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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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83-122

Alaska Baptists Adopt First \$1 Million Budget

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (BP)--The Alaska Baptist Convention has approved its first million dollar budget, announced a goal of 20 new churches and missions to be established by 1985 and posted the first pastor to Barrow, the northernmost settlement in the Western Hemisphere.

In its 38th annual meeting the convention set a budget of \$1,289,353 for 1983-84. Alaska Baptists expect to raise \$427,903 of this amount, with the remainder coming from the Southern Baptist Convention, primarily through the Home Mission Board.

Thirty percent of the Cooperative Program (undesignated) funds contributed by the churches will be sent to Cooperative Program mission causes outside of Alaska.

The convention reported 43 cooperating churches and 30 mission stations with 16,288 members, making it the largest Protestant group in the state. The congregations received a total of \$4,561,590 and baptized 742 during the year.

Leaders announced that on Pentecost Sunday, May 22, 1983, the churches pledged to start 20 new churches and missions in Alaska by 1985, 14 of them in and around Anchorage, where half of the state's population lives.

Messengers from the churches to the convention met new pastors and other workers, including Lloyd Elasanga who will move to Barrow to become the first pastor of the year-old Baptist mission there.

Elasanga will lead the northernmost congregation in the Southern Baptist Convention, the ninth Baptist church or mission north of the Arctic Circle.

He is a native of Little Diomed Island which is a part of Alaska and the USA. It is separated by only two and a half miles from Big Diomed Island, which is a part of the Soviet Union. Mrs. Elasanga is a native of Louisiana.

In other actions the convention--

--reactivated the Alaska Baptist Foundation to handle wills and bequests;

--announced final plans for a simultaneous evangelistic revival campaign among the churches October 23-30, 1983, assisted by Baptists from Texas;

--approved participation in a national simultaneous evangelistic campaign among Southern Baptists in 1986,

--decided to divide undesignated contributions from the churches for hunger 75/25 between the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the Home Mission Board.

Officers elected to serve for the coming year are Roy Williams, Kenai, president; Edward Wolfe, Anchorage, first vice president; Paul Brewer, Anchorage, second vice president, and Milidene McConnell, Anchorage, recording secretary.

The 1984 meeting of the convention will be August 7-9 at the First Baptist Church, Kenai.

Get Language Act Together,
Linguist Larson Urges FMB

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Straight-talking linguist Don Larson communicated a friendly but direct message in an unusual dialogue here with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

It's time to get your language and orientation act together if you want cost-effective, happy, productive and durable missionaries.

Larson, retained to help the board produce missionaries who adapt more effectively to new cultures and languages overseas, urged the board to step up its efforts for better coordination between its stateside preparation of new missionaries and its language and acculturation programs on the field.

He believes there's a direct connection between the missionary's foreign language competence and his ability to remain on the field as an effective communicator of the gospel.

Larson, a Christian anthropologist and language expert who has worked with Southern Baptist missionaries overseas on and off for more than 20 years, gave the board good marks for what it has already done to help its missionaries be more effective. But he said the creation of the new Missionary Learning Center near Richmond, Va., offers an ideal time to put together a coordinated approach to cross-cultural communication and language study.

Missionary training at the new learning center will begin in March 1984. The last orientation at Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, Ga., will be held in January and February of next year.

The board requested help from Larson and other experts as it sought to offer a more streamlined program to better prepare missionaries for work overseas.

Starting in 1984, Larson said, the board should make greater effort to assess the potential of its new missionaries to adapt to new cultures as it makes overseas assignments. Those with lower potential should not be sent to countries where both language and culture are drastically different, he said.

The new center cannot show people how to live in other countries, he said, but it can help them to be more effective learners. He urged use of video tapes in which successful missionaries could share their skills and techniques in bridging the gaps between different cultures and languages.

Overseas, he said, each mission field needs to select and train two persons for long-term, part-time service on orientation committees. In most cases now, he said, there's little continuity in these committees which supervise the new missionaries' orientation and language development.

Larson also advised the board to determine what levels of language competence are required in the various assignments. This will be essential, he said, to augment the priority concerns which the board has identified in its overseas ministry.

