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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

## NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee  
460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
(615) 244-2355  
Wilmer C. Fields, Director  
Dan Martin, News Editor  
Craig Bird, Feature Editor

### BUREAUS

**ATLANTA** Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
**DALLAS** Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996  
**NASHVILLE** (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300  
**RICHMOND** (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151  
**WASHINGTON** Stan L. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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WB

Reagan, New Right Disagree  
On U.S. As Chosen Nation

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Reagan does not agree with the view of leaders of the religious right that the United States is a "chosen" nation in the sense that Israel was chosen as God's special people in Old Testament times.

That assessment of the President's view came from Edwin Meese III, counsellor to the President, in a Sept. 14 working luncheon with 15 editors and writers from the religious press.

Asked to explain what Reagan meant in a Sept. 9 Kansas State University speech when he declared that America was "set apart" by God, Meese said the President was referring to his "sense of historical purpose" for the U.S., not to "theological perceptions per se."

When a reporter pointed out that leaders of the religious right, including Moral Majority founder and president Jerry Falwell, use such language to designate the U.S. as a successor people to Israel under a new covenant with God, Meese said Reagan does not share that view.

What the President means in such references, Meese went on, is that when a nation has been blessed, it has a "corresponding responsibility" to use its blessings for the common good. Thus, Meese explained, when Reagan refers to America as a nation "set apart," he is referring to the "potential," "possibilities" and "mission" of the country rather than to a narrow nationalistic theology.

The editors and writers, meeting for the second time in recent weeks with Meese, heard the Cabinet-rank official declare that Reagan is committed to the so-called conservative "social issues" put on the back burner during the Administration's first year and a half in office because of the President's desire to focus on his economic program.

Such issues, Meese said, deal with "American values" and include abortion, prayer in public schools, tuition tax credits and crime.

Despite a steady stream of criticism from the new right that the White House has ignored such matters, Meese said Administration officials have been working on them "literally since Jan. 20 of last year," the day Reagan was inaugurated as 40th president.

All these issues "deal with moral, family and intellectual values" about which the President feels strongly, Meese said.

In a surprise appearance before the group, Reagan focused his comments on the current battle in the U.S. Senate over tuition tax credits, reiterating his view that they should be passed as a matter of "fairness" to parents who pay local property taxes to support public schools, but then must pay tuition to send their children to private schools.

He also defended his plan against charges that tuition tax credits will benefit the wealthy more than the poor and will encourage more "white flight" from public schools.

Neither is the real issue separation of church and state, Reagan said, declaring that an "overwhelming majority" of parents choose private schools not because of religion but because of "the desire and the belief" that their children will receive a better education there than in public schools.

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"We are going to do everything we can" to insure that Congress passes a tuition tax credit measure, he declared, adding, "I believe in this body and soul."

On the abortion controversy, Reagan likewise pledged again to fight for a constitutional amendment banning the practice except to save the life of the mother. "I am going to fight as long and as hard as I can" for such an amendment, he declared.

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Texas Baptists Eyeing  
\$50 Million CP Budget

*Dallas*

By Terry Barone

Baptist Press  
9/15/82

DALLAS (BP)--A record \$50 million Cooperative Program Budget for mission causes in 1983 has been approved by the executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT), a 10.1 percent increase over the 1982 budget of \$45.4 million.

The largest allocation is \$17.9 million for worldwide causes to support Southern Baptist home and foreign missionaries, six seminaries and several commissions. The \$17.9 million represents 35.9 percent of the budget, an increase of two-tenths of a percent over the 35.7 percent in this year's budget.

The second largest is more than \$15.8 million for the eight Texas Baptist colleges and universities and one academy.

The proposed budget, which will be considered in November at the BGCT annual meeting in Corpus Christi, Texas, allocates more than \$6 million for Texas mission causes and \$4.9 million for eight Baptist hospitals, four children's homes and five homes for the aging.

The remainder covers general operation of the convention and executive board areas which service programs throughout Southern Baptist churches and agencies in Texas. Since 1975 the BGCT Cooperative Program budget has more than doubled from \$20 to \$50 million.

The board also went on record supporting Proposition 2 for the upcoming Texas November election which would raise the amount of funds available for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Phil Strickland, director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, said the ceiling has not been raised in Texas since 1969 and the state is 49th in the nation in the amount of funds provided AFDC recipients.

The board also heard a report concerning the financial condition of Dallas Baptist College, which received a \$500,000 gift and a \$2.5 million, 10-year loan from the BGCT after meeting a requirement to raise \$3 million in pledges for endowment.

