to Hawaii without any understanding of what all that means," says Veryl Henderson, who left as state director of missions in March to take the same job in Colorado.

"It's hard to explain to a person the different factors," he says, listing Hawaii's high cost of living, cultural diversity and religious pluralism.

"The first year is very traumatic," he says. "Once you get past the honeymoon stage of living in a nice place, then living in Honolulu is just like living in any other big city. It has all the human social problems of any other city."

And the high cost of both moving to and living in America's 50th state makes missions work here even more taxing, he adds. The median house price is \$356,000 for a basic, three-bedroom, two-bath house. Land often costs more than \$500,000 an acre.

"It's hard for most people on the mainland -- especially where Southern Baptists are strongest -- to comprehend those cost factors."

Moving a pastor to Hawaii costs between \$10,000 and \$15,000. "If they move (back) within two years, it bankrupts the church," Henderson says. "That's the reason it's important to raise up as much local leadership as possible."

Local leadership also already understands the Asian influence on the state's culture, Henderson says.

When Henderson moved here in 1969, he had to learn the customs associated with such things as Filipino weddings and why when going to a Chinese funeral, one should never wear the celebration color red.

"When you violate an unwritten social code, people may stop talking to you, and you might not know why," he says. "Most are not very confrontive."

--more--

Even a basic Baptist tradition like visitation must be re-evaluated. "You do not visit in people's homes because if you do they are obliged to feed you," he says. "Most visiting is done in the front yard or at the door of the home."

Ask O.W. "Dub" Efurd how many Southern Baptist churches in Hawaii are ethnic, and the state convention executive director will grin and reply, "All of them." The ethnic mixture means that every person in Hawaii is a member of an ethnic minority group, Henderson adds.

"A lot of people are not used to that who come from the South," he says. "Some come with the attitude that they're going to teach the natives all they know, and that attitude will have difficulty."

Less than 2 percent of Hawaii residents are Southern Baptist, according to the Glenmary Research Center, which studies religious participation. Henderson notes, however it does not mean residents are anti-religious.

"They look upon religious life as being very private," he says. "Consequently, their attitude would be, 'You have your religion. I have mine. I'm very glad for you, but don't try to impose on me.'"

He says his witnessing approach to Hawaii residents was to be seen as a friend as well as a Christian. In addition to his mission work, he coached pee wee baseball and wrestling and was a member of the Jaycees.

"To me, the response is relational -- to build relationships with people and then secondly to share how Christ can meet the needs of daily life.

"People may not be interested in Jesus Christ or the Bible or the church until they are in crisis," he says. "So we have to love them when they don't want to be loved. Then when they get to their moment of crisis they at least have a friend or acquaintance they can call for help."

To answer high property costs, churches must consider whether to buy land or rent their meeting space. The state convention's goal is to start six new churches a year, "with the understanding that four of them will probably never have property of their own," he says. "Their whole church experience will be in rented property."

That's still a hard concept to sell, he adds, noting most pastors were trained with the philosophy that a mission should look like a church. "We tend to duplicate our experience," he says.

Even when church planters start congregations without buildings, pastors who follow often don't have the same vision, he says.

"And all of a sudden the energy shifts from being the church in community to being a church without a home. And so the emphasis shifts to 'We've got to find a house for our church.'"

Which is not to say the convention has given up on buying property. Leaders recently completed Missions Hawaii 2000 Site Fund, a fund-raising effort to raise \$5 million to purchase 10 church sites.

Leaders originally tried to raise \$1 million in Hawaii and \$4 million from those with ties to Hawaii on the mainland. Instead, they raised \$1.5 million locally and only \$250,000 outside.

"We had people who were willing to make the sacrifice locally," Henderson says, adding the experience had a uniting effect on Hawaii Baptists and allowed them to buy three sites to date.

"It illustrated to us that Hawaii has more resources and is able to do more than we thought we could," he says. "We sometimes had the feeling that if somebody would do something for us we could do something and I think this gave us the feeling that we could do something ourselves."

--30--

(BP) photo of Hawaii (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines posted in SBCNet News Room.

EDITORS' NOTE: The following information can be formatted into an information box to be included with preceding (BP) story on Southern Baptist work in Hawaii.

