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January 9, 1989

89-3

\$30.8 million given in '88
Annie Armstrong offering

By Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP)--Catch-up contributions in November and December pushed total Southern Baptist gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions to a record \$30.8 million at the end of 1988.

Even though the \$30,854,398 was a record for the offering, total gifts fell short of the \$37.5 million goal for 1988 and did not keep pace with a 4.5 percent inflation rate, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis noted.

Lewis announced the final tabulations during a meeting of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union executive board in Birmingham, Ala., in early January.

The \$30.8 million is an increase of \$611,192, or 2.02 percent, over the \$30.2 million given through the offering in 1987.

Lewis said he was pleased that Southern Baptists responded to an appeal in September to dig deeper into their pockets and catch up on the offering.

In September, Lewis said that if contributions continued at the same rate for the rest of the year, the board would receive an estimated \$30.4 million, an increase of only \$151,000, or 0.5 percent. That amount would have been the lowest percentage increase in Annie Armstrong Offering giving since 1970, when the offering dropped 1.6 percent, he said.

Instead, when final 1988 figures were tabulated, the 2 percent increase ranked the third-lowest in the last 25 years. Offering gifts decreased in 1970, and increased only 1.37 percent in 1967.

During the past 15 years, gifts through the special offering have increased an average of 11.3 percent each year, or 5.15 percent when adjusted for inflation, Lewis noted. The annual offering for home missions has not reached its goal since 1981.

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HMB begins year with new telephone number, logo

Baptist Press
1/9/89

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board began operations in 1989 with a new telephone number, a new logo, a new identity statement and a new staff structure.

The new telephone number is (404) 898-7000 and is operative now for a limited number of calls. The board's current switchboard number, (404) 873-4041, will continue to handle most calls until March, when a recording will notify callers of the new number.

The board's toll-free customer services number, (800) 634-2462, and the Home Missions Intercessory PrayerLine, (800) 554-PRAY, will remain unchanged.

Most "direct inward dial" numbers assigned to staff members on a 24-hour basis will remain the same, HMB leaders said. Callers who know a staff member's extension may dial (404) 898-7 plus the extension and reach the staff member at any time, even after the switchboard closes at 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
 Nashville, Tennessee

The board will publish a new direct inward dial directory of staff members later this year, after staff affected by reorganization move to new offices. The reorganization went into effect Jan. 1, but not all staff members' with new positions will move to new offices or get new telephone extensions.

Tied to implementation of the board's reorganization, Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis announced the board would begin using a new logo and identity statement on all letterheads and all other communications materials.

The new logo features the letters "HMB" in a bold typeface. The symbol of a cross is superimposed on the middle of the "M." Under the HMB logo are the words, "Home Mission Board, SBC," and the new identity statement, "Christ for Our Nation."

Lewis said the logo design has strong symbolism. "It is significant that the cross of Christ is central to our mission," he explained.

The new identity statement, "Christ for Our Nation," embraces everything the Home Mission Board does in evangelism, church starting, church growth and ministry -- the four priority areas of the board, Lewis added. The statement puts Christ first, and is reminiscent of a slogan used by the board in the 1960s and 1970s, "Our Land for Christ."

The logo and identity statement were developed by a public relations task force as part of a communications study for the board.

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Reproduction of logo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press

Accidents, opposition
dog Baptist relief work

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
1/9/89

GAZANKULU, South Africa (BP)--At 3 a.m., most people in the small South African town were asleep, including the attendant at the gas station.

But Mark Morris, a Southern Baptist missionary from Memphis, Tenn., didn't need gasoline. He was looking for water to flush a sliver of glass from his eye.

Less than an hour earlier, Morris and his family had been in an auto accident. His wife, Cindy, had swerved to avoid a rabbit, lost control of their car and spun off the road.

The windows on the right side of the car shattered when it struck a tree, spraying both adults, 4-year-old daughter Emily and 2-year-old Betsy with glass. Hitting the tree was terrifying, but it kept the car from overturning.

Theirs was the third auto accident in five months connected with a Baptist relief project designed to aid refugees from Mozambique.

"Sometimes," Morris said, "I get the feeling the devil doesn't like what we're doing in Gazankulu."

First Morris was forced off the road by another vehicle as he drove a truck used to deliver grain to refugees. The truck overturned and rolled three times.

When police arrived, they didn't even walk down the hill to look inside the truck cab before they reported a sure fatality, "because no one could be alive in that truck." But other than numerous bruises and a sore ankle entangled in the clutch pedal, Morris was uninjured.

Later the replacement truck was involved in an accident, but again no one was injured seriously.

Human problems also have plagued relief efforts.

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A local pastor charged the Baptists with starting a "religious war" and making people sit through "hours and hours" of sermons before giving them food. The furor died when the Baptists showed the logistical impossibility of preaching for "hours and hours" while distributing food and clothing at three refugee camps each day.

