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November 17, 1989

89-165

Alabama twister claims
Southern Baptists' lives

By Jim Burton

N-CO
(B'hood)

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (BP)--At least four Southern Baptists have been identified among the estimated 20 fatalities resulting from an afternoon tornado that left a two-mile portion of Huntsville, Ala., looking like a battle zone.

"This is one of the most terrible devastations you can imagine," said Harold Chandler, director of missions for Madison Baptist Association. "It looks a scene from World War II where a bomb was dropped. Cars are crumpled. Sometimes there will be as many as four vehicles that are stacked up."

Southern Baptist victims identified so far are Della Buford, Jackson Way Baptist Church; Louise McCord, Southside Baptist Church; and Mary Matheny and Karen Jones, Whitesburg Baptist Church.

The same storm system that spawned tornadoes in Alabama and Georgia claimed the life of Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission trustee Stan Riehn, 38, of Oak Ridge, Mo., Nov. 5. He was killed in a traffic accident as heavy rains moved through southeastern Missouri.

When the storm system moved into the Southeast, the tornado struck about four hours after the Alabama Baptist Convention adjourned its annual meeting at First Baptist Church of Huntsville.

The Alabama Baptist Brotherhood department's disaster relief feeding unit was in Huntsville for the convention and has been activated to feed support personnel, said Tommy Puckett, state Brotherhood director.

About 250 meals were served Nov. 16 and the morning of Nov. 17, feeding police, Red Cross volunteers, utility workers, National Guardsmen and others. Puckett estimated the feeding unit will remain on site through Nov. 19, preparing food provided by the North Alabama Food Bank.

Southern Baptist disaster relief cleanup crews were not immediately requested by local officials. According to John Davis, Madison Baptist Association minister of education and ministries, the National Guard was using heavy equipment in the affected areas to remove debris, and Redstone Arsenal Army personnel were scheduled to continue the cleanup after the heavy equipment is gone.

Most Southern Baptist churches contacted by Baptist Press reported damage to members' homes.

"We have three or four church-member families that have homes that were severely damaged," said Alvin Pelton, administrator at First Baptist Church. "Most are two stories with the top story completely gone."

Among the homes damaged was that of Allen Walworth, pastor of First Baptist Church. His wife was home when the storm hit but was not injured.

"What we are finding with our folks is a number of miraculous stories of people getting into bathrooms and closets as the storm hit," said Pelton.

First Baptist has served as an information center, relaying information to out-of-town relatives of church members.

Whitesburg Baptist Church was the closest Southern Baptist church to the major areas of damage. It was without power Nov. 16, with the exception of its fellowship hall and kitchen. Church Secretary Beverly Jones said the fellowship hall was used as a day shelter for workers to get food, coffee and to keep warm.

Hardees, a fast food chain, is bringing breakfast food to the church to feed workers. The church is distributing the food into the community to residents, said Jo Karr, publications, publicity and special events coordinator for Whitesburg Church.

Whitesburg Pastor Jimmy Jackson said many church members lost their homes, and several are in the hospital.

"Our people are ministering," said Jackson. "They are taking folks into their homes. The people have just overwhelmed the ones who are hurting. They are there doing everything that needs to be done."

Dick Thomassian, Whitesburg's associate pastor and minister of music, was shopping in Westbury Mall with his wife when the storm hit. They were among few survivors at the shopping center.

"The Lord just spared their lives," said Jackson.

The storm system moved into Georgia and caused several tornadoes around 7:30 p.m. Eastern time, around Atlanta. Albert Mohler, editor of the Georgia Baptist Christian Index, said his automobile was totaled when a tree fell on it at his home in Gwinnett County, east of Atlanta.

A tornado also ripped through a mobile home park in Palmetto. At least 12 Southern Baptist churches have responded with clothing, food and blankets.

James Harper, area administrator for Georgia Baptist Children's Home at Palmetto, said a gymnasium and lodge building were offered to Red Cross as a shelter but were not used. The children's home is located about four miles from the mobile home park.

Bob Green, Georgia Baptist Men's director and disaster relief coordinator, said damage assessment is continuing.

"All of this is being impacted by our response to South Carolina," said Green. "We have had over 1,000 people go to South Carolina, and suddenly we have this storm to hit, and we are changing horses in midstream."

"We are putting together a major effort for Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving in the Sullivan Island and Isle of Palms off the Charleston (S.C.) coast. We are trying to respond there and in the Caribbean and in California. Our people are pushed to the limit."

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NOTE TO EDITORS: The following story replaces a Nov. 16 (BP) story titled "Missionaries in El Salvador calm as fighting continues":

Murders concern missionaries;
plan to stay in El Salvador

By Donald Martin

N-FMB

Baptist Press
11/17/89

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (BP)--The brutal murders Nov. 16 of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter in San Salvador, along with death threats to Lutheran missionaries in the area, deeply concern Southern Baptist missionaries in El Salvador, according to mission official Joe Bruce.

But the three missionary families have not changed their intention to remain in the country, Bruce said Nov. 17.

"As far as they know, there have not been any threats against any Baptist churches or the Baptist leadership," said Bruce, area director of Southern Baptist work in Middle America.

Victor Mercado, Latin America area secretary for American Baptist Churches/U.S.A., added that his denomination has no plans to urge the four American Baptist missionaries to leave El Salvador.

"At this point they are all staying," Mercado said. "They will be the ones to make any decisions about leaving. We are staying in contact with them. They will let us know if they feel things have changed."

As fighting continues, so does the climb in the number of dead and wounded. At least 800 people have died and more than 1,600 have been wounded.

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Before they knew of the Jesuits' killings, the Southern Baptist missionaries said they felt safe, as government troops gained an apparent advantage over leftist rebels in the latest fighting of the country's decade-old civil war.

