



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2481
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5481
RICHMOND Richard M. Styles, Acting Chief, 3906 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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Cooperative Program
Giving Slows in November

NASHVILLE (BP)--Giving through the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program unified budget, after a fairly strong start in the first month of the 1975-76 fiscal year, has decreased somewhat, according to reports here.

In November, undesignated Cooperative Program receipts totaled \$3,589,571 compared to \$4,221,122 during October, the first month in the fiscal year. The November figure is 5.03 percent ahead of November, 1975.

For the first two months, Cooperative Program receipts of \$7,810,693, which are intended for budget needs of the SBC's worldwide missions program, are running 9.41 percent ahead of the same point last fiscal year, according to Billy D. Malesovas, director of financial planning and assistant to the treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee.

The Cooperative Program started off the fiscal year, 13.43 percent ahead.

Total gifts, including the Cooperative Program figure and specially designated funds, amounted to \$8,634,508 after two months--7.35 percent ahead of last year. Designated receipts alone, which amount to \$823,816 showed an 8.88 percent decline.

In the month of November alone, designated receipts of \$302,775 showed a 33.73 percent decline over the \$456,880 received in November, 1975.

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Saul Elected To
Golden Gate Faculty

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MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--D. Glenn Saul of Tempe, Ariz., has been elected assistant professor of Christian ethics at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary here, effective Jan. 5.

He comes to the faculty of Golden Gate Seminary from the pastorate of the Southside Baptist Church, Tempe, where he had served since 1972.

A native of Plainview, Tex., Saul received the doctor of philosophy and master of theology degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., the bachelor of divinity degree from Golden Gate Seminary, and the bachelor of arts degree from Wayland College, Plainview.

He has been pastor of churches in Bethlehem, Ky., Rohnert Park, Calif., and Bellvue, Colo.

Saul has been an adjunct professor at Golden Gate and a field education supervisor and Garrett Fellow at Southern Seminary. He is listed in "Outstanding Young Men of America."

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Black Churches Multiply In
Southern Baptist Convention

By Walker L. Knight

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ATLANTA (BP)--The number of predominantly black Baptist churches affiliated with Southern Baptists has jumped 76 percent in the past three years.

A recent survey conducted by Home Missions magazine, published by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board found 340 black churches affiliated with the once predominantly white Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) on associational, state and national levels.

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In 1956, the year of the Supreme Court decision against racial inequality in education, there were few--perhaps five at most--predominantly black SBC churches. By 1973, a survey by the Home Mission Board found 191.

Most change is taking place in the border states and in states where Southern Baptists have started work since 1940. Twenty-nine black churches affiliated with associations in the past year, and one entire black association of 40 churches in the Los Angeles area has indicated an interest.

California, with 85, reports the most black churches. But Texas, with 81, is close. Illinois has 35. Michigan has 20. New York and Virginia each have 15.

Percentage-wise, New York leads with 20 percent of its churches black. Ten percent of the Michigan churches are black, and in Long Beach Harbor Association in California, more than 50 percent of the churches are predominantly black.

No reliable statistics are available on the number of black Southern Baptists. The last survey, taken in 1973 by the Home Mission Board, estimated 75,000 blacks were members of SBC churches. But board officials say the number of blacks has jumped significantly, along with the percentage of churches, and plan to do a new survey. Also, no figures are available on the number of predominantly white churches with black members.

Falling racial barriers have stimulated interesting events. Florida, which has seven black churches, reports, for example, the merger of white and black congregations in St. Petersburg. Southside Baptist Church--all white--and Tabernacle Baptist Church--all black--joined to form Southside Tabernacle Baptist Church with the black pastor, Lewis Langley, becoming pastor. State mission leader Murray McCullough says, "The church has done well and set a good pattern for other churches in changing neighborhoods."

States of the traditional Southern tier have fewer black congregations, and sometimes make the news with hardline holdouts against blacks. Yet, even where change comes slowest, changes are coming. H. O. Hester, state director of special missions in Alabama, reports Trinity Baptist, a white church in Montgomery, has ordained a black minister who now serves as pastor of a mission of Trinity. It may become the first black church in that convention.

The strong interest comes despite passiveness of Southern Baptist leadership. Of course, racial prejudices--among both white and black Baptists--still handicap change in certain areas. But most SBC coolness today seems to result from the SBC's efforts to avoid charges of proselytizing from the three National (black) Baptist Conventions.

The initiative has had to come from the black churches themselves. Even in those states where most of the growth is taking place, the strongest activity from SBC leadership is cultivating relationships, building bridges and finding cooperative ways to tackle common problems.

Sid Smith, a black Christian social ministries director for Southern Baptists in the Los Angeles area, wants an end to the passiveness, even though he somehow wants to avoid proselytizing.

"In consideration of the background of segregation and racism in our convention, we must come to the point that we realize that we need black Southern Baptists and other ethnic minority groups. We need their input, and it shouldn't be optional. We ought to work out some kind of an approach whereby we actively seek them. The passive approach has its limitations, and it does not recognize our need for the minority input."

Phil Rodgers, state missions director for Virginia Baptists, more aggressive than many, says: "We have let it be known in both public and private opportunities that the doors are open. Individual churches then request information, and we usually have a personal conference with church leadership."

More than a third of the state conventions report more black churches affiliating with them than in previous years. Nine still do not report any black churches. The others say the number of affiliations is about the same, but even that means an increase.

