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November 10, 1987

87-169

Porter Routh Dies
After Brief Illness

N-CO

NASHVILLE (BP)--Longtime Southern Baptist Convention executive Porter W. Routh died Nov. 7 in Nashville following a brief illness. He was 76.

Routh was executive secretary (now president) and treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee from 1951 until his retirement in August of 1979. During that span he also was treasurer of the convention.

Routh was the son of the late E.C. and Mary Wroe Routh. His father was editor of two Baptist state newsjournals: Texas' Baptist Standard and Oklahoma's Baptist Messenger. He followed directly in his father's footsteps in 1942, when he took the helm of the Messenger for three years.

Previously, the Lockhart, Texas, native had been a reporter for two daily newspapers and was secretary of Brotherhood and promotion for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma in 1942-43. He was secretary of the SBC Sunday School Board's department of survey, statistics and information from 1945 to 1950 and was SBC senior secretary from 1945 to 1951.

Following his retirement, he was an adjunct professor at Southern, Southeastern and Midwestern Baptist theological seminaries. He also was interim executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in 1980.

Routh also held numerous other posts. He was a deacon at First Baptist Church of Nashville. He had been on the executive and administrative committees of the Baptist World Alliance; the board of managers of the American Bible Society; the national council of the Boy Scouts of America, which awarded him its Good Shepherd Award; the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; and Kiwanis International.

He was an honors graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University. He received honorary doctorates from his alma mater, as well as from Wake Forest University and Georgetown College. He performed graduate study at the University of Missouri, George Peabody College (now a part of Vanderbilt University) and Southern Seminary.

He wrote five books and contributed to numerous Southern Baptist periodicals. He traveled extensively, visiting about 60 countries and numerous Southern Baptist mission fields.

He is succeeded by his wife of 51 years, the former Ruth Elizabeth Purtle; five children: Charles Routh, Betsy Green, Dorothy Leppert, Susan Routh and Lelia Cothen; and three sisters: Lucille Burnett, Elizabeth Pool and Lelia Arnette; and seven grandchildren.

His funeral is to be Nov. 10 at 2 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Nashville.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, memorials be made to the American Bible Society.

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Cooperative Program
Enjoys Best October

N-CO

Baptist Press
11/10/87

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program enjoyed its best first month this October, when receipts topped \$11 million, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the convention's Executive Committee.

The Cooperative Program is the denomination's unified budget, which finances missions, evangelistic and educational projects around the world. It operates on a fiscal year that begins Oct. 1 and ends the following Sept. 30.

October receipts totaled \$11,004,930, Bennett reported. That makes it the best October in the 62-year history of the program, and the seventh-best month overall, he said.

The monthly receipts were \$67,815 more than receipts for October 1986, for a gain of 0.62 percent, he said.

That increase is several points below the current U.S. inflation rate. However, the comparison is misleading, because the October 1986 receipts were unusually high for that month -- 21 percent over the total for the same period the previous year, Bennett noted.

The Cooperative Program goal for the current fiscal year is \$140 million. Receipts for the current fiscal year must average slightly more than \$11.7 million for each of the remaining 11 months if that goal is to be reached.

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New England Baptists Meet
For Anniversary Celebration

N-CO
(NE)

Baptist Press
11/10/87

SUDBURY, Mass. (BP)--New England Baptist messengers met Nov. 5-6 for the fifth annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of New England to celebrate 25 years of organized Southern Baptist work in the region.

More than 220 messengers and guests attended the two-day meeting at First Baptist Church in Sudbury, Mass., said Executive Director James Currin.

Major business included the adoption of a \$1,914,603 budget for 1988. Of that total, \$511,723 -- or 26.7 percent -- is to be raised by New England churches. The BCNE will contribute 20.5 percent of the funds it raises from its churches -- or \$104,895 -- to national and global mission projects through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget.

Of the \$1,402,880 that is to come from non-church sources, \$1,264,429 is to be received from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, and \$68,995 is to be contributed by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Messengers defeated a motion to instruct the BCNE board of directors to name a subcommittee to study the effects of the Southern Baptist theological/political controversy on the convention's work in New England.

Four resolutions were adopted, including one pledging prayer for Betty Collins, wife of Southeastern New England Baptist Association director of missions Floyd Collins, who faced major surgery on Nov. 11 in Detroit.

In one session BCNE Historian Merwyn Borders moderated a panel discussion about the 25-year history of Southern Baptist work in New England. The Baptist General Association was formed in 1962 with eight churches; today 145 congregations comprise the BCNE.

Messengers received a report of 13 new missions and 14 Bible studies begun last year in the region.

James Schneider, pastor of Pleasant Valley Baptist Church in Groton, Conn., was elected BCNE president. Other officers are David Waugh, church planter in Providence, R.I., first vice president; Ken Hale, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Hanover, N.H., second vice president; and Jeff Jeffries, associate pastor of Newton Corner Baptist Church in Newton, Mass., clerk.