"It's quite an adjustment to hear bombs go off," said missionary John (Rusty) Alums. "We hear them every night now, so it's not comfortable, and yet we realize that it's not going on right in front of us like it was last Saturday night."

Alums and his wife, Peggy, and missionaries Bill and Libby Stennett live in San Salvador, the capital, where a 6 p.m.-6 a.m. curfew was in effect for most of the city. Some areas were under a 24-hour curfew, as rebels and government forces battled house-to-house. Alums is from Mobile, Ala. Mrs. Alums is from Birmingham, Ala. The Stennetts are from Richmond, Va., and Washington, D.C., respectively.

The Alumses live near the Salvadoran president's home where rebels attacked Nov. 11. Attackers opened fire in the street in front of their home and threw hand grenades and other explosives. The Alumses and their children -- son John Jr., 15, and daughter Kelly, 6 -- took cover in the stairwell of their two-story townhouse. A rebel was killed in front of the house; the neighborhood night watchman also was killed.

Alums and Stennett were able to go to the Baptist bookstore in San Salvador Nov. 16, although the store is not open. Both bookstores in the capital area are undamaged. They had no information about possible church damage in the area.

Alums said they are talking daily by telephone to missionaries Sam and Margaret Drummond in the city of Santa Ana, where the situation is much calmer. The Drummonds, of Camden, Tenn., and Louisville, Ky., respectively, have even been able to open the Baptist bookstore in their city.

Food supplies are adequate in San Salvador's central market, Alums said, but in the northern and eastern parts of the city, where fighting is the heaviest, some shortages may exist.

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Allen elected new chairman
of Baptists Committed to SBC

By Ken Camp

N-Texas

Baptist Press
11/17/89

DALLAS (BP)--Jimmy Allen, former president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, was elected chairman of Baptists Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention by the organization's 18-member executive committee on Nov. 16.

Allen succeeds Winfred Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, who became honorary chairman of Baptists Committed and will continue to serve on the group's executive committee.

Assuming the reins of the self-proclaimed "mainstream centrist" organization at a press conference at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, Allen expressed his desire to help bring Southern Baptists "back to the center of the road" in a renewed commitment to missions.

"The last 10 years have been unhappy times for Southern Baptists," he said. "We need to come back to the central kind of commitments to missions, evangelism and ministry which have held us together. It is my hope we can see a great coming together of Southern Baptists around our historic positions."

Allen, 62, who now is president of Faith and Family Communications Inc. in Fort Worth, Texas, a religious television network and home shopping service, said he purposely kept a "low profile" during his time at the helm of the RTVC and the ACTS network.

"I felt that as I was working with the agency board and trying to fashion this new network (ACTS), that I didn't want it to become the center of the political controversy. It was not stabilized enough as a new enterprise for that. So I initiated to my board a statement that I was going to take a low profile," he said.

Allen expressed sadness concerning the "harassment" of SBC agency heads and the expediency of them remaining silent about the on-going controversy within the convention.

"I think its a lamentable fact that the days when our agency heads were leaders in the Baptist enterprise -- the days when we could elect agency heads as presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention and look to them for leadership -- have now become historic relics," he said.

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"We have rather systematically stripped ourselves of some of the finest voices that we might have to lead us when we have decided to treat agency leadership as hired hands instead of as leaders."

Allen said Southern Baptists need to "affirm the Bible by living the Bible" and by rejecting the use of "secular political methods and power tactics sowing seeds of distrust within a family of faith."

He drew a line of distinction between the political methods of the last decade -- which he compared to the J. Frank Norris Fundamentalist movement of the 1930s -- and the informal politicking of years immediately prior to 1979.

"Politics before were informal networks of relationships that were being gathered with a basic common trust that whoever was elected was trustworthy to do the work that the family was called to do in missions and evangelism," Allen said.

"What's happened with the secular political method is that people have been organized around distrust."

Allen underscored his personal support for the declared candidacy of Dan Vestal, pastor of Dunwoody Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta noting: "I decided to support Dan Vestal long before I came into Baptists Committed.

"I believe it is safe to say that Baptists Committed will endorse him. We're in kind of a position where he is not endorsing us, but we are endorsing him. He's his own man. He does his own thinking, and we like that. We think that's the kind of man we ought to elect."

Allen said that the centrist movement is "not monolithic" and he would offer no speculation as to future actions of other groups, such as the Southern Baptist Alliance.

Moore, 69, who has announced his retirement from the Amarillo pastorate effective Dec. 31., denied the on-going rumor that he is being groomed as executive director of Baptists Committed. However, he expressed his continued support of the organization and its goals.

Baptists Committed currently has no executive director, but it does maintain two salaried staff positions from its Houston headquarters: David Currie as field coordinator and Ceita Bottorff as project director.

Allen offered no figures as to the organization's projected budget.

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Child-care legislation
stalled until next year

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press
11/17/89

WASHINGTON (BP)--Action on proposed federal child-care legislation has been postponed until next year, congressional sources have said.

The House Democratic leadership was unable to work out a compromise between members of two House committees on legislation being considered by a House-Senate conference committee.

In October, the House passed a comprehensive child-care measure that included plans designed by the Education, and Labor and the Ways and Means committees. At that time, sponsors of the two plans were unable to agree on how to provide federal funding for child-care services.

The Labor and Education Committee supported establishing a new grant program to provide funds for day-care programs for children under age 13. The funding would have been distributed through the states, which in turn would have given the funds to eligible child-care providers.

But the Ways and Means Committee advocated increasing existing block grants to states. The grants would have been earmarked for child care and could not have been used to take the place of federal and state funds already being used for that purpose.

House leaders feared an amendment that was to be offered on the floor by Rep. Thomas J. Tauke, R-Iowa, in support of the block grant-approach would divide House Democrats and lead to a major floor fight, sources said.

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When Congress returns in January, the House is expected to resume efforts to work out a compromise child-care measure, which then will have to be reconciled with legislation already approved by the Senate.

