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 News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Missionary Force Gain
 Is Highest Since 1978**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists last year recorded the largest percentag gain of foreign missionaries since 1978 and the second largest since 1969, a possible indication that Bold Mission Thrust is taking hold.

A 4.01 percent net gain over 1982 resulted in part from a drop in missionary resignations and an increase in journeymen appointment for two-year terms.

Appointments for career missionaries numbered 190, the third highest ever recorded. Career resignations at a 2.61 percentage rate were the lowest since 1966. Auxiliary personnel, including journeymen, increased 18.37 percent over 1982, about a fourth of the net gain.

"This could be interpreted as a sign that Bold Mission Thrust is catching on," said Winston Crawley, the Foreign Mission Board's vice president for planning. Bold Mission Thrust is Southern Baptists' effort to share the gospel with all people by the year 2000.

The net gain of 129 missionaries and auxiliary personnel brought the total number of missionaries in service at the end of last year to 3,346.

The gain came despite a 40 percent increase in missionary retirements. This tr nd is expected to continue for several more years as large numbers of missionaries appointed in the years after World War II reach retirement.

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**State Convention Linkages
 Key To Missions Strategy**

By Patti Stephenson

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 1/25/84

ATLANTA (BP)--Linkages between mainline and new state conventions are essential to achieving Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust goals. That's the consensus of state convention and Home Mission Board leaders who coordinate and nurture the voluntary linkups.

Matching the resources of established conventions with the needs of new conventions is an idea which began percolating in the mid-1950s when Southern Baptists ventured into pioneer areas. It gathered steam in 1982 when state executive directors took another look at such alliances as a way to accelerate new work growth, explained David Bunch, the HMB's Mission Service Corps director.

A pipeline of money, volunteers and know-how connects 13 established conventions with 12 young conventions or fellowships: Alabama with Wyoming; Arkansas with Indiana; Florida with Pennsylvania/South Jersey; Georgia with New York; Kentucky with Ohio; Louisiana with Nevada; Missouri with Iowa; North Carolina with West Virginia; South Carolina with Puerto Rico; Tennessee with Michigan; Texas with Minnesota/Wisconsin; Virginia and Maryland with New England.

Because no two conventions are alike, there is no "typical" linkage, noted Gerald Palmer, HMB vice president of missions. True to Southern Baptist tradition, the linkages are autonomous, with the cooperating states working out the details of their partnership. "They're not something to be tightly controlled but just encouraged and allowed to develop on their own," Palmer said.

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The goal of linkages is neither to clone cookie-cutter state conventions, nor to rush developing fellowships into full-blown convention status. Becoming a convention is a byproduct of linkages, rather than a goal.

"Linkage is an expression of New Testament Christianity," Palmer observed. Though most linkages are forged at the state level between administrators, ownership filters to associations and local churches and, "It really boils down to volunteers," he said.

Long-term personal involvement--the major strength of state linkages--"is what must characterize Bold Mission Thrust if it is really to be bold," Palmer said.

Personal involvement is key in the year-old partnership between South Carolina and Puerto Rico. In 12 months, Puerto Rico enjoyed "phenomenal growth, doubling in almost every area," according to Ed Richardson, executive director of the Puerto Rico Baptist Association.

Eighteen groups from as many as 35 South Carolina churches--222 volunteers in all--made the trek south to Puerto Rico last year, according to Larry Bryson, South Carolina's director of missions. Five churches (left half finished by lack of funds) were completed, four were built from the ground up and seven were enlarged. This year, more than 350 volunteers will help develop a conference center, lead evangelistic crusades, Big A Clubs and vacation Bible schools, perform concerts, repair pastors' cars and conduct surveys.

South Carolina churches are also joining Puerto Rico churches to sponsor new missions in an attempt to double their number by 1985, Richardson said. Nurturing existing churches and helping them grow and parent a new church is a priority, Bryson stressed.

With 82 percent of Puerto Rico's 76 churches and missions facing building programs, affordable loans are a necessity. Some South Carolina churches are helping secure needed financing, Bryson said.

The linkage is not all one-sided, however. Last year, Puerto Rico volunteers helped start four Spanish missions in South Carolina and provided graduates of the Puerto Rico Baptist Theological Seminary as pastors. They also sent four summer missionaries to work with migrants. In 1984, they plan to send eight summer missionaries and four seminary interns to minister to South Carolina's Hispanics.

