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82-155

Orlando Church Raises Over
\$14 Million In Two Week Effort

By Craig Bird

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--A five-dollar-a-month pledge here and a \$1 million gift there added up to a remarkable two weeks at First Baptist Church, Orlando.

The church launched a fund-raising drive Oct. 17 with a goal of \$12.5 million to finance phase one of the church's relocation building program. The evening service Oct. 31 was "just one big celebration," according to Wayne Johnson, head of media ministries at the church.

Cash pledges of more than \$13.1 million were received in addition to "substantial" pledges of gifts-in-kind (such as real estate in Florida and the Bahamas and an antique watch collection) which will allow the church to build phase one of its new facilities without having to pay any interest on loans.

Two major gifts in addition to the pledges of \$13.1 million were announced Oct. 31--\$600,000 for an organ for the sanctuary and \$1 million to construct a separate chapel building. Neither item was included in phase one plans.

The chapel will be a memorial to Andy Yaros, chairman of the land purchase committee which lead the church to buy 150 acres in southwest Orlando last year for the relocation. Yaros died of cancer earlier this year.

The fund drive started Oct. 17 with a church-wide banquet attended by 2,800. At that time advance pledges by 200 church families of more than \$6 million were announced. By Oct. 24 the total had exceeded \$11 million.

The overwhelming success of the effort was front page news in the Orlando newspaper Nov. 1 and was carried by all three local television stations Sunday evening. First Baptist Church gained international publicity last fall when it raised \$2.6 million cash in 70 days to purchase the 150 acres to relocate the church.

This year consultants advised the church that \$10 million was a realistic goal and literature was printed and mailed using that figure, according to Johnson. "We had \$1.5 million in the bank and if we raised \$10 million we would still have to borrow \$2.5 million," he said.

But at an all-night prayer meeting Oct. 15, 500 church members reached agreement that the goal should be the entire \$12.5 million because "that would be a better use of God's money rather than paying interest for 100 years."

Pastor Jim Henry referred to the church's experience as "revelation giving--if the Lord wants you to give it, He'll provide it."

First Baptist's success in fund-raising has not hurt either its regular budget giving or its mission gifts, according to Johnson. "Last year we were worried since we take pledges for foreign, home and state missions in December and our people had just given \$2.6 million in September and October," he said. "But we set the combined goal at \$110,000--our highest ever--and wound up sending over \$150,000 to the Foreign Mission Board, the Home Mission Board and the Florida State Convention."

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The church has had a budget excess for each of the last five years.

Phase one's \$14 million price tag will provide a sanctuary that will seat more than 5,000 and educational space for 3,500. Later buildings will include a school and a high-rise apartment building.

First Baptist Church has a resident membership of approximately 6,500, operates two missions and baptized over 500 people in 1980-81, according to the Florida Baptist annual. During the same period it gave over \$400,000 to national Southern Baptist Convention causes through the Cooperative Program.

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Lyle Will Head
Maryland Baptists

By Lyn Sheehan

Baptist Press
11/2/82

LUTHERVILLE, Md. (BP)--Kenneth R. Lyle, a native Texan and pastor of Baptist Tabernacle in Atlanta, Ga., was elected unanimously executive director-treasurer elect for the Baptist Convention of Maryland Oct. 28 at a special called session of the state mission board.

The board's executive committee considered more than 50 persons during its 11-month search for a successor to Roy Gresham who will retire Dec. 31 after 25 years.

Ralph Ehren, chairman of both the executive committee and search committee, reviewed the search process for state mission board members and introduced the candidate and his wife Judy, who had flown in from Atlanta for the meeting.

Lyle received his B.A. from Mississippi College, his M.Div. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and has pursued doctoral studies from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Lyle was director of missions for the Metropolitan New York Association for eight and one-half years. He has been pastor of churches in New York, Texas and Mississippi. The Lyles have four children; two married daughters, a son in college and a teen-age son.

The executive director elect and his wife attended the Maryland state convention and Lyle will begin his transitional duties with the Baptist Convention of Maryland Dec. 1. He will assume his position as executive director on Jan. 1, 1983.

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Missouri Baptists Handle
Controversial Issues Calmly

By Bob Terry

Baptist Press
11/2/82

RAYTOWN, Mo. (BP)--Prayer in public schools, tuition tax credits, a national constitutional convention, the importance of Cooperative Program giving and the unbiased use of Southern Baptist Convention officers' appointive powers were among the issues faced by messengers to the 148th session of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Meeting in the First Baptist Church the more than 2,200 messengers and visitors approved a record \$12.5 million budget for 1983. Of that amount 35 percent (the same as in 1982) will go to worldwide missions through the Cooperative Program.