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Sunday School Board's Trotter
dies during planning meeting

N-SSB

Baptist Press
11/17/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--Don Trotter, director of the Sunday school growth and administration department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, died Thursday, Nov. 16, after suffering an apparent heart attack during a project planning meeting.

Trotter, 60, marked his 25th anniversary with the Sunday School Board in September.

Trotter had been participating in a meeting with the Great Commission Project task force planning a Sunday school growth training project when he apparently suffered a heart attack during a break.

Hotel employees performed CPR until emergency personnel arrived. Trotter was pronounced dead at a Nashville hospital a short time later.

Harry Piland, director of the board's Sunday school division, said: "If ever I have known a man who genuinely cared about people, it was Don Trotter. I never heard him say a critical word about another person. He was a devoted and committed Christian."

Trotter had been director of the Sunday school growth and administration department since it was formed in March 1988. He previously was director of the Sunday school administration group from its creation in 1977.

He first joined the Sunday School Board as editor of special materials in the church training (now discipleship training) department in September 1964. He was supervisor of the adult/youth curriculum unit in the church training department and manager of the Sunday school department.

Before joining the Sunday School Board, he was director of education at Third Avenue Baptist Church and Highland Baptist Church, both in Louisville, Ky.

A native of Oklahoma, Trotter is a graduate of the University of Tulsa, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

He is survived by his widow, Joanne Watson Trotter; a son, Doug, a student at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.; and two daughters, Donna Ann, a student at the University of Tennessee Medical Center at Memphis; and Dara, a student at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro.

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Hungarian lay academy sets
teaching partnership with OBU

By Mike Creswell

N-FMB

Baptist Press
11/17/89

BUDAPEST, Hungary (BP)--The International Baptist Lay Academy in Hungary has named faculty members for its first classes next year and finalized a three-year teaching partnership with Oklahoma Baptist University.

The lay academy, which will provide instruction in the Bible and church-related topics to Baptists from most of Eastern Europe, is scheduled to open next July. It is being sponsored by the European Baptist Federation, the Baptist Theological Seminary in Switzerland and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Under the agreement reached in November, Oklahoma Baptist University will send three professors and one upper-class student to teach English at the academy next July. The agreement was announced Nov. 15 by Bob Agee, OBU president, and Errol Simmons, a Southern Baptist representative based in Budapest who is the academy's associate director.

The Oklahoma personnel will spend the first half of 1990 preparing to teach English as a second language, Agee said. Investment in the program is part of the university's continuing commitment to missions, he added.

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All students at the academy will begin studies with a two-week intensive course in English and later will study English two hours daily along with biblical studies, Simmons said. Some beginning students will study only English. The emphasis on English was requested by European Baptist Federation leaders. The 27-nation, multilingual European union uses English as its working language.

Teachers at the school's inaugural session in July will include some of European Baptists' best-known teachers and leaders, Simmons said. They will be George Beasley-Murray, former principal at Spurgeon's Theological College in England, teaching New Testament; Reg Harvey, general secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society in England, missions; Harry Moore, faculty member at Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, pastoral care; Wiard Popkes of Baptist Theological Seminary in Hamburg, West Germany, New Testament; and Hans Gunter Sachse, secretary of home missions and evangelism, East German Baptist Union, evangelism.

Sachse and other East German Baptists are expected to have an easier time going to Budapest following the adoption of less restrictive travel laws in their country, Simmons said. "The loosening of travel restrictions is encouraging to us," he added.

In another development, the Hungarian academy's sponsoring bodies signed a five-year agreement with the Baptist Union of Hungary giving the new school use of the two top floors of a new five-story building under construction on the campus of the union's seminary in Budapest, plus half the basement in an older building. The new building will include offices, classrooms and dormitory space for visiting faculty and students. The older building will house a library, reading room and language lab.

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Romanian Baptists convicted
of stealing to build church

By Art Toalston

N-FMB
Baptist Press
11/17/89

BUCHAREST, Romania (BP)--Four Baptists in Romania have been sentenced to "punishment at work" after being convicted of using stolen building materials to construct a church in the town of Comanesti, according to a report from Keston College.

Authorities in the town, located about 250 miles northeast of Bucharest, demolished the church building last May, claiming the congregation did not have proper authorization to build it.

Church leaders claim they had verbal permission from officials who were in office prior to the town's current officials, according to Keston, an English research institute monitoring religious affairs in communist countries.

Traian Grecu, president of the Baptist Union of Romania, confirmed in a telephone interview with European Baptist Press Service that sentences were given to the Baptist church members and three other individuals for "misappropriation of construction materials" from "socialist property."

"This means that (they) took some construction materials from their working places, from their factories. So, they misappropriated the materials" in using them to build the Baptist church, Grecu said.

Representatives of the U.S. and British embassies and the Romanian Baptist union's attorney observed the trial in October, Grecu said.

According to Keston College's news service, "The sentences of 'punishment at work' mean that those sentenced continue to work at their usual place of work but with part of their wages deducted by the state. Between 15 and 50 percent of a person's wages may be deducted." They also live under house arrest, Keston said.

Two of the four Baptists were given sentences several months longer than the maximum two years permitted under Romania's penal code, Keston reported. The other two were given sentences of one year.

The congregation's pastor, Ioan Chivoiu, was not charged with any crime. However, Keston reported that Chivoiu is being pressured by the government's Department of Cults and the Baptist union to move to another part of the country. The Comanesti controversy, according to a Zurich-based group called Christian Solidarity International, has caused concern among a number of Romanian lay pastors for their churches and personal welfare.

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In June, Keston reported the Romanian government was pressuring the Baptist union to revoke Chivoiu's license to preach. Vasile Talpos, former general secretary of the Baptist Union, responded, "The Baptist union always supports the congregations here. But when things are illegal, nothing can be done."