**Hawaii Baptists:
an overview**

HONOLULU (BP)--Convention data: The Hawaii Baptist Convention covers a geographic area larger than Alaska. In addition to the state of Hawaii, the convention also includes American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau and Western Samoa.

Population: 1,667,497.

Southern Baptists: 16,126 (1993 Uniform Church Letter).

Southern Baptist congregations: 106. (Of those, 70 are churches, 27 are missions and nine are language departments of another congregation.)

Perspective: The ratio of 15,732 residents per Southern Baptist congregation is nearly three times the national average.

--30--

**International students find
Baptist friends in Hawaii**

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
5/17/95

HONOLULU (BP)--For many international students at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, the first friendly face they see belongs to a Southern Baptist.

That's because volunteers from the Oahu Baptist Association work with the college to pick up students from the airport and help them find housing.

"We always stress, 'We'll help you in any way,'" says home missionary Joy Turner, who serves as director of international ministries for the association.

Turner calls the airport greeting "the most crucial meeting" for laying a foundation for a year of ministry with students from all over the world. "It's the most crazy time that we have of the year, but it's one of the most exciting times."

During new student orientation, the association sponsors a meal and introduces itself again as a resource to the 2,000 international graduate and undergraduate students.

Throughout the school year, churches sponsor weekly luncheons for students at the state convention offices, close to the campus. The meals result not only in fellowship, but opportunities to share the reason behind Hawaiian Baptists' concern.

"One of my favorite things to do is stand back at the luncheon and watch who is integrating with who at the tables," Turner said. "The gospel is definitely being communicated."

Turner says the association's hard work and consistency won the respect of the school's department of international student services. "God really has just blessed us with that relationship because if they endorse who we are, it just gives us a lot more credibility."

The department even asked the association to design a program for student's spouses teaching cooking, language skills and cultural differences.

School officials "know that we totally care about the students first," she said. "Part of that is wanting them to know Christ, but what must come first is care for them as an individual person regardless of whether they ever become a Christian or show interest in spiritual things."

Chinese churches in the association host celebrations for Chinese new year, she added. "We celebrated in a positive way, but presented that really true happiness is going to be found through Jesus."

--more--

Churches recognize the significance of the students they are targeting, she said. "They're going to be key leaders in their country," she said. "We're committed that these people are going to go home with the gospel. I think that's why the churches are excited about the ministry."

--30--

(BP) photo of Joy Turner (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines posted in the SBCNet News Room.

Baptists help residents after
rain of 'biblical proportions' By Lacy Thompson

Baptist Press
5/17/95

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--When rain starts falling in May, New Orleans residents wince -- and with good reason.

They know what heavy rains can do in a city already below sea level at many points. They also know how often those heavy rains come in May. Indeed, for more than a decade, New Orleans floods have been measured by events of May 1978.

Now, however, the city has a new standard.

"A rain of biblical proportions" was how the New Orleans Times Picayune newspaper reported events. "This was like a 500-year storm," one article noted. "It's as bad as it gets," an area leader said.

It is certainly hard to imagine how it could have gotten much worse. As it was, the New Orleans area bore the brunt of a rare storm system that combined torrential rains, high winds, even some tornadoes. And it all came quickly, without warning, stranding motorists and residents, forcing some of scramble to high ground and roofs, forcing others to abandon cars and swim to safety. A photograph in one newspaper showed a motorist standing in water almost to the shoulders. The cutline noted the motorist was standing not on the ground but on the roof of a car and was soon forced to swim to safety.

Meanwhile, other graphics showed the extent of the rain that inundated the area. Many areas reported up to seven inches of rain in a three-hour period and more than twice that much in a six-hour span. Overall, some areas of New Orleans saw more than 17 inches of rain fall from the system. Other areas, just miles away, say only a couple of inches fall. After a second wave of rain swept through the area, the two-day rain totals topped 20 inches in the Slidell area. At the Slidell airport, the total was more than 23 inches in two days.

All in all, it was enough to affect hundreds of thousands of the 1.6 million people who live in the metropolitan area, leaving six confirmed deaths, 12 parishes declared federal disaster areas, an estimated 33,000 homes damaged, more than 13,000 automobile insurance claims (with leaders expecting 7,000 more in upcoming days). It required \$2.6 million in Red Cross relief funds expended and brought in 568 workers to the area. And it was enough to push news of the O.J. Simpson trial and a possible outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus in Zaire to the far back pages of the local newspaper.

