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December 5, 1985

85-152

National Cooperative Program Starts Fast For 1985-86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Just two months into its fiscal year, contributions through the national Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention are more than \$1.5 million ahead of last year.

November's voluntary contributions to the national SBC programs from the 37 state conventions affiliated with the SBC were \$10,770,854 which pushed the two-month figure to \$19,809,888. That represents an increase of \$1,513,675 (8.27 percent) over the first two months of the 1984-85 fiscal year.

It is the first \$10 million November in Cooperative Program history and is the third highest single month in CP history behind August 1985 (\$10,911,903) and January 1985 (\$10,812,419).

The national Cooperative Program budget is divided among 19 SBC agencies, boards and commissions. This year 50 percent goes to the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va.; 19.644 percent goes to the Home Mission Board in Atlanta; the six SBC seminaries (Golden Gate in Mill Valley, Calif.; Midwestern in Kansas City, Mo.; New Orleans; Southeastern in Wake Forest, N.C.; Southern in Louisville, Ky., and Southwestern in Fort Worth, Texas) receive 20.49 percent, and the Radio and Television Commission in Fort Worth receives 4.177 percent.

The remaining income, less than 5.5 percent, is shared among the convention operating budget, the Annuity Board in Dallas, the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, Tenn., the Public Affairs Committee in Washington and six Nashville, Tenn.-based agencies: the Southern Baptist Foundation, the American Theological Seminary Commission, the Christian Life Commission, the Education Commission, the Historical Commission and the Stewardship Commission.

The Woman's Missionary Union (Birmingham, Ala.) and the Baptist Sunday School Board (Nashville) receive no Cooperative Program funds, but are self-sustaining, primarily through literature sales.

In order to meet the 1985-86 basic budget requirements of \$120.6 million, income for the present fiscal year must average \$10.05 million per month--an increase of \$3,073,309 (2.604 percent) over 1984-85 income. Income beyond that will be applied first to capital needs which were unfunded in 1983-84 of \$3,340,385, then to capital needs of \$4,500,000 for 1985-86.

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Baptists Enlarge Witness
As Colombians Ask 'Why?'

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
12/5/85

IBAGUE, Colombia (BP)--The questions are inevitable when 25,000 to 40,000 people are killed after a volcano erupts: "Why us? Why, God?"

In countries where Roman Catholicism is prevalent, "people recognize the hand of God in things," said Southern Baptist missionary Dan Rupp. Colombia's Catholic bishops urged the nation to return to God after the Nov. 13 eruption and deadly mudslide which left a death toll roughly equal to the thousands of injured and homeless.

The bishops also cited the 28-hour shootout at the Palace of Justice in Bogota, Nov. 6-7. About 100 people were killed as the army and national police regained control of the building seized by leftist guerrillas.

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"What sin are we paying for?" a newscaster asked over a Bogota TV station.

In the rural village of Guayabal, not far from Armero, an elderly Pentecostal pastor told of "the judgment of God for the sins of the people" as he visited with Southern Baptist missionaries Larry Booth and Howard Atkinson.

Adriana Robledo, a nurse from the Baptist Clinic in Barranquilla who traveled to Ibague to work with survivors of the mudslide, recounted, "They have asked so much, 'Why did something like this have to happen?'"

"I told them, 'Many times, we do not understand why these things happen. There's a God who can give us strength and power. We can hold on to him and he will hold on to us and help us,'" said Robledo, a member of Barranquilla's Genezaret Baptist Church.

Christians cope better than non-Christians in tragic times, said Rupp, of Bogota. "They realize how God can work through the tragedies."

"Certainly history shows that people respond in a quest for faith, a desire to know God, in the wake of disasters," said Booth, also in Bogota.

Jose Zabala, pastor of First Baptist Church, Ibague, the closest Baptist congregation to Armero, has told his members, "Life has two sides. There is the good side, happiness and satisfaction. There's the other side, sadness, pain, tragedy."

The Armero crisis has stirred Zabala to do more teaching on "spiritual resources" so First Baptist members "won't be caught so off guard they won't know what to do as believers...in whatever kinds of circumstances come to them."

For Southern Baptist missionaries, the crisis has underscored the importance of disaster relief preparedness.

Southern Baptist relief funds allow Baptists to respond quickly and effectively to crises, while missionaries with many other groups have no such resources, said James Giles, the Colombia mission's disaster relief coordinator. For example, missionaries spent \$25,000 to help the Colombian Red Cross fill acute shortages in medicine, medical supplies, portable power generators and powdered milk.