Chivoiu and four members of the church were arrested, reportedly beaten and held for five days after the church building was destroyed in May, Keston reported. The institute did not give any details of the alleged beatings.

Grecu said demolition of Romanian churches built without proper authorization is rare. The last such incident, three years ago, involved a Baptist congregation in the town of Bistrita. "After that, the people received the permit to build and now they will dedicate the building next month," Grecu said.

The Comanesti church was demolished because the congregation "didn't have the license to build" and because "the building was not on a church site. It was on a personal property" involving a house that was being expanded into a church, Grecu explained.

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Stanley Crabb, director of European Baptist Press Service, contributed to this story.

Mississippi Baptists
oppose state lottery

By Tim Nicholas

N- (MISS)

Baptist Press
11/17/89

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Messengers to the annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention in Jackson, Nov. 13-15, elected a Jackson pastor as president and passed a 1990 budget of \$19.5 million without discussion or opposition.

Messengers also approved resolutions opposing a proposed state lottery; supporting Baptist Press, the news service of the Southern Baptist Convention; and keeping a hands-off position concerning the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a religious liberty/separation of church and state coalition of nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada.

The convention, which took place at the recently remodeled facilities of First Baptist Church of Jackson, drew 1,892 messengers, 29 fewer than the previous year.

Eddie Hamilton, pastor of Oak Forest Baptist Church of Jackson, was elected president of the convention in a runoff against Tupelo businessman Larry Otis, a member of Calvary Baptist Church.

Otis later was elected first vice president, defeating Hardy Denham, pastor of North Long Beach Baptist Church. Talmadge Smith, of Brookhaven, director of associational missions for the Copiah and Lincoln associations, was elected unopposed as second vice president.

The budget is \$19,581,130 with 36.53 percent -- \$7,152,987 -- going to support the worldwide missionary, evangelistic and educational causes of the SBC. This is a half percent increase over the amount given in 1989, based on a 1989 budget which was revised downward by \$1 million in August because receipts did not reach budget projections.

A line item of \$115,095 in the budget will go to Clarke College, which has operated in the red for most of the past 20 years. Clarke, a junior college in Newton, is operated by Mississippi College which receives all the funding for Clarke but keeps separate books.

Messengers heard a report that the day before the convention opened, financially-troubled William Carey College had secured a \$4.1 million loan which allows the college to reorganize its finances. The loan is tied to an agreement, requested by college trustees, for the money to be paid from funds allocated to the college by the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

In a resolution, messengers urged Mississippi Baptists to tell their legislators and governor of their opposition to "any attempt to funding through a state-operated lottery."

Mississippi Gov. Ray Mabus has linked an education reform proposal to an attempt to amend the Mississippi Constitution to allow gambling. Mabus would pay for the reforms with a state-backed lottery. The Governor requested and was refused time on the convention program to discuss his education proposal.

An amendment from the floor added that Mississippi Baptists should covenant to seek legitimate ways to raise revenue for education.

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A resolution supporting the Baptist Joint Committee survived a motion to table and then was replaced on the floor by one which called the BJC a "controversial entity" and resolved to "leave this matter in the hands of those who are charged with trying to resolve the conflicts."

Another resolution supporting Baptist Press survived a tabling motion. The resolution notes that "Baptists historically have encouraged and supported a free press and have rejected all efforts to intimidate the free press." It called for copies to be sent to members of the SBC Executive Committee.

The 1990 Mississippi Baptist Convention will be Nov. 13-14 at First Baptist Church, Jackson.

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William Carey College
gets \$4.1 million loan

By Tim Nicholas

N-(¹⁰)
(MISS.)

Baptist Press
11/17/89

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (BP)--William Carey College has secured a \$4.1 million loan from a consortium of Mississippi banks which, according to participants, will place the financially-troubled Hattiesburg-based college back on a sound financial base.

James Edwards, who was elected early in November to be president of the school, told the Mississippi Baptist Record, "We've achieved financial stability again at William Carey College."

The loan, signed Nov. 13, will be paid from money due to Carey from the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Instead of giving Carey its higher education funds from the state convention budget the convention board, acting on a request from Carey trustees, will write monthly checks to the lead bank in the consortium.

The convention board will pay \$34,166.67 monthly on the principal, plus a quarterly accumulated interest payment. The first quarter that amount will be \$103,000; the second, \$102,000; and a lesser amount through the life of the loan.

Technically, the convention board is simply assigning to the banks a portion of what the board would have paid Carey had the loan not been made. However, Carey needed the loan to refinance its operations.

Carey would otherwise receive about \$800,000 as its portion of Mississippi Baptist Convention funds.

The \$4.1 million will allow the college to pay off most existing notes, bonds and leases, past due accounts and notes, and up to \$900,000 in "borrowings and encroachments" made by Carey in the past. The borrowings and encroachments include spent endowment money and past money received from the convention for falsified student enrollment figures.

Edwards pointed to several reasons for the successful negotiation of the loan. He credited Mississippi Baptist Convention Board executive director-treasurer Bill Causey "and his leadership through the state with the banking community and our trustees."

Edwards said the schools vendors and creditors had been "patient with us in very significant ways." He added "the alumni and churches in the state have begun to support Carey in both tangible and intangible ways.

"The next step is to make all of Mississippi Baptists and our other constituents proud of Carey again and willing to support Carey with students and financially," he said.

Causey told the convention board meeting the morning before the signing that "William Carey College was actually bankrupt. Their creditors had said 'No, we cannot go farther.'" He said that with the signing of the loan, auditors said Carey would have a "clean audit."

Causey also told the board that the Carey trustees have agreed orally to begin looking at possible sale of dormitories on the Gulf Coast campus which are costing more than they are taking in, and possible sale of Carey's nursing program in New Orleans which is making a profit.

