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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Vines seeks recommendations
for key SBC appointments

By Dan Martin

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Jerry Vines has issued an open letter seeking recommendations of people to be appointed to key committees to serve at the 1989 SBC annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nev.

In his letter to "all Southern Baptists, persons in elected positions and state convention executives," Vines said he is "beginning the process which will result in nominees for the 1989 Committee on Committees, Resolutions Committee, Credentials Committee and Tellers Committee."

According to the SBC constitution and bylaws, the convention president appoints the four key committees that will serve June 13-15, 1989, at the annual meeting in Las Vegas. The president appoints the Committee on Committees and Resolutions Committees "in conference with" the two vice presidents; the Credentials Committee "in consultation with" the vice presidents; and the Tellers Committee "in consultation" with the SBC registration secretary.

The Committee on Committees names the Committee on Nominations and any other committee not otherwise provided for; the Resolutions Committee deals with all resolutions introduced during the annual meeting; the Credentials Committee oversees registration and the Tellers Committee tabulates all votes taken at the convention.

Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., said he would welcome recommendations from "all Southern Baptists." He added: "My commitment is to find the best Southern Baptists for these committee appointments. I will make my appointments as prayerfully and carefully as possible."

He noted he has received the names of two people from Virginia nominated to serve on the SBC Committee on Committees by messengers to the annual meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

The BGAV, meeting Nov. 15-16, directed its own committee on boards and committees to nominate two people whom Virginians could ask Vines to appoint on his Committee on Committees on behalf of Virginia Baptists.

Vines responded to the Virginia action by saying: "I welcome recommendations from any area of our Southern Baptist life. Therefore, if the brothers and sisters in Virginia want to recommend someone to me, I will receive their recommendations along with any other names Virginia Baptists want to send to me."

He told Baptist Press he would not give the names sent by the BGAV any more weight than a recommendation sent by an individual Virginia Baptist.

"To do so would run the risk of connectionalism," he said. "As I understand it, we as Baptists do not believe that one Baptist entity is to exercise authority over another Baptist entity. By that we mean that a Baptist association cannot be dictated to by a Baptist convention or vice versa. All of these entities are independent and autonomous."

Vines, who was elected during the 1988 SBC annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, said he has conferred a number of times with First Vice President Darrell Robinson, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., and Second Vice President Rudy Hernandez, pastor of Metro Park Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas.

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"I will be seeking input from them several more times in the future. I am taking the (SBC) constitution seriously," Vines said.

Vines listed qualities he wants and does not want in people he appoints: "I want people who are supportive of our Southern Baptist work. I want people who are committed to our priority as Southern Baptists -- winning people to Christ. I am more interested in that they are witnessing people than that they are wealthy people.

"I am looking for committed Southern Baptists, not merely prominent Southern Baptists.

"I do not want people who have personal hostilities or grievances which would cause them to use a committee appointment as a platform for pushing their own agenda."

Vines asked that the recommendations be sent to him by Feb. 1, 1989, at First Baptist Church, 124 Ashley Street, Jacksonville, Fla. 32202. The envelopes should be designated on the lower left hand side, "SBC Committee Recommendation."

He asked people making nominations to include information on whether the nominee has served on any SBC committee or board previously, and whether anyone in the nominee's church currently is serving or previously has served.

He also asked that specific information be provided, including the full name of the nominee, correctly spelled; complete mailing address, including ZIP code; home and business telephones, including area code; whether the nominee is in a clergy or denominationally related post or is a layperson. The correct title or occupation of the nominee -- whether clergy or layperson -- should be included, as should the full business address and telephone number.

In addition, the recommendations should include the nominee's church affiliation, the church mailing address and telephone number, total church membership, amount the church gave through the Cooperative Program unified budget during the 1987-88 associational year and the percentage of the church budget the CP gifts represented.

Nominations also should include the number of baptisms in the church during the 1987-1988 associational year, whether the nominee plans to attend the SBC in Las Vegas, and the state convention in which the nominee lives.

The recommendations also should include the nominator's name, title, mailing address and home and business telephone numbers.

Copies of a form on which to submit nominations are available from Vines' church.

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Hungarian lay academy
slated to open in 1990

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
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BUDAPEST, Hungary (BP)--A key Hungarian official has given new assurances of his government's openness to a Baptist lay academy in Budapest for training bivocational pastors and other church workers in Eastern Europe.