Even short-term personnel, such as two-year journeymen and four-year missionary associates, could be more effective if given a month's language study and crosscultural instruction at the beginning of their service, he said.

Larson, chairman of the department of linguistics at Bethel College, St. Paul, Minn., also suggested the board assemble material on all 100 of the countries where it has missionaries. New missionaries and even those considering missionary service could then have a more accurate picture of the language and ethnic makeup of these countries, he explained.

Brief profiles are needed on how missionaries are taught languages in each country so the new missionaries can do the kinds of things in their orientation process they'll have to do by themselves once they get overseas, he said.

Larson praised the board and its administrative staff for their creativeness and desire to improve missionaries' communication of the gospel. "Some groups," he said, "do almost nothing. You are among those who are doing something. This orientation business is the wave of the future in missions."

Board members spent two afternoons in dialogue with Larson during their August board meeting, held in connection with the annual Foreign Missions Conference at the Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

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

Laotian Pastor's
Young Son Killed

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PORTLAND, Ore. (BP)--The two-year-old son of the Laotian pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, Portland, Ore., was killed July 29 in an accident near his home.

Ou Fou, youngest of five children of Yoon Fou Saechao and his wife, Lai Chan, was riding a tricycle near the family residence when a car crashed into him.

A woman learning to drive had pulled to the curb and was instructed by her husband to stop when she reportedly accidentally hit the accelerator instead of the brake pedal.

Friendship is a mission primarily of refugees of Lincoln St. Baptist Church, Portland. Saechao began pastoring the mission a couple of months ago.

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Elder Pledges Support
For Student Ministry

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
8/16/83

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Lloyd Elder pledged to be an advocate of Southern Baptist student work during an address and dialogue session with 200 campus ministers, state student leaders and church workers with students.

Elder, president-elect of the Baptist Sunday School Board, outlined his philosophy of Christian leadership during Student Conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

"I would like to be president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, and therefore of national student ministries, in such a way that there is a high trust level," Elder said. "If we know each other and trust each other and lift each other up in prayer, it is possible for us to do better the work we have to do even at those times when things do not go so well."

Calling student work an "imperative" job, Elder urged persons involved in student ministry on campuses, in churches and on associational, state and denominational levels to work together. "There is an impelling need for persons from various areas of student work to build a program of even greater strength," he said. "This will enable us to make better use of our limited resources but will still allow for diversity."

Elder said he has a personal appreciation for student summer missions because he made his profession of faith at age 18 in Anchorage, Alaska, through the influence of Robin Guess, a student summer missionary from Howard Payne University.

Later, while pastor of First Baptist Church, College Station, Texas, he also served as interim Baptist Student Union director. "That was a frightening experience filled with hard work, but I caught a vision of student leaders who wanted to make a difference for Christ," Elder said.

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Defining Christian leadership as sacrificial, self-giving service, he said Christians must be authentic persons of integrity. "It is not only the message we bear that matters but also the quality of life of the messenger," said Elder.

He said Southern Baptists must do the work of sharing the gospel with the entire world by starting where they are. "If we're going to grapple with the whole world, we've got to start on campus A, church B and state C," he noted. He called team work "absolutely essential inside this large and diverse Southern Baptist family."

More than 2,200 persons attended the student conference sponsored by national student ministries of the Sunday School Board.

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Southern Baptists Must Deal
With Diversity, Shurden Urges

By Patti Stephenson

Baptist Press
8/16/83

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--The Baptist association, traditionally cherished as a "fellowship of kindred minds," must now face "multiple levels of diversity and pluralism," church history professor Walter B. Shurden told associational directors of missions during the annual home missions conference.

Shurden, who recently resigned as dean of the School of Theology and professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., to become chairman of the Department of Christianity at Mercer University in Macon, Ga., noted Southern Baptists are "not as regional...not as white...not as poor" as in past decades. "And if anyone thinks we are not today theologically, ethnically and politically diverse, they have not been to the last several sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention."

"Recognizing the diversity in our denominational past will help save us from becoming white-knuckled, holding firmly to half-truths," he explained.