Should those two sales occur, said Causey, about \$2.5 million of the \$4.1 million loan could be paid back immediately, and "Carey will be better off than in the last 10 or 15 years."

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Quiet Florida convention
welcomes John Sullivan

By Barbara Denman

N-(CO)
(FLO.)

KISSIMMEE, Fla. (BP)--J.C. Mitchell, pastor of the 4,500-member First Baptist Church of Winter Park in metropolitan Orlando, was elected president of the Florida Baptist State Convention during its annual meeting Nov. 13-15 in nearby Kissimmee.

Throughout the three-day meeting, 2,262 participants welcomed John Sullivan, who was elected executive-director treasurer of the Florida convention in January.

In addition to Mitchell, presidential candidates were Jack Snell, pastor of Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church in Jacksonville, and Theresa Buss, a layperson from First Baptist Church of Vero Beach. For the past year, Snell has been chairman and Buss has been recording secretary of the State Board of Missions, the convention's 99-member executive body.

If Buss had won the election, she would have been the first woman president of the 128-year-old convention.

Mitchell, who garnered 60 percent of the vote, was nominated for the office by Daytona Beach pastor Bobby Welch, who was president in 1988. Welch told of seeing Mitchell and his wife march in the pro-life rally held before the special abortion session of the Florida legislature in October.

Mitchell later told reporters his "personal goal is to save lives through fighting abortion and save the souls of people through helping our convention intensify and enlarge their program of evangelism."

Mitchell said he is a member of the conservative movement, as well as the anti-abortion movement, within the Southern Baptist Convention. He said he looks forward to assisting Sullivan in the work of the convention.

In other election activity, two laypeople from Florida's Panhandle were elected vice presidents. Al Townsend of First Baptist Church of Niceville was the first incumbent in 45 years to be re-elected to a second consecutive term as first vice president.

Nancy Langford, wife of a Panama City pastor, was elected second vice president. Dale Kinsey, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Clermont, was tapped as recording secretary.

The 2,003 registered messengers unanimously passed a \$24,866,644 budget goal for 1990 and a \$23,024,670 basic budget. In making the budget recommendation, Miami pastor Robert Knight, chairman of the state board's budget and allocation committee, noted that 49.25 percent of the budget is allocated for national SBC causes; 50.75 percent is designated for statewide causes.

In a decision made at the 1988 state convention, messengers voted to back off of a 50/50 split of Cooperative Program unified budget funds, following several years of evenly dividing funds between SBC and state causes. The 1990 budget represents a 0.07 percent increase in SBC designations.

Knight asked for patience as Florida Baptists try to return to the 50/50 division of funds. "We have not made it to 50/50, but we're moving in the right direction," he said.

Business matters of the convention were routine. Few dissenting votes were cast on any resolutions or decisions. The nominations for boards, agencies and committees were accepted with little discussion. Every recommendation from the State Board of Missions passed unanimously.

"I want to commend you on your interest in peace," convention president Bill Billingsley of Hollywood told the messengers as he characterized the tone of the meeting. "Peace is a wonderful privilege."

Yet Billingsley admonished messengers to "listen with openness to other persons or there will never be peace."

"We need to wage peace," Billingsley said. He encouraged Florida Baptists to show "respect and appreciation for those with a different point of view."

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Messengers unanimously passed a resolution that called upon the U.S. Congress to restrict television advertisement and promotions of alcoholic beverages. The resolution also asks Congress to increase the federal excise tax on alcoholic beverages.

The next meeting of the Florida Baptist State Convention will be Nov. 12-14, 1990, in Tampa.

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Convention marked by close votes,
major decisions and resolutions

By R.G. Puckett

N-60
(NC)

Baptist Press
11/17/89

GREENSBORO, N.C. (BP)--Messengers to the 159th annual session of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina elected officers by narrow margins, passed three resolutions, defeated a name-change for Wingate College and mourned the death of one of its laymen.

W.T. Harris, 81, collapsed on the platform after delivering a appeal to the messengers to support the namechange for Wingate College. He was rushed to a hospital where he was pronounced dead at 1:20 p.m., about two hours after his speech. (See related story.)

Gene L. Watterson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Shelby and first vice president of the convention for the past two years, defeated two opponents by 21 votes to win the presidency on the first ballot.

Opposing Watterson were Eugene Ridley, pastor of Long Leaf Baptist Church in Wilmington and president of the 1989 state Pastors' Conference, and Billy H. Cline, pastor of Merrimon Avenue Baptist Church, in Asheville, and a trustee of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Watterson was endorsed by Friends of Missions, a group which describes itself as "mainstream Baptist." Cline was supported by Conservative Carolina Baptists, an organization formed in 1988 by M.O. Owens Jr., retired pastor in Gastonia, which includes such members Mark Corts, former state convention president and present chairman of the trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, and Coy Privette, former state convention president and head of the state's Christian Action League. Ridley was supported by Robert Tenery, pastor of Burkemont Baptist Church in Morganton and editor of the Southern Baptist Advocate newspaper, and his followers, who gather under the name of Baptists United.

For first vice president, W. Randall Lolley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Raleigh and former president of Southeastern Seminary, defeated James Johnson, pastor of West Asheville Baptist Church who said he was not identified with any group, and George McCotter, a Lillington layman who broke with Friends of Missions and joined with Conservative Carolina Baptists.

Bruce Whitaker, retired president of Chowan College, was elected second vice president. He defeated Joe Lennon, a layman from Wake Forest who is president of Christian Action League and a member of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, and Bea McRae, a layperson from Lumberton and former state Woman's Missionary Union president.

Messengers approved three of four resolutions:

A resolution requesting the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to reconsider the appointment of Katrina and Greg Pennington was defeated 1,648 to 1,227.

Steve Hardy, a Burlington pastor and FMB trustee, spoke against the resolution, insisting the rejection of the Penningtons was not because of her ordination or a protest lodged by an Oklahoma association where they serve. He cited other situations which were involved, and because they were of a "personal" nature, they could not be discussed in public without violating confidential information.

