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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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October 10, 1985

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Foreign Force Up To 3,587;  
1985 May Be 'Banner Year'

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists' overseas missionary force reached a record 3,587 as the Foreign Mission Board named 40 new missionaries and reappointed eight former missionaries at its October meeting.

The additions brought the total new personnel added so far this year to 378, or 80 more than had been named at this time in 1984.

"It's a strong year," said Louis Cobbs, director of the board's personnel selection department. "It could be a banner year in naming overseas personnel."

With more than 40 missionary candidates projected for appointment in December, Cobbs said the year's total could be as high as 415 or 420. That would top the record 406 new missionary personnel named in 1982.

Southern Baptists, with the largest U.S.-based career foreign missionary force in the world, have a goal of 5,000 missionaries by the year 2000.

To support work in 106 countries, the board approved a record \$162.3 million budget for 1986, earmarked \$6 million in current funds to help provide for missionary housing and other urgent capital needs overseas, and continued to sharpen the focus of its home staff.

Johnni Johnson Scofield, vice-president for communications, was named to a new position as assistant to the president. The Office of Communications, which she has headed since 1980, will become the Office of Communications and Public Relations. The new office will have broader functions and will be added to responsibilities of William R. O'Brien, executive vice-president. The changes will take place Jan. 1.

In approving the change for Scofield, the board defeated a motion by Kenny Lewis, Brownsville, Texas, to table action until December. Lewis said he felt the board needed more information about lines of authority under the reorganization before taking action.

O'Brien will be assisted by an administrative team of Sam Pittman, who will be associate executive vice-president; Bob Shoemake, assistant to the executive vice-president, and Bob Desbien, assistant vice-president. Their expanded roles will include previous responsibilities.

A boardwide public relations steering committee of about a dozen members also will be created as the new office seeks to "amplify the message of foreign missions and seek more ways to inform and involve Southern Baptists in meeting the challenges and opportunities of Bold Mission Thrust," O'Brien said.

The new office also will provide closer coordination with the board's development and intercessory prayer ministries.

Scofield's new assignment will allow her to concentrate on consultation with Southern Baptist agencies involved in strengthening missions education in the churches. A native of Huntington, W.Va., who grew up in Ashland, Ky., she also will assist R. Keith Parks, board president, in follow-up to the global evangelization strategy consultation attended by Baptist leaders from 21 nations at Ridgecrest, N.C., last June.

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Historical Commission

The new Office of Communications and Public Relations will include news and information services, The Commission magazine and two new departments, audio-visual and print, to be formed from what is now the product development department. Bob Ethridge, media designer in project coordination, will direct audio-visuals. The print director has not been named.

Ken Lawson, formerly director of product development, will take on officewide responsibilities as research and production consultant in an executive producer type role.

Resource coordination, distribution coordination, the photographer group and conference coordination also will become officewide.

Pittman, a native of Greenville, S.C., has been executive assistant for denominational relations since 1980. Shoemake, a native of Commerce, Texas, who grew up in Winters, Texas, has been assistant to Scofield since that same year. Desbien, a native of Stockton, Kan., was assistant to the president and director of public relations at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., before he came to the board in 1982 as coordinator for printed and audio-visual materials.

In other personnel changes, the board named Jerry Juergens, a missionary teacher at Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary and a native of Okmulgee, Okla., field associate to East Asia director-elect Samuel M. James. From a base in Hong Kong, Juergens will work as a liaison between the board and the 224 missionaries and other workers assigned to Hong Kong, Macao and South Korea.

Missionary Robert Hardy, formerly field associate in East Asia for Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, will now relate to the 296 missionaries and workers in Taiwan and Japan. He will continue to live in Taipei, Taiwan. Hardy is a native of Logan County, Ky.

The board accepted the resignation of missionary Milton Womack, formerly field associate in East Asia for Japan and South Korea. Womack has accepted a position as psychologist and counselor at the Baylor University Health and Counseling Center in Waco, Texas.

The 1986 budget for the first time will include world hunger and relief funds. An anticipated \$12 million in hunger and relief contributions will be used only for their designated purposes, but are being included to give a complete picture of the board's total income.

Because of the continuing strength of the U.S. dollar compared to foreign currencies, the board was able to appropriate \$4 million from this year's income for a missionary housing loan fund which will help the board get more of its missionaries out of rental units. Another \$2 million from current funds was allocated for other overseas capital needs.

In other actions, the board honored 36 missionaries retiring with a combined total of 1,202 years' missionary service and approved 43 young adults for two years' service as journeymen, pending medical clearance and successful completion of training April 4.