Disaster relief "opens doors that would never be opened in any other way," said Giles, who also is president of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Cali. To the injured and homeless and to Colombian government officials and relief workers, Baptist disaster response gives "depth to what being a Baptist means," Giles said. It shows Baptists are "willing to respond to physical suffering as well as spiritual needs."

It demonstrates Baptists are "a caring group and one that can help," said Robert Edwards, director of the clinic in Barranquilla who traveled to Ibague's state hospital to help treat injured survivors. He added, "It gives us direct contact with people in need, to whom we can give a word of hope, a direct witness of God's mercy in spite of such terrible conditions."

"There's absolutely no way we can call ourselves Christians and not respond," said Giles' wife, Mary Nell. "The Bible says Jesus went about doing good. "Ours is the type of help that changes people," she noted. "That's why we're spending so much time and resources to help."

"You may not be able to go back and count numbers of conversions," said Don Pearson, an orthopedic surgeon from Orlando, Fla., who also worked at Ibague's state hospital, "but it's a long-term statement" of "love and concern ... because of Christ."

Among the 85 Baptist churches in Colombia, a number collected food and clothing. The Colombian Baptist Convention donated about \$700 from its limited budget and a 20-member mission in the city of Tunj took \$150 out of its budget. Few individuals in the churches make as much as \$100 a month.

'Mark Of The Beast' Appeal
Loses In U.S. Supreme Court

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)—Ezra Eli Borntrager, a Kansas City, Mo., attorney who refused for religious reasons to divulge his Social Security number in an application for admission to the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court, has lost his final appeal at the nation's high tribunal.

Borntrager believes Social Security numbers are the 'mark of the beast' mentioned in several passages of the New Testament book of Revelation. Although he acknowledged in a written appeal to the high court that he was assigned a Social Security number years ago, he has stopped using it since discovering the references in Revelation.

Borntrager argued that unlike other numbers assigned to him—such as those on his driver's license and financial accounts—his Social Security number is different in that it is "mandatory, omnipresent, (and) a universal identifier."

In refusing without comment to review the case, the Supreme Court let stand two lower federal court rulings against the Kansas City attorney. (85-719, Borntrager v. Stevas)

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WMU, SBC Adds Owen To Staff,
Loses Two To Tennessee WMU

Baptist Press
12/5/85

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, has named Jennifer Bryon Owen products group manager. Carrol Kelly and Donna Maples, past communications group manager and training design group manager respectively, have been elected to the Tennessee WMU staff.

Owen is the first to hold this new position. She will be responsible for managing the work of the products editors, editorial assistants and artists relating to the WMU administrative magazine Dimension and to products development.

Prior to coming to national headquarters, Owen owned a public relations and marketing firm. For 13 years, she was employed at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn., working in the book store division and for Broadman Press.

Kelly and Maples, both native Texans, will assume their positions Dec. 9. They will assist Executive Director Katharine Bryan in designing, planning and implementing activities for all WMU missions organizations in Tennessee.

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Baptists Aid Victims
Of Hurricane Kate

Baptist Press
12/5/85

WHITBY, North Caicos (BP)—Baptists are helping about 70 families who lost homes in November as Hurricane Kate lashed the Turks and Caicos Islands northeast of Cuba.

Southern Baptist missionaries Ed and Joyce Perimon, who work on the islands, assisted Baptist businessman Lou Hendfeld of North Caicos, who distributed almost 200 food packages. Purchased with \$3,800 in hunger relief funds sent by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, the packages helped families in North Caicos, the worst-hit island. The board sent another \$3,200 to buy roofing and other construction materials as rebuilding begins.

Hurricane Kate, which damaged Cuba extensively, caused relatively little destruction and no deaths in the other Turks and Caicos Islands, Mrs. Perimon said. But the storm hit North Caicos hard, destroying at least 70 homes and knocking down power lines.

Two Southern Baptist electricians from Texas went to the island Nov. 23 to help restore electrical power, but the airline they flew lost their electrical equipment in transit. After waiting several days the two men returned to the United States.

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Colorado Baptists Approve Strict Budget Guidelines

LITTLETON, Colo. (BP)--Messengers to the 30th annual session of the Colorado Baptist General Convention adopted a \$2.3 million budget, a business plan, seated messengers from five new churches and received another for watch care.

The 1986 budget projects \$1,189,242 in receipts from churches affiliated with the Colorado Baptist General Convention and \$1,152,503 from other sources including the Home Mission Board (\$1,124,000) and the Baptist Sunday School Board (up to \$44,270).