A resolution on race relations and cooperative ministries passed with minimal discussion but a resolution on divorced people as missionaries and one on academic freedom prompted debate and efforts to amend.

North Carolinian Collis Hill Charlton was abandoned and subsequently divorced by her husband. Both were missionaries to Brazil and the Foreign Mission Board refused to send her back even though the mission station requested her reappointment.

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"I cannot understand why the Foreign Mission Board says that since my husband abandoned me am no longer worthy to serve God on the mission field," she told the messengers. She said many women are abandoned in Brazil and five of nine marriages end in divorce. She denounced the policy that forbids divorced people to be appointed as missionaries, noting it was established in 1845 "at the time slavery was practiced."

An appeal was made to Foreign Mission Board trustees, but the resolution, which encouraged FMB and Home Mission Board trustees to re-evaluate their policies on divorced missionaries, was approved by voice vote.

The resolution on academic freedom, specifically aimed at Southeastern Seminary which has been in turmoil for more than two years, was approved after efforts to amend it failed. The resolution cited support for faculty, administrators and trustees who seek to preserve academic freedom and encouraged "every effort of peaceful resolution to the school's accreditation problems."

Several efforts to amend the proposed 1990 budget of \$29.3 million failed.

The base budget is \$27,250,000 with \$1,050,000, as a preferred item for the Ministers Expanded Church Annuity Plan and an extra challenge budget of \$1 million.

Of the base budget, the same dollar amount -- \$9,585,000 -- is designated for Southern Baptist Convention causes in 1990 as in 1989. The percentage to the SBC is 35.17 of the base budget, with a 50/50 division between church establishment in the state and the SBC if the \$1 million challenge phase is reached.

Four efforts to amend the budget failed: Take a portion of the Christian Life and Public Affairs Council budget and give it to pro-life forces in the state. Give the amount sent to the SBC which would go to its Public Affairs Committee to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in addition to the \$5,000 already earmarked as a line-item in the budget. Delete the portion of the funds sent to the SBC which is given to its Christian Life Commission. Assign the \$5,000 in the budget for the Baptist Joint Committee to ministers emergency reserve.

A proposal by Conservative Eastern Carolina Baptists to restore appointive powers of the convention president was defeated 2,198 to 2,058. During the 1988 convention, messengers approved by four votes a change in the bylaws that makes the president and two vice presidents a nominating committee to submit names to the convention; General Board for its approval for the membership of the Committee on Committees and the Committee on Enrollment.

Mark Cortis, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem and former convention president, presented a bylaw change which calls for associations to take action and present names to the state convention's nominating committee for positions on the General Board. Cortis' motion passed 2,101 to 2,087.

William E. Poe, a former president of the convention and chairman of the President's Task Force on Church Growth and Image, brought a progress report that acknowledged the leveling off of decline in growth and the unfavorable image of Baptists in the state because of the SBC's decade long controversy.

The convention registered 5,519 messengers and 294 visitors by the end of the second day. It was second in size to the 1987 convention also at Greensboro, which registered about 6,000 messengers and visitors.

The 1990 convention will be held in Winston-Salem Nov. 12-14.

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N.C. Baptists defeat
Wingate name change

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(N.C.)

Baptist Press
11/17/89

GREENSBORO, N.C. (BP)--By a 3-1 margin, North Carolina Baptists refused to change their constitution to allow trustees of Wingate College to name the school Cannon-Wingate University.

Messengers to the North Carolina Baptist annual meeting voted 3,426 to 1,063 against the change after two speeches against and for the new name.

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William Thomas Harris, founder of the Harris-Teeter grocery chain, collapsed on the platform and was pronounced dead about two hours later following his appeal to the messengers to sustain the change in name for the future growth and development of the school.

Carolyn Gaddy, a retired history teacher at the college, spoke against the name change. In her address, Gaddy supported her opposition to the name change, citing the way trustees had handled the action in a special session Jan. 24, 1989.

"This is the first time that a name change has come to the convention floor unblessed and unrecommended (by the General Board). It is a flawed recommendation which cries out for further consideration by the trustees at Wingate," she said.

"It takes a lot of nerve to stand up here after my good sister (Gaddy) got through," Harris began. He identified himself as a member of Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church in Charlotte and "one of those trustees who did all those bad things which this good lady has talked about.

"You know how we Baptists do things," he said. "I have stayed off the board a year and then been re-elected and come next January, I will have served 33 years on the Wingate board of trustees.

"We stand not for ourselves, but the boys and girls who are yet to come," Harris said after he praised "my good friend, Charles Cannon" for his generosity to Wingate with money which "was the lead money that saved Wingate College."

"I am for progress. ... You've got to improve what you have or you will die. You're either growing or dying ... That's the way of life," he added as he appealed to the messengers to "don't get carried away by what has been said."

He was stricken almost immediately and was pronounced dead at 1:20 p.m. of a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm.

Paul R. Corts, president of Wingate College, issued the following statement:

"Wingate College mourns the death of Mr. W.T. Harris. A dear personal friend, he loved Wingate College with all his heart.

"He would often say that after his church, Wingate College came first. He served the college devotedly as a trustee since the mid-1950s. He was a very faithful servant who gave total commitment to those causes in which he believed.

"The same kind of leadership he gave to the dynamic growth of Harris-Teeter Supermarkets, he gave to his volunteer work with Wingate College and so many other worthy causes.

"Mr. Harris was a very strong person, but tender and compassionate; a big man physically, his heart was even bigger.

"All those associated with the Wingate (College) family mourn the loss of this giant of a man."

Funeral services were held at Pritchard Memorial Church, Thursday, Nov. 16 at noon. The college leadership has declined any public statement on the convention's action regarding the name change until a time of respect has been paid to Harris.