A special feature of the three-day meeting was a focus on the convention's partnership mission program with the Republic of China (Taiwan). The chairman of that convention, Pastor Cheng Yi Shan, together with the Chinese Baptist Convention's executive secretary, Pastor Chang Pei Shin, shared about the impact of Bold Mission Taiwan on the Christian witness in that country.

Bold Mission Taiwan is a three-year effort designed to strengthen Chinese Baptist churches and to establish new mission points. It will be climaxed by a nationwide, simultaneous evangelistic crusade in September 1983.

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Like the two previous conventions, this year's annual meeting was characterized by harmony among the messengers, even as they adopted positions on controversial issues.

A resolution declaring the convention's opposition to "government schedule and/or government directed prayers" drew the most debate. However, the debate centered on the best way to phrase the convention's opposition. Some messengers preferred to declare the convention's opposition to government's involvement in writing prayers or religious instruction of children.

Messengers compromised by combining both suggestions into one resolution which put the convention on record as opposing government written prayers, government sponsored religious instruction of children and government scheduled or government directed times of prayers.

Tuition tax credit again drew the ire of Missouri Baptists who have historically opposed this proposal. Messengers again called tuition tax credit a "violation of the First Amendment's guarantee of 'no establishment of religion'." The same resolution also praised the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and Americans United for Separation of Church and State for their leadership in opposing tuition tax credits.

An attempt to put the convention on record in support of a balanced federal budget constitutional amendment resulted in the convention declaring its opposition to any national constitutional convention "until adequate procedures and safeguards can be passed into law to guarantee an orderly, fair and judicious method for conducting such a convention." The convention sidestepped the balanced budget issue by declaring it neither endorsed or proposed any current issue calling for a national constitutional convention.

Missouri Baptists also zeroed in on several controversial Southern Baptist Convention issues.

Messengers called on fellow Southern Baptists "to value the Cooperative Program participation of the churches from which pastors and laymen are elected to positions of responsibility and honor within Southern Baptist life." The statement was made against a background of 1982 Southern Baptist Convention nominations and appointments of some individuals from churches which contributed little through the denominations unified national budget called the Cooperative Program.

Another SBC issue faced by Missouri Baptists was what the messengers termed "appointive privileges" of the SBC officers. The call for "unbiased" use of this authority reflected earlier charges of stacked Southern Baptist Convention committees during the June 1982 annual meeting of the nation's largest evangelical denomination.

Elected president of the Missouri Baptist Convention was Max Morris, a fulltime evangelist, who presided over the MBC Pastors' Conference the day before his election. Morris recently resigned as pastor of Red Bridge Baptist Church in Kansas City to enter fulltime evangelism. He defeated John Hughes, pastor of First Baptist Church, Independence, by ight votes, 461 to 453.

The convention will next convene in Springfield, Mo., Oct. 24-26, 1983. First Baptist Church there will be host for the next annual meeting.

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IBSA Elects Black President,
Ups National CP Support To 42%

By Robert J. Hastings

Baptist Press
11/2/82

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)—For the first time in its 75-year history, the Illinois Baptist State Association has elected a black president. At same meeting the IBSA also approved a record-breaking Cooperative Program goal of \$4 million for 1983 with 42 percent to be shared with the national Cooperative Program budget.

This is an increase of one-half of one percent for SBC causes.

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Don Sharp, a 45-year-old pastor from Chicago, was elected to succeed outgoing IBSA President Craig Ridings, a Rockford, Ill., attorney. According to the Southern Baptist Historical Commission, Illinois is the second state affiliated with the SBC to elect a black as its president. Alaska has twice elected a black president.

Sharp, though born in Chicago, has family roots in Mississippi. He became pastor of Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church in 1964 and led the then independent church to affiliate with the Southern Baptist Convention. He is also associate director of church extension for the Chicago Metro Association.

The 1982 meeting set all-time highs in attendance and registration with 2,344 messengers registered. Attendance at the opening session, which celebrated the association's 75th anniversary, was conservatively estimated at 3,000.

Hundreds of senior adults, plus 100 Royal Ambassadors and Acteens carrying flags of the nations where Southern Baptists have mission work, led the processional to open the meeting.

The decision to increase the percentage the state convention sends on to the national level of SBC work underwent two votes. A motion to leave the percentage at the 1982 level was adopted in one session but the next day a motion to rescind that action was approved.