The percentage of local church income which will be passed on to worldwide mission and educational efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention through the national Cooperative Program was set at 29 percent.

Last year's approved budget designated 28.5 percent to go through the national Cooperative Program, the SBC's unified budget. However, severe shortfalls in income forced the convention to cut the percentage to 10 percent the last six months of the year.

The budget crisis formed the background for the development and approval of the budget plan.

The business plan adopted divides the budget into basic and advance and limits each year's basic budget to the actual income the convention received "for the 12 month period immediately preceding the beginning of budget preparation," from its affiliated churches and outside sources such as the Home Mission Board and the Sunday School Board.

The plan also specifies that budget planning will begin July 1 for the following January-December fiscal year. Therefore CBGC income from July 1, 1985 through June 30, 1986 will set the basic budget parameters for the 1987 budget.

All income which exceeds basic budget requirements will be designated as the advanced budget and allocated according to the approved budget.

The basic and advance budgets will be presented to the convention in annual session by the executive board through its finance committee for approval.

In other actions messengers approved new parameters for the sale of the Baptist building. The price will be not less than \$1.9 million; any lease entered into by the Colorado Baptist General Convention must exceed the 1986 budgeted amount for building debt retirement; and the executive board was authorized to proceed with negotiations of a contract that meets or exceeds these minimum parameters and to execute all documents necessary to finalize the sale.

If the building sells, \$600,000 will be used to repay the Home Mission Board loan the convention secured this past summer to help it ride out the budget crisis and the remainder will be deposited in appropriate interest bearing accounts to be established as a sinking fund for the repayment of bonds of the Baptist Foundation which will become due starting in 1986.

In his report on the Baptist Foundation and Church Loan Corporations, George Feather, foundation secretary, said the actions of the corporation are subject to the review and scrutiny of the executive board between conventions. All investors requesting immediate, "on demand" payments have been paid as of Oct. 1, 1985. Initial payments of \$19,500 per month will go to those who agreed to monthly payments over the next three years. That amount will decrease as some accounts are paid in full.

W. Michael Wilson, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Aurora and former state director of evangelism, was elected convention president for 1986. Others officers elected were Eddie Scroggins, pastor, Riverside Grand Junction, first vice-president; A.L. Lyth, layman, Applewood Baptist, Wheat Ridge, second vice-president, and Mrs. Phil (May Marie) Irwin, and Mrs. Roy (Weida) Spannagel, both from Pueblo as recording secretary and assistant secretary.

The 1986 convention will at Circle Drive Baptist Church, Colorado Springs, Nov. 4-6.

United Methodist Officials
Lose Supreme Court Appeal

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)—A controversial Methodist clergyman fighting his forced retirement will have his day in a civil court following U.S. Supreme Court refusal to block such proceedings.

Rejecting an appeal by a United Methodist bishop and a former district superintendent, the high court let stand a lower panel's ruling that William E. Alberts is entitled to take his complaint against the two church officials to a civil court.

Alberts, former pastor at Old West Church, Boston, Mass., was forced to retire in June 1983, after Bishop Edward G. Carroll and then-District Superintendent John E. Barclay, recommended the move to other district clergy. The 300-member body then voted to place Alberts in what is called in the United Methodist Church a "retired relation." That category stops short of stripping a member of the clergy from his credentials but has the effect of forcing retirement.

Alberts' difficulties with church officials came into the open in late 1972 and early 1973, when the embattled clergyman first broke off psychiatric care he was undergoing, then performed a wedding for two homosexual men against Carroll's expressed wishes.

Following that highly-publicized event, Carroll and Barclay went to Alberts' former psychiatrist seeking information on the pastor's mental state. Alberts' lawsuit charged the officials with violating the confidential physician/patient relationship he enjoyed with the psychiatrist.

A key factual dispute in the proceeding has been whether Alberts first sought to resolve the matter before a church tribunal. In their written appeal asking the Supreme Court to review the case, church officials stated Alberts refused such a hearing. But Alberts claimed Bishop Carroll ruled out of order a motion made immediately after the forced retirement vote to submit his case to a church trial.

United Methodist polity, spelled out in the denomination's Book of Discipline, empowers a bishop annually to assess a minister's continued ability and fitness to function and to appoint him to another post.

Alberts' lawsuit sought his reinstatement as well as monetary damages for mental anguish, loss of earning capacity and damage to reputation. Alberts currently is pastor of a nondenominational congregation, The Community Church of Boston.