Then, less than two weeks after the opening of Xhurani Baptist Welcome Center -- where refugees who have walked for days to escape fighting in Mozambique rest and receive medical treatment before moving on to a camp -- soldiers from the South African Defense Force staged a raid and arrested seven refugees as suspected terrorists.

That problem also seems to have eased, and troops have conducted no raids in the months since.

"I guess it just shows we're doing some good if we are under so many attacks and God keeps protecting us," Morris said.

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Computers: powerful tools for world mission

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
1/9/89

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Could computers complete the evangelization of the world?

Not any more than television, radio or the printed word can, mission planners say. But information is power in the information age, and in human hands, the modern computer has become a powerful tool Christians are using to gather and share information about the world they want to evangelize.

In short, world evangelization demands world information.

"If you've got a global objective like Bold Mission Thrust (the plan to spread the gospel worldwide), you need global information," explains British missionary researcher David Barrett, who is working with Southern Baptist mission strategists. And that information must reach the missionaries, mission agencies and other Christian workers who can use it to take action, he adds.

That's why the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has established the World Evangelization Database, a computer databank. It includes specifics on about 3,000 unevangelized peoples, cities and countries in the world -- their size, location, language or dialect and the like.

The database also pinpoints crucial factors in each population's exposure to Christianity, such as the availability of translated Bibles or Scripture portions, the number of churches and trained disciples, the presence of foreign or indigenous missionaries and the so-called "R factor" -- the ratio of unevangelized people to church members within the group.

Collated and analyzed, the data enables researchers to develop a profile of an unreached people group. They can determine almost exactly how unevangelized the group is, allowing strategists and missionaries to make decisions about what must be done to reach the group. "It's very important that we approach each one very seriously and professionally," Barrett insists.

The database itself is anything but static. Researchers are adding, deleting or revising chunks of information as the world situation changes and new or previously unknown facts become available. Raw data constantly is monitored, updated and shaped into publishable material. Polished data is used by the mission board's Global Strategy Group for planning purposes and becomes available to missionaries, other mission agencies, researchers and scholars.

This is not an "ivory tower" operation, Foreign Mission Board researchers and administrators stress. They agree that the information is useless unless it is accurate, practical and accessible to missionaries and mission groups who can both use it and contribute to it.

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"In 1987 we began broadening our involvement with denominations that see themselves as 'Great Commission' Christians committed to global evangelization," explains board President R. Keith Parks. "We got together to see how we might do it more effectively, more quickly -- how we might enhance each other's efforts. We have begun a networking or sharing of mission information data. We want to avoid expending time and money to find out things some other group already knows and avoid duplication of efforts in one region to the neglect of unreached population segments elsewhere."

One of the Foreign Mission Board's top goals is to establish a mission data network to bolster its own database and make it accessible via computer to others who need it. Board staffers huddled with representatives from nearly 30 major U.S. mission organizations and denominations in Dallas last year to discuss how to set up the network.

The potential for evangelistic networking and cooperation is enormous, researchers say. They count some 3,800 missionary-sending agencies worldwide, with a total force of more than 260,000 missionaries from 200 countries. In addition, Christian institutions of various types number more than 98,000. Hundreds of these organizations are committed to the same goal Southern Baptists proclaim -- evangelization of the world by the end of this century.

Barrett believes past attempts to complete the Great Commission have failed because Christians failed to communicate and cooperate with each other. The current race of evangelization toward the year 2000 also may fail, he acknowledges.

But if it does, blame cannot fall on ignorance or lack of technology, he says. The information Christians need to complete the task is in hand, and so are the tools with which to share it.

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Successful ministries said to require dual responsibilities, communication By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press
1/9/89

BLOUNTSTOWN, Fla. (BP)--"Pastors need to know they have the support and confidence of church members to effectively lead a congregation," claims Rea Mangum, a north Florida pastor who has ministered to hurting pastors through the fellowship of his church.

Mangum decided several years ago to become involved in helping and healing Southern Baptist pastors who had been removed forcibly from their pastorates in Apalachee Baptist Association.

Just before Christmas, Mangum and the deacons of First Baptist Church of Blountstown sponsored the second annual fellowship for pastors, staff members, deacons and their wives from the 11 churches in Apalachee Association, site of about 20 forced terminations in the last 14 years.

This year's fellowship dinner, which featured remarks from Mangum and two deacons from his church, drew more than 100 people representing all the churches in the association.

Participants at the dinner were aware that mutual support between pastor and church members is not just theory at First Baptist of Blountstown. In August 1988, Mangum learned he had a tumor in the brain that had to be removed. Deacons and church members rallied around their pastor and his wife, presenting him a letter of support when he came out of the surgery.

In the letter, which Mangum read during the fellowship meeting, he was pledged the prayers and love of the church, assured of job security and financial support for medical expenses.

Mangum has made progress following the surgery and is working as much as he is able. He made the opening remarks at the fellowship dinner.

Mangum underscored communication and the need for a covenant between pastors and churches to spell out responsibilities and expectations from both viewpoints.