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Oklahomans hike
CP percentage

By Sarah Zimmerman

N-10
(Okla.)

Baptist Press
11/17/89

TULSA, Okla. (BP)--Oklahoma Baptists approved a 0.25 percent increase in giving to Southern Baptist Convention causes during their annual meeting Nov. 13 -15 at Eastwood Baptist Church in Tulsa.

The 1990 budget calls for 44.25 percent, or \$7,301,250, of the state convention's \$16.5 million budget to be sent to SBC mission ministries. The remaining 55.75 percent will be used for state missions.

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Edgar Hallock, a retired missionary to Brazil now living in Norman, made a motion to increase giving to SBC causes by 0.5 percent rather than 0.25 percent of the budget. His motion was defeated after a member of the finance committee said increasing the SBC allocation by 0.25 percent already was stretching the budget "as far as it could possibly be stretched."

This is the third year Oklahoma has approved a \$16.5 million budget goal. The goal was not met in the previous two years.

The final day of the meeting, about 300 of the 1,362 registered messengers attended a "rally for life." Speakers called for church leaders to take an active role in influencing the state legislature to stronger pro-life legislation. "If we lose this one, we will descend into a new barbarism," said Richard Land, executive director-treasurer of the SBC Christian Life Commission said.

A resolution encouraging stronger pro-life laws was also passed, by convention messengers. Other resolutions supported the boycott of Mennen and Clorox products, asked for continued freedom in home schooling and encouraged the convention family care ministry department to consider providing housing and care for developmentally disabled adults.

Another resolution affirmed the "long-held Southern Baptist doctrine of the autonomy of local churches, separate from but in cooperation with, the local associations of Baptist churches."

A motion to amend the resolution to say that it did not refer to any recent events in Oklahoma was not approved, although those events were not specified.

All three of the convention's top officers were elected without opposition. Hoyt Aduddell, pastor of Wilmont Place Baptist Church in Oklahoma City was re-elected president. Anthony Jordan, pastor of Northwest Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, was re-elected first vice president. Bob Shoemake, of Henryetta, director of missions for North Canadian Baptist Association, was elected second vice president.

Next year's annual meeting will be held Nov. 12-14 at First Baptist Church of Moore.

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Kentuckians elect Messer;
launch evangelism effort

N-10
(Ky.)

Baptist Press
11/17/89

FRANKFORT, Ky. (BP)--Kentucky Baptists elected an Ashland pastor as president and launched statewide evangelistic effort during their annual meeting in Frankfort Nov. 14-16.

They also voted down a motion to do away with resolutions and adopted a statement of support for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention attracted 1,416 messengers and 690 guests to Farnham Dudgeon Civic Center. The event marked the first time the convention's annual meeting has been held outside the walls of a church.

Bill Messer, pastor of First Baptist Church of Ashland, was elected convention president. He defeated Terry Norris, a dentist from Owensboro.

Don Short, a vocational evangelist from Eddyville, was elected first vice president. Officers re-elected were Doris B. Yeiser, secretary, and G. Allen West, assistant secretary; both are retired denominational workers from Louisville.

The annual meeting theme, "Here's Hope. Jesus Cares for You," marked the launch of a year-long evangelistic effort designed to reach the commonwealth for Christ. The effort will include simultaneous evangelistic crusades in hundreds of congregations across the state next April.

Messengers defeated a motion to dispense with resolutions. Support for the motion noted that resolutions "represent the feelings of the majority of voters at a particular meeting at a particular time and in no way bind the body to any kind of action."

But messengers who opposed the motion expressed a desire to present a "strong Kentucky Baptist voice" on prevalent moral issues.

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They went on to approve resolutions on such topics as integrity and evangelism; Mid-Continent Bible College in Mayfield, Ky.; abortion; and child-care legislation.

The Baptist Joint Committee, a religious liberty organization comprised of nine Baptist denominations, was the focus of a report of a special study committee. That committee was created a year ago to determine the Kentucky convention's support for the agency, whose receipts from the Southern Baptist Convention have been reduced in recent years.

A motion presented by the committee commends the Baptist Joint Committee; urges the agency to be responsive to SBC church-and-state expressions; recommends that Cooperative Program unified budget funds not be designated to the BJC; offers to channel such designated funds; agrees to consider direct funding to the BJC and other funding options; and expresses to the SBC the Kentucky convention's concern about defunding the BJC.

Messengers defeated a motion to table the issue and an amendment to delete the reference to direct funding of the BJC. The committee's motion passed by about a 9-to-1 margin, observers said.

Also approved was a motion to study the criteria by which Kentucky Baptist churches qualify to send messengers to the convention's annual meeting. Existing criteria were set in 1888 and have not been reconsidered for 101 years.

The convention adopted a \$20,674,462 budget for 1990-91, a 1 percent increase over the current operating budget. The projected plan calls for an operational goal of almost \$17.9 million, a challenge section of \$1.3 million and \$1.48 million in estimated additional income.

SBC causes will receive 38.75 percent of the new budget, and Kentucky Baptist causes will get 61.25 percent. That distribution is the same as the current percentage split. If the challenge section is reached, 57.21 percent of that \$1.3 million will go to SBC causes.

The 1990 annual meeting will meet Nov. 13-14 in First Baptist Church of Paducah.

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Virginia Baptists hear
report on Memorial

By Beth Harris McMahon (Va.)

Baptist Press
11/17/89

SALEM, Va. (BP)--Messengers to the annual meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia adopted a report which calls for "substantial dialogue about serious matters" concerning the relationship between the BGAV and the Southern Baptist Convention.

A record number of messengers heard an interim report from the committee appointed to monitor response to the 1988 BGAV Memorial to the SBC. Some 2,700 messengers registered at the Nov. 14-15 meeting in Salem, breaking the 1988 attendance record of 2,655.