Although a lower state court agreed with church officials that the First Amendment forbids civil courts from ruling in such cases, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court disagreed, holding instead that civil courts do have jurisdiction in the case because it does not involve religious doctrine or internal organization.

In their written appeal asking the nation's high court to review that decision, attorneys for the church declared: "That ordained clergymen should have to defend the reasonableness of their beliefs in a secular court, before a jury of persons who do not share their religious views, is intolerable."

They also claimed that when First Amendment religion rights clash with the state's interest, "religious freedom is clearly the stronger value."

But Alberts' attorneys asked the court to refuse the case, arguing Massachusetts possessed "an interest sufficiently compelling to justify" legal action against church officials. "Civil courts must respect the decisions of (church) tribunals on religious doctrine, not civil liability," they concluded.

Alberts' lawyers also wrote that Carroll's and Barclay's clerical duties did not include calling a press conference during which they allegedly told reporters Alberts was mentally ill.

Alberts' brief also cited an exchange of letters between Carroll and the psychiatrist in which acknowledgement was made that a tape recording of a telephone conversation between them about the pastor's mental state ought to be erased or otherwise destroyed.

The recording was made by the bishop without the psychiatrist's knowledge or permission. That conversation, Alberts charged, amounted to a breach of confidentiality, making church officials liable under civil law.

Siding with church officials' unsuccessful effort to keep the dispute out of civil courts, the General Council on Finance and Administration of the United Methodist Church and the National Council of the Churches of Christ warned the high court such civil jurisdiction would endanger the constitutional balance between church and state.

Two of the nine high court justices, William J. Brennan Jr. and Byron R. White, indicated they voted to accept the case for review. But a minimum of four justices is required for a case to come to oral argument. (85-500, Carroll v. Alberts)

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Robert Lee Sets
1986 Retirement

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.

Baptist Press
12/5/85

ALEXANDRIA, LA. (BP)--Robert L. Lee, executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention since 1956, has announced his retirement effective Dec. 1, 1986. He was assistant executive secretary of the convention 1953-56.

Lee said he was "gratefully consenting" to a request last year from the convention's executive board that he continue in office "for at least two years."

When Lee was elected to the office at age 41 he was the youngest of Baptist state executive secretaries, now called directors, in the Southern Baptist Convention. Now he is the eldest of executive directors presently in office and is serving the longest tenure of any of them.

When Lee became a staff member of the executive board in 1953 there were 1,123 churches with a total membership of 323,158. Today there are more than 1,410 churches with a total membership of more than 570,000.

The Louisiana Baptist Convention operates five agencies: Louisiana College in Pineville; "The Baptist Message" (a weekly newspaper) and Baptist Foundation, both in Alexandria; the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home in Monroe and the Arcadia Baptist Home in Arcadia.

Lee was 70 years old in October. He was reared in Mobile, Ala., and had a career as an insurance executive in Mississippi before entering the Baptist ministry. He was pastor of churches in Mississippi and Louisiana before joining the LBC staff.

He is a graduate of Mississippi College and the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary where he earned the doctor of theology degree in 1951.

Lee recently led in establishing Mission 90, a program to raise \$10,000,000 to organize 250 new churches and missions throughout the state by 1990.

Russell McIntire, pastor of Oak Park Baptist Church, New Orleans, and president of the LBC executive board, said a successor to Lee will be recommended to the board by the operating committee. The board's administrative subcommittee becomes the search committee and a chairman will be named in the future.

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Education Commission
Selects Jerry Self

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Jerry M. Self, public affairs and Christian life consultant with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Brentwood, Tenn., has been named assistant director of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Education Commission, said Self's major duties will be as liaison with denominational agencies in coordinating programs and establishing relationships defined in the program statement of the Education Commission and to provide staff support for the Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary.

Self, 47, also will aid in developing means for communications of the educational needs of Baptist conventions to pastors, church workers and denominational leaders.

The Wichita, Kan., native has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas, and a Ph.D. in ethics from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. Prior to joining the Tennessee Baptist Convention in 1978 Self was pastor of Austin Heights Baptist Church, Nacogdoches, Texas. He also was pastor in Ada, Okla., and Hillsboro, Texas.

Self has led numerous workshops and seminars and has taught ethics at Belmont College in Nashville. He is the author of "Men and Women in John's Gospel" as well as 40 magazine articles on various relational issues.

Self and his wife, Peggy, reside in Brentwood, Tenn. They have two children, Jay, 19, and Angela, 15.