Messengers also reaffirmed their commitment to a five-step increase in the percentage to national causes, which escalates one-half of one percent a year. The total 1983 budget, which includes funds from a number of sources, was set at \$7,023,736.

Messengers also instructed the executive system to study the feasibility of a ministers' emergency fund for pastors and other staff members facing unusual crises and also to study the possibility of naming the Illinois state missions offering.

The 1983 convention will meet at the Logan Street Baptist Church in Mt. Vernon, Nov. 1-3.

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Zimbabweans Find Answer
Through 'Wind Evangelism'

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
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GOKWE, Zimbabwe (BP)--Bob Parker leaves more than billowing clouds behind as he roars down the dusty byways in Zimbabwe's bush country.

"You've heard of 'WIN evangelism,'" said the slender South Carolinian as he stuck a fistful of gospel tracts out of the window of his van. "Now, you've heard of 'wind evangelism.'"

With that, the tracts joined the swirling dust and fluttered--unerringly it seemed--toward the scurrying children he had targeted. A passing truck ground to a halt. Its driver also had joined the paper chase.

Parker gave up a career as a school teacher and administrator, which began in 1954 in South Carolina and ended in 1978 in Zimbabwe, to devote the rest of his Southern Baptist missionary career to evangelism and church development.

The soft-spoken, 59-year-old missionary maintains a tight schedule on those dusty roads. He has to keep tabs on some 40 churches and preaching points and on burgeoning witnessing and Christian discipleship training programs in 38 government schools in the Sanyati and Gokwe rural areas.

In between--and anywhere else--he spreads the word of God abroad on the wind.

"It's not the best way to do evangelism if that's the only way you do it," Parker said. "But I don't apologize for it. It excites people--especially kids--and it gets results."

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Parker can't judge how many roads a man must go down before he can win another man. He does know that more than 100 persons found their answer written on the wind since he began his airborne evangelism several months ago.

It's difficult for bush dwellers to get somewhere to buy a stamp and an envelope, not to mention to find a mailbox. But 100 persons have filled out a section on the tracts and returned it by mail asking for Christian literature. Parker has turned them over to the Zimbabwe mission's Bible Way Correspondence School for continuing follow-up.

Zimbabwean bush people, deprived of schools and churches during their country's long struggle for black majority rule, "hunger for reading material and the word of God," Parker said. "If 'wind evangelism' reaches some people I wouldn't reach any other way, I'm for it."

Another tract, crackling briskly, tore free from his fingers. A man's bicycle skidded to a halt. Parker squinted quizzically at the man scrambling in the rearview mirror. Would he, too, find his answer written on the wind?

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist papers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press
Related story released by Baptist Press 10/29/82.

Baptist Schools, RTVC
Consider Educational TV

Baptist Press
11/2/82

WASHINGTON (BP)--Administrators of several Southern Baptist colleges and seminaries met with officials of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Oct. 29 in a seminar on educational television.

The schools represented in the informational meeting are in cities where a non-commercial, educational channel is allocated by the FCC but not licensed. The educators heard SBC officials discuss eligibility, financing and application for and use of the vacant channels.

The FCC contingent included two of the agency's seven commissioners, Anne Jones and Stephen Sharp, and three top staff persons. Jimmy R. Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission (RTVC) and American Christian Television (ACTS), chaired the meeting. Other officials of the RTVC participated along with two consultants--a communications lawyer and an engineer.

The FCC has reserved 615 TV channels for non-commercial educational use, like those associated with the Public Broadcasting Service and many colleges and universities. Currently there are about 250 in operation.

If licensed by the FCC, the educational stations would carry cultural and educational programming, much of which will be produced locally. In addition they can broadcast the programming of the ACTS, the proposed Southern Baptist TV network.

The educational stations would differ from the 125 low-power stations planned for ACTS and would be owned by the schools or related groups. Cable television systems are required to carry the signal of local educational stations.

Represented at the meeting were Baptist College of Charleston, Charleston, S. C.; Baylor University, Waco, Texas; Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary, San Antonio, Texas; Houston Baptist University, Houston, Texas; Mercer University, Macon, Ga.; Meredith College, Raleigh, N. C.; Mississippi College, Clinton, Miss.; Palm Beach Atlantic College, West Palm Beach, Fla.; Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark.; Stamford University, Birmingham, Ala.; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; Stetson University, DeLand, Fla.; Union University, Jackson, Tenn.; Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C., and Wayland Baptist University, Plainview, Texas.

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