By using the BGCT funds and other cash accumulations for debt retirement, the long range effect on available cash reserves indicate an increase in available cash funds through 1987 of \$1.8 million for the university.

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Baptist Relief Team Aids  
Nairobi Slum Fire Victims

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press  
9/15/82

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--Southern Baptist mission personnel and Africans distributed about \$5,000 worth of food and blankets to destitute victims of a fire which destroyed part of Nairobi's Mathare Valley slum area.

Nairobi city councilman Z.W. Ndururu Kiboro, who personally donated \$500, praised Baptists for being the first group to help 4,000 victims, mostly children, left homeless when the fire gutted about an acre of the makeshift shantytown. "Other organizations are just talking about helping," Kiboro said. "You Baptists are doing something."

The fire destroyed a medical clinic operated by the National Christian Council of Kenya, but stopped three feet short of a clinic operated by furloughing Southern Baptist missionary physician John Adams of Texas. The Mathare Valley Baptist Church meets in the Baptist clinic.

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While the team distributed 1,000 sacks of cornmeal, a truckload of cabbages and 1,000 blankets to the disaster victims, members of Mathare Valley church handed out gospel tracts in Swahili, told the recipients about Jesus Christ and invited them to attend church.

Baptist leaders in Kenya hope the relief response, funded through the Foreign Mission Board's hunger and disaster relief funds, will be the first step in a long-range plan to provide a comprehensive, self-help hunger and relief program for Nairobi's slum areas.

Most area residents, attracted from rural areas by the city's glitter, have little or no education or employment. They live in 6x9 foot cardboard, clapboard and tin shanties with dirt floors and no water, electricity or sanitation facilities. Most couples share the tiny living space with seven to ten children.

Missionary Charles Tope, former Oklahoma pastor, who was in charge of the relief effort, said evangelism and church development will be an integral part of any plan to help the physical needs of the people.

"This opportunity to help people will give us many contacts and possibilities for the future to reach people for Christ," said Patrick Kimani, pastor of the struggling, 60-member Mathar Valley Baptist Church.

Kimani helped design a screening system to determine eligibility for relief supplies. While some ineligible persons did filter through, they were met with tough opposition from Kiboro, a diminutive Kikuyu tribesman, who descended on them waving a stick.

One singled out by Kiboro was a slum landlord who was sent scurrying. "This food is for the people who need it, not a landlord who tries to take advantage of them," Kiboro said.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

BSSB Search Committee Chairman  
Requests Presidential Nominations

BSSB

Baptist Press  
9/15/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Response has been good to requests for nominations for a president of the Sunday School Board according to the chairman of the search committee, John J. Bryan.

Bryan of Bluefield, W.Va., urged all interested Southern Baptists to submit recommendations before the Oct. 1 deadline, emphasizing that "any Southern Baptist is encouraged to make a nomination." He said the seven-member committee would like to receive nominations from a wide cross-section of the denomination.

Bryan, a layman and medical doctor, said recommendations should be made in writing and include a complete biographical sketch of the nominee and a concise statement of the reason for the nomination.

Recommendations should be mailed to Bryan at P.O. Box 1728, Bluefield, W.Va. 24701.

When the board's trustees elected the search committee in August to seek a successor to Grady Cothen, guidelines also were adopted calling for the new president to be elected in February 1983 or as soon thereafter as possible.

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FMB Names 21 Missionaries,  
Releases \$25,000 for Beirut

RB

Baptist Press  
9/15/82

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Appointment of Southern Baptists for service overseas continued at a record pace as the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board approved 21 new missionaries in September, bringing the year's total to 299.

Expectations of large numbers of appointments in October and December mean 1982 appointments should exceed the record of 355 set in 1981.

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The latest appointments included one member of the board staff, Joy Neal, administrative assistant for eastern and southern Africa, and Mike and Kathie Benge Chute. Chute is the former managing editor of Word and Way, the Missouri Baptist state paper.

Neal, a Mississippi native and former missionary journeyman to Zambia and Kenya, will be Bible correspondence course coordinator in Transkei. She came to the Richmond staff in 1973.

The Chutes, of Illinois and Mississippi respectively, will work in Brazil where he will do publications and media work. In recent months both have been public relations consultants at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. where Chute is attending.

At the close of its Sept. 14, business session the board received word a survey team had arrived in Beirut, Lebanon, to work with missionaries in determining relief needs there. Immediate release of \$25,000 in general relief funds will pay for repairs at the Beirut Baptist School, which housed refugees and a small medical clinic during the summer's fighting. The money will also replace some furnishings and provide supplies.