An important trend is developing especially with Southern Baptists in Illinois, Michigan, California and areas of the Northeast. These states are seeking to start churches in predominantly black communities.

As Illinois mission leader Charles Chaney says, "The black community of Illinois is the largest single pocket of people the Illinois Baptist State Association has tended to overlook in its 70-year history."

Chaney is seeking to change that, feeling Southern Baptists have the obligation to address the black community "in the same manner that we address the white community and the ethnic community."

A factor which gets a mixed reaction is dual alignment (the practice of having membership with more than one Baptist convention). In the past most black churches which affiliated with Southern Baptists kept their ties with one of the black conventions.

Most state conventions of the SBC, and the SBC itself, allow dual alignment. A few state conventions, such as Missouri, do not. While it is allowed in most places, not everyone favors dual alignment.

Joe Chaney, moderator of the Long Beach Harbor Baptist Association and himself pastor of a black church, says he has never aligned with another convention. "It would be confusing to me and I imagine also confusing to our people. We are going to be Southern Baptists or we are going to be National Baptists."

Vernon Hickerson, black work and relationships consultant for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the only black employed in that capacity by a SBC state convention, believes his goal of 110 affiliations by 1981 is conservative. (The Home Mission Board also has a black in that capacity, Emanuel McCall, director of Cooperative Ministries with National (black) Baptists.)

Hickerson says some black churches do not seek affiliation because they fear absorption, rather than integration, and a dissolution of their own culture. They may also fear being identified as an "oreo"--like the cookie--black on the outside and white on the inside.

Hickerson has thoroughly studied dual alignment and recommends it. "You always benefit when you are exposed to someone other than yourself, especially those with whom you may not agree on everything."

Because of his sensitivity to the needs of the black community, Jack O'Neal of the California Southern Baptist General Convention agrees dual alignment is needed at this time, even though it calls for divided loyalties of a sort.

Thomas Kilgore, president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, explains, "This is the ambiguity black people have been forced into by this dual society. The alert black Baptist preacher is mindful he cannot walk out on the black experience; therefore, he has to keep his connection in these black Baptist conventions."

Kilgore has led his large, prestigious Second Baptist Church of Los Angeles, once singly aligned with American Baptists, to dually affiliate with the Progressive Convention.

"It is something that history has forced upon us, and we still think it has something to offer," he adds.

On the other side, Kentucky Baptists report two of their white churches dually aligned with National conventions.

As the number of blacks within the SBC grows, both within once all-white congregations and through the new movement of the predominantly black churches, their contacts are attracting even greater numbers.

For example, Louisiana has been approached by three black churches for affiliation, two of these because the pastors were with churches in California and Texas that were affiliated with SBC groups.

All this means that other changes will be coming for the once predominantly white SBC, such as pressure for more and more representation on boards and agencies. Then it will follow that more qualified blacks will be available for staff positions, and Southern Baptists will be better informed concerning the needs and the culture of blacks.

The explosion, on the evening of Nov. 18, killed five young people, including two students at Southern Baptist College here, and wounded 22 others, creating economic havoc for its victims' families.

Children of the market vendors were practicing some Philippine folk dances for a program, when the bomb exploded, according to James B. Slack, Southern Baptist missionary.

The person who threw the grenade and the reason for it are still not know. But William R. Wakefield, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's secretary for Southeast Asia, said he believed that it was part of the insurgency movement that has been in the area for a long time.

"The situation was indescribable--the torn limbs, faces and bodies; the blood; the panic; the push and shove of people trying to find their own family members; and the rush of medical people to do what they could for those being piled on the hospital doorsteps," Slack explained.

After a request from the Philippine Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries), \$5,000 out of \$50,000 that had been previously appropriated for disaster relief after a recent earthquake, has been approved to aid these victims and their families.

The families who lost loved ones and those whose family members were injured face almost insurmountable problems, Slack said.

"The people involved are market vendors. With the exception of about three or four of the wounded or killed, they are extremely poor," he explained. "The majority of the people cannot even get together money to buy food for the wounded family members."

Slack said they lived on their day-to-day income from the market. Many of them are facing the problems of trying to keep their stalls open and taking care of their injured children.

Money for medicine and treatment is another problem. If there is no money to buy the medicine, they do not get it, he said.

Families who suffered deaths face burial expenses. "For instance, one family of two sisters, whose husbands are not living, each lost a child," noted Slack. One lost a daughter, and the other, a son--the only male wage earner in the family. The boy's mother brought all the money she had to the hospital before her son died but it was only a small amount of change wrapped up in a handkerchief.

One of the victims of the catastrophe was a member of one of the Baptist churches in M'Lang. He had been baptized at the end of a crusade in September. It is believed that he died from blood loss.

The province of Cotabato, of which M'Lang is a part, does not have a blood bank. When an emergency occurs, concerned people have to canvas the town for blood donors, convince them of the seriousness of the situation and then get them to come to be typed and give the blood.

Slack rounded up some donors, including students and faculty of the college. He took them to the hospital only to find out that there were no blood collection kits to draw the blood. He went to a nearby clinic and bought blood kits but by the time he returned with them, it was too late.

Slack did not stop there. He and his wife have helped with funeral arrangements and have tried to comfort the bereaved. They have also continued to work with the families of the injured. Mrs. Slack, a registered nurse, has been using her medical abilities since the calamity occurred.