The International Baptist Lay Academy in Budapest is scheduled to open in the summer of 1990 and will be affiliated with Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

Barna Sarkadi-Nagy, vice president of the Hungarian State Office for Church Affairs, "assured us the academy would be able to carry out freely its educational programs," said John David Hopper, president of the Ruschlikon seminary and a longtime Southern Baptist missionary in Europe. Hopper was part of a delegation that met with the official Nov. 22.

To assist the new academy, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board administrators will ask board trustees in December to assign a Southern Baptist couple to work in Hungary. The trustees' strategy committee first approved Foreign Mission Board participation in the academy last June.

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Hungarian pastor Laszlo Gerzsenyi has been named the academy's first director. He was selected Nov. 25 by the Ruschlikon seminary's executive board, which was assigned the task by the European Baptist Federation. The federation encompasses 26 Baptist bodies in Western and Eastern Europe.

Gerzsenyi leads a Baptist church in the Budapest suburb of Pecel and is a church history professor at Hungarian Baptist Seminary in Budapest. He received a doctor of ministry degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and for five years was pastor of a Hungarian Baptist congregation in Detroit.

Sarkadi-Nagy has given Baptist representatives a green light for opening the academy on two other occasions. He met with a delegation in Budapest last May that included Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks; G. Keith Parker, director of Southern Baptist work in Europe; and Janos Viczian, president of the Baptist Union of Hungary. And he met Nov. 4 in New York with Parker and Isam Ballenger, board vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

The academy will operate primarily during the summer and will utilize the Hungarian seminary's classrooms and sleeping quarters. The facility's overnight capacity is being expanded from 28 to 40.

Bivocational pastors and other church leaders throughout Eastern Europe will be able to enroll in conferences and training programs spanning several days to several weeks. Especially in the Soviet Union, Romania, Czechoslovakia and parts of Yugoslavia, a large majority of ministers are bivocational.

Because they earn their living from jobs outside their churches, with limited time off for vacation, many of these leaders have few opportunities for in-depth study of the Bible or for training in evangelism, discipleship, church growth, preaching, religious education or music ministry, according to Parker.

Beyond such training, the academy also will provide English-language instruction to help church leaders make greater use of books and publications in English.

Another key aim of the academy will be to assist Eastern European church leaders in developing their own materials and "their own indigenous approach to evangelism and church growth," Parker said.

The Hungarian government's openness to the Baptist academy, Parker said, stems in part from "glasnost" liberalizations initiated in the Soviet Union by Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

"The openness in all of Eastern Europe has immediate effects on the churches," he added. "They are able to allow us to be partners with them with less of the difficulties of the past."

Christians in some socialist countries now find it easier to build churches, publish religious materials and import Bibles and other books, Parker said.

And the new openness has allowed Eastern Europeans to venture into the global evangelization movement, he noted. Baptists in East Germany have received government permission to send two nurse-midwives to Sierra Leone. The two single missionaries began language study in October. A Hungarian woman also is working in the African country.

The academy is not Southern Baptists' first involvement with Hungarian Baptists, Parker pointed out. Six teams of Southern Baptist volunteers traveled to the Budapest seminary last summer to help construct a four-story building.

Southern Baptists first assisted Hungarian Baptists in 1921 by helping acquire property for a seminary. A girls' training school opened in 1937, and Southern Baptist missionaries were among the teachers. Both institutions' buildings were destroyed during World War II. After the war, Southern Baptists helped Hungarian Baptists acquire the current seminary property.

Musicians hear plans,
emphases for 1990-95

By Charles Willis

NASHVILLE (BP)--An emphasis on worship, the jubilee celebration of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church music department and publication of a new hymnal were subjects for discussion during the annual meeting of Southern Baptist church music leaders at the Sunday School Board Nov. 29-Dec. 2.

"Let's All Go to Church," a 1990-95 emphasis on worship, was presented to state leaders and their associates. Jointly sponsored by the board's church music and church administration departments, the emphasis is designed to enhance understanding of authentic worship and to increase worship attendance in churches.

PraiSing II, a celebration of the church music department's 50th anniversary and the Sunday School Board's 100th anniversary, will showcase the new "Baptist Hymnal" now being developed, leaders announced. State leaders were told the March 11-14, 1991, event will feature evening concerts at Nashville's Grand Ole Opry House, with daytime concerts in churches throughout the Nashville area.

A dozen committees have been appointed to plan the event, said Wesley Forbis, director of the church music department.

In a progress report on the hymnal, Forbis said 355 hymns from the 1975 "Baptist Hymnal" have been selected for inclusion by the hymnal committee.