The linkage formed in 1980 between Tennessee and Michigan is one of the strongest, according to Palmer.

Tennessee's 68 associations are divided into clusters, with each cluster linked to one of Michigan's 14 associations. Regular contact is maintained through monthly reports and exchange visits between associational leaders and pastors.

In addition to conducting backyard Bible clubs, concerts and surveys, Tennessee volunteers have donated buses to Michigan churches and provided second-hand cars for students who commute to Michigan from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Robert Wilson, Michigan's executive director, and Carroll Owen, director of Tennessee's convention ministries division, agree starting new churches is a top priority of their partnership. Some Tennessee associations have bought property for new churches, paid for first units or donated salary for mission pastors, Wilson reported. New church starts have advanced "significantly" as a result, he noted, with 47 new missions begun in 1983. Michigan currently has 300 congregations.

For Tennessee Baptists, a byproduct of their participation has been a "fresh spirit and a new missions vision," Owen confirmed. For Michigan Baptists, the linkage formed at a "crucial time, just as we were moving into the recession," Wilson said. "The involvement of Tennessee's people has challenged our own people to deeper commitment."

Palmer described the Home Mission Board's role as counselor and catalyst. "We think linkages are dispelling the idea missions is something the Home Mission Board does all by itself," he said. "Our Baptist people are learning we do more than just send out missionaries --we provide resources for Baptists at every level to do a better job of missions."

As linkages have matured, "they've strengthened awareness of missions needs and increased Baptists' support of missions through regular giving channels," Palmer added. Linkages are also proving to be a "more consistent, planned approach to a task that otherwise tends to be dealt with sporadically," he said.

For Bunch, linkages have demonstrated "a high degree of unselfishness" in both the willingness of older conventions to share their abundance and the willingness of new conventions to accept direction from outsiders. He said, "I think it shows convention leaders operate from a bottom line of wanting to spread the gospel and start new churches, and they're willing to ventilate the system to do it."

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Louisiana Baptist Message
Announces Staff Changes

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ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--The Louisiana Baptist Message has announced the resignation of associate editor Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr., and the hiring of Marv Knox as associate editor.

Hoffmeyer, associate editor for 10 years, resigned to become director of public relations for the Louisiana Baptist Convention. He replaces Dick Davis who became outdoor editor for an Alexandria daily newspaper and independent producer of an outdoor sports television series.

Before Hoffmeyer announced his decision, the Baptist Message board had enlisted Knox to join the staff as a second associate editor. Knox, a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., will begin work with the Message Feb. 1.

Hoffmeyer, 60, came to Baptist Message from Baylor University, Waco, Texas, where he was assistant professor of journalism. Before that he was director of news services and chairman of the journalism department of Louisiana College. He previously worked with the Missouri Baptist Children's Home and the Times-Picayune of New Orleans.

He earned his B.A. degree from Baylor University and graduate degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and East Texas State University.

Knox, 27, presently works as director of information services at Southern where he is completing his master of divinity degree. He worked previously as assistant news editor for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Atlanta, and as a staff writer for the Abilene Reporter-News, Abilene, Texas.

He also worked as a summer intern for the Colorado Rocky Mountain Baptist and as news writer for the Texas Baptist Children's Home. While at Hardin-Simmons University, where he earned his bachelor's degree, Knox was editor of the school's student newspaper.

Hoffmeyer presently serves as president of the Southern Baptist Public Relations Association, one of the largest denominational public relations organization in the world.

Clayton said he does not expect to fill Hoffmeyer's position for several months.

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Seminary Dean Named
Georgetown President

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GEORGETOWN, Ky. (BP)--W. Morgan Patterson, dean of academic affairs at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., has been elected president of Georgetown College.

He will assume duties as president of the 155-year-old Kentucky Baptist institution April 1, succeeding Ben E. Elrod, who resigned June 30, 1983, after five years as president.

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Patterson, a native of New Orleans, currently is in his eighth year as academic dean at the Southern Baptist seminary. Previously, he was director of graduate studies in the School of Theology and the David T. Porter Professor of Church History at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

He served as a faculty member at Southern seminary from 1959 to 1976. Previously, he was a professor of church history at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary from 1956 to 1959.

Following service as a bombardier in the Army Air Corps during World War II, Patterson enrolled in Stetson University, completing his bachelor's degree in two years. He also received a master of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from New Orleans seminary. He did additional graduate study at Oxford University.