He will assume the position Jan. 2, 1986. Self succeeds George E. Capps Jr., the former associate director of the commission who died of a heart attack in June.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Education Commission

Religious Broadcaster
Loses Final Appeal

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
12/5/85

WASHINGTON (BP)--A colorful and non-traditional California religious broadcaster has lost what is likely to have been his last legal effort to stay on the air.

The U.S. Supreme Court refused Dec. 2 to review a lower court decision against Eugene Scott and his Faith Center Inc., a 10,000-member congregation located in Glendale, Calif. That panel affirmed proceedings by the Federal Communications Commission which resulted in the denial of license renewal applications to a Los Angeles radio station and a San Francisco television station owned by the church.

Scott and Faith Center have been battling the powerful regulatory agency since 1977, when the FCC demanded access to broadcast tapes of programs on a San Bernardino television station also owned by the church. Those proceedings resulted in the loss of the license for the station when Faith Center refused to provide the tapes.

Following the proceedings in the San Bernardino case, the FCC initiated similar investigations into the Los Angeles and San Francisco stations.

Proceedings against all three stations have been based on charges by a former Faith Center employee that Scott engaged in fraudulent fund-raising on the air by soliciting funds that were diverted for uses other than those advertised.

A fourth Faith Center property, a television station in Hartford, Conn., was sold earlier.

A key factual dispute throughout the lengthy war has been the church's contention that the regulatory agency demanded access to lists of donors, an accusation denied by the FCC.

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Faith Center attorneys have based their case on the legal claim that providing the donor lists would force the church to violate a fundamental tenet of its faith, Jesus' command in Matthew 6:1-4 that alms be given in secret.

Faith Center has insisted throughout all the proceedings its key claim--that the government's demand to turn over the donor lists amounted to a denial of the free exercise of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment--be settled before sanctions were imposed.

Scott, who holds a Ph.D. degree in education from Stanford University, but whose on-the-air antics have been widely criticized, is also president of the Full Gospel Fellowship of Churches and Ministers International, a denomination claiming some 2,000 congregations and two million adherents worldwide.

For its part, the FCC has insisted that religious licensees have the same public interest obligations as do other broadcasters and that it has an "affirmative duty" under law to investigate allegations of fraudulent on-the-air solicitation. (85-527, Faith Center Inc. v. Federal Communications Commission)

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Eula Mae Henderson,
Missions Leader, Dies

Baptist Press
12/5/85

DALLAS (BP)--Eula Mae Henderson, 70, a Texas Baptist mission leader for more than three decades, died Dec. 5 at her home in Garland, Texas, following a lengthy illness.

Services were Dec. 6 at First Baptist Church, Dallas, where pastor W.A. Criswell officiated. Charles McLaughlin, director of the state missions commissions of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, brought the message. She had been a worship leader in an elementary Sunday school department at First Baptist Dallas for more than 30 years.

Miss Henderson was executive director-treasurer of Texas Woman's Missionary Union from 1947-80 after being young people's secretary for Texas WMU in 1946.

Following her retirement, she spent more than two years as a Mission Service Corp volunteer for the Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary in San Antonio. The seminary honored her for significant contributions to Hispanics by naming a chapel after her.

During her 34 years of denominational work, she was instrumental in expanding mission work in Texas, especially among Hispanics. She helped launch the Rio Grande River Ministry, which has involved hundreds of Texas Baptist churches and thousands of volunteers in sharing talents and faith with people along the Rio Grande (the border between Texas and Mexico).

She also led Texas Baptists to begin scholarships for ethnic students through the annual Mary Hill Davis Offering for State Missions. The program has helped more than 1,100 Hispanic, black and Asian students attend Texas Baptist universities.

In connection with her missionary efforts, she traveled throughout the United States and to South America, Europe, the Orient and Africa, spending many of her vacations visiting and encouraging Southern Baptist missionaries in foreign countries.

McLaughlin described her as, "Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong and Mary Hill Davis housed in one charming personality...she was the best demonstration of mission support I ever knew." During her tenure, the state mission offering grew from \$109,000 in 1947 to almost \$2.2 million in 1980.

The Oklahoma native attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and received honorary doctor's degrees from Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas (1956), and Mary-Hardin Baylor, Belton, Texas (1970). In 1984 she received the Texas Baptist Elder Statesman Award for distinguished service to Texas Baptists.

Miss Henderson requested memorial gifts be made to the Mary Hill Davis State Missions Offering or the Eula Mae Henderson State Missions Memorial Fund through the Woman's Missionary Union or the BGCT treasurer, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, 75201-3355.

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