It also decided all receipts from the estate of the late Cecil B. Day Sr. will be used toward paying the operating expenses of the Cauthen Missionary Learning Center near Richmond. In 1982 the board had said the first \$6 million in funds from the estate would go for this purpose. Ultimately, the board expects to receive about \$13 million from this estate.

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

Home Mission Board Adopts  
\$67.3 Million 1986 Budget

Baptist Press  
10/10/85

ATLANTA (BP)--After pledging commitment to Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust, directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board adopted a \$67,324,354 budget for 1986 and appointed 18 new missionaries.

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Board members also heard a report on plans for the 1986 simultaneous revivals, "Good News America, God Loves You," including testimonies from two board members whose churches have participated in major efforts leading up to the 1986 coordinated effort.

The 1986 budget represents an increase of \$3.6 million (5.4 percent) over the 1985 budget of \$63,635,082.

In discussing the budget, several board members questioned why salaries for the board's 214 national staff and 3,811 field missions personnel were increased by only three percent in the 1986 budget, when the cost of living rose between four and five percent. Directors voted to ask the administrative committee to study staff and missionaries' salaries and report to the board at the next meeting in March.

In his annual report to the board, HMB President William G. Tanner said the 4,125 Home Mission Board staff, missionaries and chaplains reported a total of 103,014 decisions for Christ last year, including 59,498 first time professions of faith in Jesus Christ.

Citing data from the board's research division, Tanner said reliable statistics indicate there are 156 million people in the United States "without a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ," compared to the nation's total population of 239 million.

"We are dangerously near losing America," Tanner warned. He pointed out only two countries (India and Indonesia) where the SBC has foreign missionaries "have a total population greater than the number of unsaved people in our land. Seventy-five of the 106 nations where we have foreign missionaries have populations less than the number of lost people in the state of California," Tanner added.

Both Tanner and Richard Harris, director of the board's mass evangelism department, told board members about plans for 1986 simultaneous revivals, saying it now appears 90 percent of the denomination's 35,000 congregations will participate in next spring's "Good News America, God Loves You" revivals.

Harris said it will be the most comprehensive, coordinated mass evangelism effort in the denomination's history, much more than just another series of revivals. Harris said he expected more than 10 million Bibles and scripture portions would be distributed through the campaign.

Two board members, Emit O. Ray of Miami and Clark Hutchinson of Marietta, Ga., told of their own churches' involvement in evangelism, and challenged board members to lead their churches to think big in 1986.

Ray, pastor of Riverside Baptist Church, Miami, said members of his church distributed scripture portions to 1,980 homes in three hours one Saturday recently as a part of "Good News America, God Loves You." Results far exceeded the church's expectations, Ray said.

Hutchinson, pastor of Eastside Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., told of his church's involvement in an evangelistic effort in New England this summer called "Good News Worcester, God Loves You." He said his church caught a vision for holding the crusade in Worcester, Mass., as a result of his participating in an awareness tour last year for HMB directors.

The fall board of directors meeting opened with a commitment service in which each board member was asked to sign a card reaffirming commitment to the SBC's "Bold Mission Thrust, with the hope of winning our world for Christ by A.D. 2000."

In major business, the board created a new information services division in the services section to include word and data processing services and records managements services.

William E. Daniel, previously director of data processing for the board, was elected director of the new division. Daniel, an Atlanta native with 16 years experience in secular dataprocessing, has directed the board's data processing services since 1978.

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Responsibilities of three other national staff members were shifted in the board's church loans division: W.C. Dudley, associate director for the central region of the nation, becomes associate director of the church loans division. Paul Montgomery, vice-president of the H.M.B. Service Corp., was named to Dudley's post in the central region. William F. Reed, assistant director of the loan servicing department, was promoted to executive vice-president-treasurer, H.M.B. Service Corp.

Directors voted to appoint 10 new missionaries, six missionary associates, and two church planter apprentices and approved financial assistance to 43 mission pastors and their wives.

Directors also attended a joint commissioning service at First Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga., for 97 home missionaries and 51 chaplains and spouses. It was the largest joint commissioning service for missionaries and chaplains in the board's history.

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Peace Committee  
Tackles Diversity

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press  
10/10/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The question of how theologically diverse can the Southern Baptist Convention be and still maintain itself as a cooperative fellowship was tackled by the SBC Peace Committee during its second meeting Oct. 8-9.

The 22-member committee was created during the 1985 annual meeting of the SBC and assigned the task to "seek to determine the sources of the controversies in our convention and make findings and recommendations regarding these controversies."

During the first meeting in August, the committee determined it would begin its work by focusing on theological issues and differences, and, during the second session, began to narrow its aim to deal with diversity in regard to the Scriptures.