"Pastors and deacons are not adversaries, but servants of the Lord working together in the Lord's church," Mangum said. "Communication will solve a lot of problems and misunderstandings."

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Mangum acknowledged that some pastors who were terminated from their positions were irresponsible to the churches they had been called to serve. Even though the ministers acted inappropriately, Christians still are told to be compassionate, he said.

"If we can't help our own people, who can we help?" Mangum asked in an interview prior to the fellowship dinner. "We've been shooting our wounded. If we can't help our wounded, we might as well forget about winning lost souls because we are manufacturing lost souls in preachers' families."

"It's devastating to the families of pastors. I think we are going to have to help them in order to maintain our integrity."

Mangum became involved in ministering to terminated staff members a few years ago in response to requests for help from several who had been fired or forced to resign.

He turned to his deacons and church and asked for permission to minister to these ministers. Mangum found that pain is not limited to the terminated minister, but spills over heavily on the spouse and children, some of whom quit the church or rebel against any authority.

Because of his long tenure in the area, Mangum said, he has been able to help some of the churches in the small association begin to understand the proper relationship between the pastor and the church. He has been direct in some instances and gentle in others, but always urged dual responsibility and increased communication, he said.

To model this for leaders in neighboring churches, he asked Howard Johnson and Jim Yelvington, chairman and a past chairman of deacons at his church, to share their concepts of ministry at this year's meeting.

The deacons talked about sharing and accepting responsibility, being peacemakers, being humble, admitting mistakes, forgiving, communicating and serving -- principles they said had served their church well, especially in recent months.

Johnson and Yelvington also said give-and-take must be present in any church situation. The deacons and Mangum agreed times come when everyone must admit mistakes and assess the situation if ministries are to progress.

Deacons need to be servant-ministers who are peacemakers in the church, Johnson said: "Say things to soften the punch rather than intensifying it. Be tightmouthed sometimes and just listen, and you can build harmony instead of causing disagreement."

Yelvington gave a prescription list of items to help the church leaders look toward better relations between pastors and themselves: Love the pastor, be available and be trustworthy, in confidentiality if necessary.

Church leaders also must communicate with the pastor honestly, to the point of discovering one or both are wrong, he said. Then be forgiving and forgetful and move on together in ministry, he added.

In his closing remarks at the fellowship, Mangum said what Southern Baptists are all about is "serving the Lord with excellence. . ."

"We're going to have to win people to the Lord. . . That's our responsibility, and we can't pass it along. We need to talk about cooperating instead of competing, communicating instead of arguing and reaching out instead of serving only ourselves."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB Bureau of Baptist Press

Lewis urges students
to develop 20-20 vision

GRACEVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Southern Baptist Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis urged graduating college students to develop "20-20 vision" for the kind of world they would like to see in the year 2020.

Lewis delivered the winter commencement address at Florida Baptist Theological College, formerly Baptist Bible Insitutue, in Graceville.

Recalling that he graduated from college 32 years ago, Lewis urged today's graduates to dream about the kind of world they would like to see in 32 years, and to start now in trying to change and improve the world.

Lewis, 52, said it was hard to imagine the changes that have taken place in the world in 32 years.

Likewise, the things today's graduating students will be dealing with in the year 2020 may be imponderable compared to the issues that greeted his graduating class from the University of Missouri in 1956, Lewis said.

"What kind of world would it be if every person were just like me?" he urged the students to ask themselves. "What do you want the world to be for your children, and for the children of Nairobi, Pakistan, Russia, Iran and Mexico?"

Lewis said he has three major dreams for the world in the next 32 years -- a major spiritual awakening, dignified and adequate living conditions for all people and world peace.

The need for spiritual awakening has escalated to critical proportions, Lewis said. He noted he prays the 1990 Southern Baptist simultaneous revivals, called "Here's Hope, Jesus Cares for You," could be the spark that will ignite the consuming flame of spiritual awakening and sweep across America and around the world.

"I dream of a world in which there is no more hunger, no more homeless, no neglected elderly, no more violence, crime, child abuse, no more fear of walking a city street alone, no more drug traffickers, no more abortion," Lewis said.

The 2020 world would receive no greater gift than that world peace should finally come, Lewis said, adding, "But if the dream is to become a reality, there is unbelievable work to do."

These dreams for the future will not become a reality unless graduates believe they are possible, pray for them, and sacrifice for them, he said: "But if we do, I believe it can happen, and will -- for you, for your children and grandchildren.

"I hope to be there cheering at age 85 when the grand world of 2020 is ushered in."

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PBAC receives
\$2 million trust

Baptist Press
1/9/89

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP)--Palm Beach Atlantic College in West Palm Beach, Fla., has received an anonymous trust of \$2 million, announced President Claude H. Rhea.

The trust has been established to provide about \$165,000 per year for 20 years for the school's annual fund, Rhea said. It will support scholarships, provide maintenance for the buildings, improve teaching facilities and provide future staff and faculty salaries, among other provisions, he said.

The Baptist school also received a \$150,000 anonymous donation, designated for operating funds, he said.

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