The Committee on the Denominational Crisis, appointed last January by President Jean Woodward of Richmond, recommended in its report that the BGAV nominate two people to suggest to the SBC president for appointment to the national Committee on Committees."

The President's Committee on Denominational Crisis, forerunner of the current committee, recommended two people for appointment last year, but SBC President Jerry Vines of Jacksonville, Fla., however, did not appoint them to the committee.

Nominated for consideration by Vines for appointment to the 1990 Committee on Committees are Neal T. Jones, pastor of Columbia Baptist Church in Falls Church and chairman of the crisis committee; and Woodward, 1988 BGAV president and ex officio crisis committee member.

Messengers adopted a proposal to amend the BGAV bylaws to make such nominations an annual assignment of the BGAV Committee on Boards and Committees.

Last year, Virginia Baptists adopted a "Memorial to the 1989 Southern Baptist Convention" which expressed concern about "the SBC's abandonment of consultation and consensus leadership" and calling for dialogue and a return to "principles of mutuality and consultation."

Jones presented the Memorial at the 1989 annual meeting of the SBC in Las Vegas. It was referred to a special subcommittee of the SBC Executive Committee, the SBC Liaison Committee. The liaison committee organized in September, but will not meet with the Virginia representative until Feb. 19, 1990.

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In its report, the BGAV Crisis Committee says the committee "continues to seek reconciliation and renewed cooperation" and "awaits an unfolding process of dialogue" with the SBC committee.

In a section addressed to the SBC Liaison Committee, the report calls for "substantial dialogue about serious matters which impact our joint efforts in cooperative ministries." It adds, "It is our hope that efforts to deal realistically with the broken fellowship and widespread distrust will be made."

The committee addressed a section to the churches of the BGAV, suggesting that Virginia Baptists "enter into a yearlong pilgrimage to reshape our cooperative missions giving plan."

It proposes discussions on a "comprehensive plan of cooperative missions giving." Such a plan may include, in addition to traditional methods of supporting SBC causes, options such as "custom support" (gifts to SBC and BGAV causes distributed according to a percentage selected by a church), "selective support" (gifts distributed as designated by a church), and "exclusive support" (gifts designated to a specific BGAV or SBC cause).

The report says "significant recommendations to the 1990 BGAV meeting will be formulated as a result of the discussions" and affirms the basic decision about mission support must be made by the church.

The report outlines other actions taken by the crisis committee since its appointment, including publishing a series of articles which affirm Baptist distinctives, entitled "On These Truths We Stand," in Virginia's Baptist state paper, the Religious Herald; and holding a series of hearings across the state to allow individuals to express concerns about the SBC controversy.

Messengers received a copy of "On These Truths We Stand" in booklet form. The report encourages action by the churches, including formation of denominational affairs committees; studies of the denominational situation; use of the booklet to conduct a churchwide study of what it means to be a Baptist; seeking to "assure and authenticate in the life of the church the right of dissent within the embrace of fellowship;" participation in associational state and national denominational meetings; and being faithful in financial support of world missions.

Presenting the report to messengers, Jones said, "We have sought not to be inflammatory, reactive, or presumptuous, but proactive. We need a vehicle to carry us into a new age as Virginia Baptists."

The report was received with little debate.

Acting on a suggestion in the report, messengers approved a resolution on "treatment of SBC agency leaders" which challenges trustees to "deal with agency heads in a Christ-like manner" and affirms "the leaders in our convention who have experienced emotional pain in recent months" and trustees "who have exercised their responsibility in a Christ-like manner."

The report also calls for continued support of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The 1990 state mission budget adopted by messengers includes a line item of \$7,500 for the BJC.

In the business session following the report, Michael Allen of Baptist Temple Church in Alexandria, made a motion that the BGAV request the crisis committee to initiate discussion with other state Baptist groups to prepare a contingency plan for gathering and disseminating news should Baptist Press be unable to do so in the future. The motion passed with no debate.

A later resolution, also adopted, expresses support for Baptist Press and opposes "any intimidation or threat" that endangers a free press for Baptists.

Messengers adopted a \$16.3 million 1990 budget which represents a one percent increase over the 1989 budget total, but is four percent more than anticipated 1989 receipts.

The budget makes the SBC annuity/protection plan a preferred item, meaning \$660,000 will be taken off the top of money going to SBC causes to allow the BGAV to match church staff members' contributions to the annuity plan.

"The budget committee agonized over this solution," said chairman y Wilson. "One solution considered was to reduce our missions giving by this amount. Another required keeping more Cooperative Program (the SBC's unified giving plan) money in our state. But we chose to make the annuity a preferred item." Percentage distributions after the \$660,000 remain the same, with 38 percent of the total budget going to support SBC causes.

Messengers attempted twice to amend the budget to maintain dollar amounts going to the Foreign and Home Mission boards at 1988 budget levels. Both were defeated.

Raymond Spence, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Richmond, was elected president; R. Stuart Carlton, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church of Salem, first vice president; and William L. Ross, pastor of Vinton Baptist Church of Vinton, second vice president.

A strategic planning report was adopted. Goals in the report include beginning 400 new churches and missions, doubling baptisms and achieving an increase of six percent annually in Cooperative Program giving to raise totals from the current \$16 million to \$30 million by 2000.

Resolutions included one saying government support of church-sponsored child-care facilities endangers the free exercise of religion; another opposing expansion of the Virginia lottery; and one calling for daily prayer for spiritual awakening.

Messengers discussed a report by the BGAV Christian Life Committee which encourages church members to influence proposed state Family Life Education curriculum by serving on local school board committees planning the curriculum. The curriculum addresses sex education as well as general family and moral values.

A motion opposing adoption of the report was voted down. Opponents of the report contended the curriculum materials do not promote abstinence strongly enough and do not decrease teen pregnancy rates.

The 1990 BGAV is scheduled Nov. 13-14 in Richmond.