Materials from the 1956 "Baptist Hymnal," the 1940 "Broadman Hymnal" and a wide range of other sources will be considered by the committee during an April meeting. More than 1,400 hymns, including new compositions, are logged into the computerized system for hymnal subcommittees to consider. Unsolicited hymn texts and tunes continue to be received for consideration.

Musicians on Mission, an emphasis on volunteer music missions that began in 1985, continues through 1990. Fred Kelly, Musicians on Mission coordinator in the church music department, said volunteers still are needed to work in churches in conjunction with the 1989 workshops in the Washington area, April 13-15, and in Denver, Sept. 28-30.

In their closing session, music leaders honored three church musicians for their contributions to associational, state and conventionwide music efforts. Gene Wright, minister of music at First Southern Baptist Church in Indianapolis, was honored, along with Charles Hughes, minister of music at Memorial Baptist Church in Tulsa, Okla., and Hugh McElrath, professor of church music at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

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Southern Seminary gets
gifts for new building

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Gifts from charitable foundations and financial institutions have helped Southern Baptist Theological Seminary secure more than \$10 million in cash and pledges for the Louisville, Ky., school's Campus Center Complex.

Four Louisville-based foundations, three local banks and the estate of a Louisville civic leader have contributed more than \$2 million for construction of the campus center, the seminary's largest capital expansion since the school moved to its present location from downtown Louisville in 1926.

Local foundations making contributions were the C. Edwin Gheens Foundation Inc., \$1.25 million; the J. Graham Brown Foundation, \$250,000; the V.V. Cooke Foundation, \$100,000; and the Mary and Barry Bingham Sr. Fund, \$100,000.

Gifts from Louisville banks included \$125,000 from First National Bank/First Kentucky National Co., \$100,000 from Liberty National Bancorp and \$60,000 from Citizens Fidelity Bank and Trust.

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The seminary also received \$100,000 from the estate of Jane Morton Norton.

The gifts were contributed as part of "Commitment '90: The Louisville Challenge," a three-year effort aimed at securing \$3.5 million for the campus center from the Louisville community.

The campus center, projected to cost \$15.9 million, will be built in three phases. Construction on the first phase of the center, which will house a comprehensive physical fitness and wellness facility, student commons area and lounges and a chapel, began in October and is expected to be completed by the summer of 1990.

The second phase will contain a post office, a medical clinic and administrative offices, and the third phase will include a student cafeteria and banquet and conference facilities.

In addition to local support, the seminary also has received a \$500,000 challenge grant from the Kresge Foundation of Troy, Mich. The grant is contingent on the seminary securing the funds necessary to complete the first two phases.

The funds secured through the Kresge Foundation and the Louisville effort augmented more than \$7 million raised through gifts from faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, friends of the seminary and bequests.

Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt noted the gifts are a significant step in providing a quality facility for students at Southern.

"We are excited about completing a project designed specifically for our students and their families," said Honeycutt. "The support we have already received for the new campus center is another indication of the health and vitality of Southern Seminary."

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CP falls to lowest
total in 37 months

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12/5/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--Receipts for the Southern Baptist Convention's unified budget fell to the lowest level in 37 months during November.

The national Cooperative Program received \$9,055,571, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee. The receipts were 4.73 percent below receipts for November 1987.

The Cooperative Program is the combined SBC budget that supports evangelistic, missionary, church-starting and educational ministries worldwide. Funds originate from church members, and they pass through congregations to state conventions and on to national and international causes.

November was the Cooperative Program's worst month since October 1985, Bennett reported. The budget has posted only three lower monthly totals in the past four years.

The November total was more than \$3 million -- or 25.37 percent -- below the average monthly total needed to reach the Cooperative Program's \$145.6 million goal for the 1988-89 fiscal year.

The budget's year-to-date total is \$20,007,186, Bennett said. That amount represents a 2.45 percent drop from the same period last year, while inflation currently hovers at about 4 percent -- a negative variance of more than 6 percent.

If Southern Baptists are to reach the Cooperative Program goal, the national budget now must receive an average of \$12.56 million for the 10 remaining months in the fiscal year, Bennett noted. However, the monthly total has topped that mark only three times in Cooperative Program history, during the month of January in 1986, 1987 and 1988.

"There is no question but that I must express my deep concern about our gifts to world missions through the Cooperative Program," Bennett said.

"At the same time, I admit to being a confirmed optimist. I live in hope. I believe that December will justify my optimism. Southern Baptists know the urgent mission needs and, I believe, will respond in a positive way."

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