Chairman Charles Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., told Baptist Press: "That Southern Baptists have been, and are, theologically diverse is undebatable. That we will continue to be diverse is predictable, and no Biblically-sound, thinking Southern Baptist would attempt to prohibit that diversity. It is simply consistent with the nature of personal conversion and the individual indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

"The issue is not, 'Shall Southern Baptists be theologically diverse?' it is rather, 'How diverse can we be and maintain a legitimate denominational fellowship and a trustworthy base upon which to combine our support for mutual ministries?'"

Fuller added: "Southern Baptists must decide in how much accountability can a Christian be held for ministry's sake and not violate the liberty of the Holy Spirit within that Christian."

In keeping with policies adopted by the committee during its first meeting, Fuller made a statement to Baptist Press following the two-day closed meeting, which he said was more "intense" than the first "by virtue of the fact that we tackled some items of substance."

He commented the "mix" of the committee was complete in the second meeting. Five members--including leading spokesmen for the inerrancy position--were present.

The five--Adrian Rogers of Memphis, Tenn.; SBC President Charles F. Stanley of Atlanta; Ed Young of Houston; Jim Henry of Orlando, Fla., and Bill Crews of Riverside, Calif.--had missed the August meeting.

For the October meeting, 21 of the 22 members were present. Jerry Vines of Jacksonville, Fla., was unable to attend, Fuller said, because of "a long-standing commitment."

The meeting, he added, "intensified the diversity, but did not create any disintegration. It accentuated the diversity, but also accentuated the realization that we can differ--and differ strongly--and yet have a continuing and relentless commitment...that we are here to do a job and that we believe it can be done."

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Fuller said the committee heard a report on the Baptist Faith and Message statement from Herschel H. Hobbs, pastor-emeritus of First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, and SBC President 1962-63. Hobbs, as SBC president, was chairman of the committee which drafted the statement at the 1963 SBC annual meeting.

"The Baptist Faith and Message statement is a central item in our assignment," Fuller said, noting the convention directed the committee "to follow the Baptist Faith and Message in theological matters."

Fuller added Hobbs discussed "the background, the formulation, the writing and the presentation" of the statement, which followed on the heels of a theological controversy over the historicity of the Genesis account. Fuller added Hobbs "put a lot of emphasis" on what is generally referred to as "the preamble" to the statement.

"He (Hobbs) said that section is very important because it is there that you get the clear explanation that this is not a creed. He called the preamble 'the disclaimer' to the idea that the statement is a creed," Fuller said.

Fuller added he believes if the group is to use the statement as a point of reference in theological matters "and to determine if there has been a drift," the committee "must understand what was done, why it was done, what preceded it and what caused it to come about."

Much of the discussion during the October meeting, he said, centered on Article I of the statement which concerns the Scriptures.

"Group discussions focused not just on whether there is a diversity of ideas about the origin of the Scriptures, but on what the impact such diversity would have" in such places as seminary classrooms, preparation of lessons and places of denominational leadership.

He added: "We are all aware that as Baptists we firmly believe that everybody has a right to their own interpretation. What is at issue is how much diversity of interpretation can we have and still work together in denominational undertakings."

Each member was requested to prepare a 350-word statement defining the major theological matters which are at issue among Southern Baptists. Fuller said 20 of the 22 members prepared such a statement. Each, he said, agreed there is diversity of belief concerning the Scriptures and said questions about the origin, authenticity and authority of the Scriptures "is the primary source of the conflict among us."

He said such efforts to define the limits of diversity are not aimed at Southern Baptists in general, but at those who are employed by denominational agencies and institutions. "This is not a matter of a dual standard, but it is a recognition of the fact that when someone works for Southern Baptists, they in a sense do represent them."

He added he believes the committee "can find some wording which will reflect" a balance between the accountability an employee owes to his employer and the accountability a believer owes to God and be acceptable to the convention.

The Peace Committee, Fuller said, is "the convention in miniature," but added members are "fully aware" the convention in annual session "will make the decisions regarding "how accurate they think our findings are" and "how to effect the recommendations we make."

Fuller added a four-man agenda committee composed of the chairman, Charles Pickering of Laurel, Miss.; Daniel Vestal of Midland, Texas, and John Sullivan of Shreveport, La., will meet Oct. 29-30 to synthesize the discussions of the October meeting and to plan the agenda for the third meeting, scheduled in Atlanta Dec. 10-11.

"The agenda committee will take the results and deliberations of this meeting and plan an appropriate agenda for the next meeting," Fuller said. "This way, we believe we will be moving from strength to strength."

**(BP)**

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