"One of Southern Baptists' greatest needs today is to re-saturate our pastors, church staff and churches with historic Baptist distinctives," Shurden insisted. The SBC's members must continue to undergird Bold Mission Thrust, "but unless we do something to 'Southern Baptistize' converts and churches, we will know losses in the midst of gains.

"In addition to Bold Going, Bold Growing, and Bold Giving, we must have some Bold Knowing of the Southern Baptist heritage," Shurden said.

He also urged directors to "reaffirm the association's pastoral role" by providing advice, counsel and discipline to their churches. "In a false effort at honoring local church autonomy, associations have often fallen into a passive, rather than active, posture toward church difficulties," he said. Shurden suggested associations "should not wait for pluralism to become polarization before they act."

Directors of missions were advised to "reemphasize Bible study" to discover a theology of Christian toleration. The "essence of the gospel is the welcome Christ shows his enemies," Shurden said. Southern Baptists must also "welcome one another" in the same spirit.

The week also featured nightly sermons by Robert Naylor, president-emeritus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. Naylor declared, "Churches are to be confrontational, not accomodational, in this world," as well as "local, visible and relevant to human needs. Before the world ever conquers Christianity, it must defeat its churches," he said.

Annual awards for the outstanding directors of missions in metropolitan and rural-urban associations in the East were presented to J.W. Brister, director of missions for Hinds Madison Baptist Association, in Jackson, Miss., and to Robert Hall, director of missions for North Central Ohio.

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Jere Allen, acting director of the Home Mission Board's metropolitan missions department, praised Brister's efforts to "help local churches reach their highest achievements." He cited "phenom nal growth" of Sunday Schools, churches and finances as evidence of Brister's success.

Brister, a native of Isola, Miss., is a graduate of Mississippi College and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a former director of missions for Austin (Texas) Baptist Association and the Gulf Coast (Miss.) Baptist Association. He was pastor of churches in Mississippi and Louisiana for 17 years.

Hall, outstanding rural-urban director, has been responsible for helping establish 60 Ohio churches, according to Quentin Lockwood, HMB rural-urban missions director.

Hall, a native of Roanoke, Ala., has served as director of Lakeland and Northern Ohio Associations since 1973 and was director of missions for Southeast Ohio 1958-73. He is a graduate of Auburn University and Southwestern seminary.

HMB President William G. Tanner also honored outstanding participants from the East in the HMB's PACT program (Project: Assistance for Churches in Transitional Communities).

Lawrence Childs Jr., director of the Mecklenburg Association in Charlotte, N.C., since 1970, was named 1983 PACT Consultant of the Year. Central Baptist Church in Greenville, S.C., pastored by Gerald Roper, received the 1983 PACT Church of the Year award.

Childs, a native of Spartanburg, S.C., has donated his time to assist 20 churches in studying options for ministry, Tanner reported. He was associate director of missions for Pilot Mountain Baptist Association in Winston-Salem, N.C., 1966-70, and is a graduate of Wofford College in Spartanburg and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Central church had been "one of South Carolina's growing churches" until its community changed drastically in 1978 and the church "suffered a loss of identity," Tanner said. After a one-year PACT study, the church has developed an apartment ministry, started a van pick-up service, offers a Bible club and tutoring for community children, and has active programs for senior adults and the mentally retarded.

Tanner praised the congregation, now celebrating its 90th birthday, for "turning these struggles into opportunities for creative ministries."

Oscar Romo, HMB language missions director, also recognized Charles Lawhon, director of ministries to internationals for the Jacksonville, Fla., Baptist Association, as the 1983 Language Missionary of the Year.

Lawhon, who's worked in Jacksonville 11 years, annually visits ships from 70 countries and coordinates the work of 250 volunteers from 25 churches. He is a former foreign missionary to the Philippines and holds degrees from Florida Southern College, Temple Baptist Theological Seminary and Tennessee Temple College.

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CORRECTION---On (BP) story "Hunger Foes Face Apathy, Futility" mailed 8/15/83 please change the spelling of Christian Life Commission member Patsy Ayers to Patsy Ayres in paragraphs 23, 25 and 26.

Thanks,
Baptist Press