John Cheyne, senior consultant for human needs ministries, and photographer Don Rutledge are in Lebanon and plan to visit refugee areas in Sidon in Southern Lebanon.

FMB President R. Keith Parks told the board relief allocations for the first eight months of this year increased 113.9 percent over the same period last year. A total of \$1,038,826 released in July and August brought total allocations to \$4,301,896, more than double the \$2,010,606 released during the first eight months of 1981.

Southern Baptists gave \$2,744,207 through Aug. 31, a 26 percent increase over gifts during the comparable period last year. Largest amounts released in the past two months went to Bangladesh and Brazil, with smaller allocations spread across the world.

A total of \$394,000 went to Bangladesh to establish goat and fish projects, dig wells, continue a village development project and fund a vocational carpentry project to teach handicapped young men a trade. Money for Brazilian relief went to a variety of projects, including \$131,372 for expansion of an agricultural training project in Ceres and \$49,000 for an irrigation dam as the first phase of a community development program in Sitio.

A \$143,000 allocation will help establish an agricultural school in the small Central American country of Belize, where good soil and climate fail to produce adequate food because of primitive farming methods.

In other action, the board upgraded the titles of two administrative staff members and named a new associate for south and southeast Asia. Homer Beaver, assistant to the president, was named vice president for administration and the title of Charles Bryan, vice president for overseas operations, was changed to senior vice president for overseas operations to reflect the priority of overseas work in the board's structure.

Bob Nash, missionary to the Philippines for 18 years, will become associate to the director for south and southeast Asia Jan. 1. Working under area director Bill Wakefield, Nash will share field liaison responsibilities with missionary Jerry Rankin.

Nash will work with missionaries in Guam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines, while Rankin, who began his job at the start of this year, will work with personnel in Thailand, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India.

Nash and his wife, Janet (Carpenter), are native Georgians. He is a graduate of Truett-McConnell College, Mercer University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Prior to appointment in 1964, he was pastor of Arlington Street Baptist Church in Greenville, N.C.

During their time in the Philippines, Nash was a church planter and pastor. For the past seven years, he has been mission administrator.

The Board also approved the final \$910,055 in allocations of capital funds from the 1981 Lottie Moon Christmas offering. More than \$780,000 of this total was made possible because Southern Baptists topped their \$50 million goal by that amount.

Other new missionaries appointed Sept. 14, were Clyde and Ann Turner Berkley, of Texas, assigned to Kenya; Ralph and Vivian Sims Boyle, Oklahoma and Georgia, respectively, to Tanzania; Gary and Robbin Rawson Crowell, Texas and Indiana, to Peru; and Eric and Natalie McCloskey Fruge, Indiana and Pennsylvania, to France.

Also named were Lynn and Sue Fife McGee, Oklahoma and Texas, to Mauritius; John Purl, Mississippi, to Ghana; Terry and Kathy Lane Ridenour, Oklahoma and Tennessee, to Kenya; Donna Rye, Arkansas to Mexico; Dale and Irene Trevolt Stark, Texas and Colorado, to Brazil, and Mike and Mary Ainsworth Williams, Missouri and Texas, to Ecuador.

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(BP) photo mailed to Baptist state papers by the Richmond Bureau of Baptist Press.

British Baptists Assist  
Disabled Russian Preacher

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Baptist Press  
9/15/82

MOSCOW (BP)--With the help of Baptists in Great Britian a disabled Russian preacher is now able to look out over his congregation for the first time in seven years.

Formerly, Valentin Savchuk arrived at the church where he is the summer preacher on a wooden trolley built by his friends and had to lie prone while preaching. But he is now using a new vehicle made of lightweight metal that can be tilted so he can make eye contact with his congregation. The specially designed trolley was built by a Reading, England firm and shipped air freight to Moscow earlier this year.

Savchuk, near 45, was stricken with a rheumatic condition when he was 17 which left him rigid from the shoulders down. Since he can only move his head and one arm he has been confined to his bed. He became a Christian 12 years ago after the Moscow Baptist Church convinced him to do a full study of the Bible. He has been a summer preacher since 1975.

Michael Zhidkov, a Moscow pastor, felt Savchuk's situation could be of interest at the European Baptist Federation at Brighton, England, in 1979. That sparked the search for someone to make the new vehicle. Barbara Askew of the Baptist Union of Great Britian and Ireland, who arranged the project, said Savchuk's parents are dead and he must be cared for by another Moscow church member.

"But it is so good that despite his disability he has continued to preach the Word. It is also good that members of the world Baptist family have been willing and able to share in the project of helping him," Askew added.

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