Enough to cause what leaders estimate will be more than \$3 billion in damage across the region.

"Flood numbers keep growing," one news article noted.

So do flood stories, stories about neighbor helping neighbor, stranger helping stranger, co-workers helping the new worker who had just moved into the area from Wisconsin. In the hours and days after the storm hit, relief workers note it was the local community that rose to the occasion and offered helping hands.

It was Louisiana and Southern Baptists as well.

When the second wave of rain hit Slidell, for instance, flooded residents had nowhere to go. However, First Baptist Church responded, opening its doors to 400 area residents. "When we learn there is a need, we are obligated scripturally to meet that need," one news article quoted church member Bruce Efferson as saying.

--more--

Meanwhile, a pair of Louisiana Baptist disaster relief vans were in the New Orleans area, preparing meals for stranded residents. Two other local Baptist feeding units were at work as well. Within days, a Tennessee Baptist unit had arrived. So far, the units have served more than 59,000 meals, leaders reported.

Also, child care units from Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas were scheduled to begin operations May 18.

SBC Brotherhood Commission disaster relief coordinator Mickey Caison said he expects the number of meals served to fall off during the week, then pick up again as volunteers arrive for clean-up efforts.

Caison also praised the response of local people during the crisis. "We've really been excited by the involvement of the people of the New Orleans and St. Tammany associations thus far. Many of them were hit by the flood themselves, and yet they're working at our feeding units."

Caison also reported a Mother's Day incident that indicated the emotion of the day and the importance of the Baptist efforts. He noted as worshipers left First Baptist Church of Slidell, women who had received Mother's Day roses from the church passed their gifts on to the volunteers at the feeding unit. "I've been eating your food for the last three days," one woman said. "I just wanted to say 'thank you.'"

Relief contributions are being accepted by the Louisiana Baptist Convention's missions division, which has sent a letter to the state's pastors outlining existing needs. The convention's mailing address is P.O. Box 311, Alexandria, LA 71309.

The Brotherhood Commission also is receiving contributions for the Southern Baptist response to the Gulf Coast floods. They may be sent to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104, and should be designated for disaster relief.

The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, based in Memphis, coordinates initial response to natural disasters with state convention Brotherhood directors. The Home Mission Board coordinates Southern Baptist's long-term response.

--30--

Jim Harding named to lead
Utah-Idaho convention

Baptist Press
5/17/95

SANDY, Utah (BP)--Jim Harding has been unanimously chosen as the fourth executive director-treasurer of the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention, effective Sept. 1.

Harding's selection took place during the convention's semiannual executive board meeting May 4-5. Until Sept. 1, he will continue in his present position as the interim executive director and director of religious education. He has held the latter post since 1990.

Harding, 47, succeeds Clyde Billingsley, who resigned last December after five years with the Utah-Idaho convention to become executive director of the Montana Baptist Fellowship.

"As the administrative committee prayerfully went through the task of selecting a new executive director, an overwhelming number of nominations were for Jim Harding," said Mike Gray, president of the convention and chairman of the selection committee. "This highlighted to us a significant support for him in Utah and Idaho."

Harding, a Missouri native, has been in Utah since 1984. He was pastor of Layton Hills Baptist Church, Layton, Utah, from 1984-90. During that period, Harding served as first vice president of the convention and as chairman of the budget and finance committee of the executive board.

--more--

He received his bachelor of arts degree from William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo.; a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; and a doctor of ministry degree from Golden Gate Baptist Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

Prior to coming to Utah, Harding had been pastor of churches in Murphysboro, Ill., and Poplar Bluff, Mo. He also is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force where he was stationed in Vietnam, Texas and Virginia.

Harding's wife, Jan, is a kindergarten teacher in the local public school system. She has served as children's consultant for the state convention's church growth team during the past five years. The Hardings have three children, Christy, 23; Scott, 19; and Holly, 15.

Harding's father, Earl Harding, was executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention from 1954-73.

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, TN 37234

F
I
R
S
T

C
L
A
S
S

Southern Baptist Library
and Archives