Next year's meeting will be Nov. 10-11 at Northpark Baptist Church in Bridgeport, Conn.

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West Virginians Set
\$1.6 Million Budget

N-CD
(W.Va.)

CEREDO, W.Va. (BP)--Messengers to the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists annual meeting adopted a record \$1.6 million budget for 1988 and re-elected their president during sessions at First Baptist Church of Ceredo Nov. 6-7.

Members of West Virginia Southern Baptist churches will contribute \$703,000 -- 44 percent -- of the budget. Of that portion, \$179,280 -- 25.5 percent -- will support national and global missions causes through the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program unified budget.

Of the remainder of the budget, \$898,802 -- or about 56 percent of the total -- is to be received from the SBC Home Mission Board, SBC Sunday School Board and other Southern Baptist agencies. This contribution represents a 5.3 percent increase over allocations from those agencies in the current budget.

Lawton Searcy, pastor of Highlawn Baptist Church in Huntington, was re-elected without opposition to a second one-year term as state convention president. Other officers are David Dockery, pastor of Fairlawn Baptist Church in Parkersburg, first vice president; Olin Phillips, pastor of Rowlesburg Baptist Church in Rowlesburg, second vice president; and Robert Keown, a layman from Riverwood Baptist Church in St. Albans, secretary.

Mesengers also adopted without discussion a resolution strengthening the convention's stated stand against abortion. A 1986 resolution voiced opposition to abortion for any reason other than to save the life of the mother. The new resolution expressed opposition to "the cruel, murderous holocaust of abortion on demand, except in cases where the life of the mother is in clear and definite danger."

Another resolution, also approved without discussion, commended the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union for its work in mission support and education and stated messengers' desire to join with WMU in celebrating its centennial in 1988.

The meeting was attended by 199 messengers and 94 visitors. The 18th annual meeting of the West Virginia convention will be held at First Baptist Church of Fairlee, Nov. 4-5.

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Hispanic Ministers Form
National SBC Fellowship

N-HMB
By Joe Westbury

Baptist Press
11/10/87

ATLANTA (BP)--Hispanic Baptist leaders from across the nation have formed a fellowship to bring the nation's largest ethnic group into the mainstream of Southern Baptist life.

Known as the Southern Baptist Hispanic Ministers Conference, the new organization will encourage Hispanics to take more active roles in Baptist associations and state conventions. A second priority will be for the ministers to lead their churches to increased giving to the denomination's Cooperative Program unified budget.

The group also targeted leadership training and beginning new Hispanic churches as future priorities, said Bob Sena, pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Atlanta.

Membership will not be limited to pastors but will include all Hispanic ministers, Sena added. A \$12 annual membership fee will cover start-up costs and future mailings to the members.

The formation of the group emerged separately from a three-day workshop where ethnic leaders explored ways to develop new churches and strengthen existing congregations. The meeting was sponsored by the language missions division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

The fellowship will not operate outside of Southern Baptist life but will be used to channel more pastors into an active role within the denomination, Sena stressed. The group will work with the board's language missions division in future planning sessions, he said.

In addition to adopting a constitution, the group elected a seven-member panel of officers to guide it through its first year.

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Daniel Sotelo, pastor of Templo Bautista in Fresno, Calif., was elected president. Other officers are Manuel Alonso of Holtsville, N.Y., first vice president; Manuel Rodriguez of San Antonio, Texas, president of the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas and pastor of Primera Harlandale, second vice president; Mario Vargas, pastor of First Spanish Baptist Church of Columbia, S.C., secretary; Heriberto Becerra of New York City, pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista Hispana de Manhattan, treasurer; and Joshua Grijalva of San Antonio, Texas, historian.

Sena was elected coordinator of the group.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanics are the nation's fastest-growing ethnic community, increasing at a rate five times greater than the rest of the nation. In the past seven years, the Hispanic population increased by 30 percent to 18.8 million members.

Central and South Americans emerged as the fastest-growing segment during that time, although Mexicans remained in the majority, with 63 percent of the Hispanic population.

During the meeting, Lonnie Chavez, language missions director for the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, called for an increase in the number of materials published in Spanish by the denomination.

"Until we begin developing materials for use among Hispanic congregations, we will not have much real growth in relation to our potential," Chavez said.

Chavez, from Fresno, reported California Hispanic gifts to the Cooperative Program are 37 percent higher this year than last year -- an increase he attributed to training Hispanic leaders with materials in their own language.

Thad Hamilton, associate director of mass evangelism for the board, encouraged the Hispanic leaders to take an active role in the upcoming "Here's Hope" simultaneous revivals. The revivals, to be sponsored by the board, are scheduled for March 18-April 28, 1990.