Patterson was pastor of Stapleton Baptist Church, Stapleton, Ala., and Progress Baptist Church in Progress, Miss. He has been interim pastor of churches in Louisiana, Mississippi, Kentucky, Indiana and California.

His and his wife, Ernestine, have two sons.

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Oklahoma City Church
Receives \$1 Million Gift

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OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Trinity Baptist Church in Oklahoma City has been given \$1 million by two of its longtime members.

Residential and commercial developer C.A. "Pat" Henderson and his wife, Barbara, presented the \$1 million check to Ben Loring, pastor, and Robert S. Scales, pastor emeritus, last December.

A majority of the gift was designated for development of Trinity's mission, Trinity North, now under construction. The mission has been meeting in an elementary school.

The first phase of the mission facility, providing space for 300 in worship services and some 200 in Sunday school, is now being built. The Henderson gift is expected to allow construction of phase two sooner than planned.

"I wanted to see the results of my gift while I'm alive," Henderson said.

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Union's Fall Revival
Results Long Lasting

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JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)--During the week-long revival at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., 55 students made public commitments of their lives to Christ.

In the months that followed the fall services, Union volunteers made over 135 visits to inmates in the Jackson Penal System resulting in six professions of faith, while another group of students made nearly 300 visits to the Jackson jail, bringing about three professions of faith, John Adams, vice president for religious affairs, said.

Still, other students were ministering to nearly 300 children through Backyard Bible Clubs, with one child accepting Christ. Others made close to 800 visits to patients in three local nursing homes where one resident made a profession of faith.

Late in the semester, the Baptist Student Union sponsored a concert by "Truth," a contemporary Christian music group, which saw 150 young people renew decisions to commit their lives fully to Christ. Numerous revival teams were sent to local churches which resulted in 61 decisions for Christ.

Union University is affiliated with and supported by the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

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America's Junior Miss--
A Missouri Southern Baptist Teen

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--A Missouri Southern Baptist teenager was selected America's 1983 Junior Miss.

Kathy Essig of Excelsior Springs, a member of Rock Falls Church in Orrick, will hold the title through November 1984.

Essig was judged on manners, grooming, personality and intelligence in a number of competitions, including an interview with judges. But it was through her talent competition entry that she shared her Christian faith in both the state and national teen contests.

Essig sang gospel music, "We've Got the Power" and "Father's Eyes," when asked to share her talent.

"I'm not ashamed to sing gospel music," the 14-year-old remarked. "This competition has opened doors for me to meet a lot of people and witness to them through my singing. Some people don't understand how I feel about that, but it's my way of giving God credit for the talent he gave me."

Essig's mother, Dorothy, said both her daughter and the entrant from Florida sang gospel music in the competition. "The other girls were dancing and singing secular songs for their talent entries," she recalled. "When Kathy and the Florida girl sang gospel songs, it was just a powerful witness."

Essig has been a Christian since the age of five and is an active member of her church and Youth for Christ in Kansas City. Her pastor, Bob Horton, said she is involved in "just about everything you'd expect a teenager to take part in."

According to Horton, America's Junior Miss is loyal in Sunday school and Acteen attendance, takes part in the church youth program, works in Vacation Bible School and the nursery, and sings in worship services. "She's there nearly all the time," the pastor claimed. "She's real faithful."

Acknowledging she felt a call when she was 10 years old to become a missionary, Essig feels her future ministry may include music.

She is sure winning the national title was a part of God's plan for her life. "I think God has been teaching me that it's not what you look like that really matters," she shared. "If the contest had been based on outward beauty, I know I wouldn't have won. It's really the beauty on the inside of people that is important."

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Cabbage Patch Dolls
Born At Baptist College

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CLEVELAND, Ga. (BP)--Cabbage Patch dolls, the most popular toy in the past Christmas season, were first created at Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland, Ga.

Xavier Roberts, who has become a multimillionaire because of the dolls, told USA Today he first created the soft sculptures for an art class at Truett-McConnell, a junior college affiliated with the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia.

Robert's company has produced more than 350,000 of the handmade version and Coleco, which purchased the right to mass-produce the dolls, sold approximately 2.5 million, according to USA Today.

Roberts attended Truett-McConnell from September 1974 to March 1977. He took mostly art courses.

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