"We know where our future growth in the Southern Baptist Convention is going to come from, and it's going to come from ethnic congregations," Hamilton said.

Leaders of 17 Southern Baptist ethnic language groups have taken the lead in pledging their support for the revivals and are laying groundwork for the establishment of 18,000 new congregations by the year 2000.

In responding to that interest, the board's evangelism division has agreed to publish revival materials in four languages -- English, Spanish, Korean and Haitian -- and publish a limited amount of material for 16 other language groups.

A Spanish New Testament also will be included in the 400,000 marked New Testaments to be distributed for witness training prior to the revivals, Hamilton added.

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Missionaries Plan Future
In Uganda Despite AIDS, War

F-FMB
By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
11/10/87

KAMPALA, Uganda (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries are planning for the future in Uganda, despite increasing lawlessness and an AIDS epidemic that appears worse every day.

The 24 missionaries assigned to the eastern African nation have committed themselves to two \$200,000-plus projects -- one to supply Bibles for AIDS outreach seminars, the other to build housing units for mission personnel working in Kampala, the capital city. In addition, as every Baptist church reports growth, missionaries have begun a project to build a center for theological education in the city of Jinja.

At the same time, officials at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board are watching with concern as news periodically filters out about tension between Kenya and Uganda. In the past, missionaries assigned to Uganda have needed to cross for a time into Kenya when fighting near their homes has become too close for comfort. Relations between the two countries must be favorable so the border will remain open.

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Incidents of near anarchy and lawlessness have made it difficult to work inside Uganda. When missionaries travel, they meet roadblocks and security checks. One Southern Baptist missionary came home with his family on a leave of absence after he watched a local mob kill two people accused of robbery. Another family took an early furlough after their lives were threatened during a robbery.

In September, mission administrator John Faulkner, at the direction of Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks, spent time with each of the missionaries in Uganda, stressing the board will support any decision they made about their future as it relates to Uganda.

"I went to tell them Southern Baptists supported them in their willingness to stay and witness and work in these conditions, but also to say we support them if they choose to leave," said Faulkner, who directs missionary work in Eastern and Southern Africa.

"We don't encourage them to leave," he added. Baptists in Uganda have thanked the missionaries for staying, knowing that some of their own people have left. Faulkner laments that some Southern Baptists urge missionaries not to go to such a country as Uganda.

"But if we had taken that approach we would have been out of Uganda many of the last eight or 10 years. People say to missionaries, 'You shouldn't be living there; that's too dangerous.' That's like when Peter told the Lord he shouldn't go to Jerusalem. But missionaries get their direction from the Lord, not from Southern Baptists or from the Foreign Mission Board. We just support them as they carry out their commitment to the call."

Recently mission leaders in the United States have spoken with praise about missionaries in Uganda and held them up as models of missionary commitment, Faulkner said, noting, "Under such circumstances, the pressure is to stay longer than they need to."

Faulkner spoke privately with each missionary to allow freedom to respond openly. None expressed a need or desire to leave, but the missionaries know this option is open to them if they change their minds.

A new housing unit in Kampala would offer a measure of security for missionaries there. Although the trend has been to avoid housing missionaries together on compounds, it is necessary to do so in Kampala, Faulkner said. A fence will surround two duplex apartment buildings and two free-standing houses, and a guard will walk the property at all times, he added.

Lack of security, however, is only part of the problem in Uganda. Widespread news reports indicate whole villages in the nation have been wiped out by AIDS. World health experts expect AIDS to leave Uganda and much of the rest of Africa in chaos. Many expect up to 50 million people on the continent will die because of the malady by the year 2000. They say AIDS will change the course of African history, laying to waste the development of recent decades.

Missionaries have seized on the situation as an opportunity to spread the message of Christ. They have bought every Bible available in Uganda and now are looking elsewhere as they begin a campaign to educate everyone in the country about a Christian response to AIDS.

Missionary physician Rick Goodgame believes spiritual teaching will stem the spread of AIDS, but more importantly, it could present the gospel to as many as 1 million people reached in schools, factories and businesses, and at religious and political meetings.

Ugandans of many denominations are coming forward and volunteering to participate in this project, Goodgame said. Ugandan government officials have given it full support, he added.

During the seminars, participants are given a Bible with special printed inserts aimed at discussing marriage and morality, telling AIDS patients that eternal life is real and reminding Christians how to respond to hurting people.

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CORRECTION: In BP story dated 11/6/87 and titled "Battle Against Obscenity Is Winnable, Experts Say," please change the 16th paragraph to read:

Immediately after the call, the children began acting out the sexual acts they heard, and two of the boys had sexual intercourse with the boy's sister after she asked them to "touch her" like the women on the phone had described.

Thanks, Baptist Press