



BAPTIST PRESS

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November 22, 1989

89-168

Baptists aid refugees
in El Salvador fighting

N-FMB

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (BP)--Most refugees housed in First Baptist Church of San Salvador and other temporary shelters are returning home, despite renewed fighting in El Salvador's capital city.

"I think the majority are going back to their homes," said Southern Baptist missionary Bill Stennett Nov. 22. "What they'll find there, I just don't know."

Stennett and his wife, Libby, of Richmond, Va., and Washington, respectively, spent several days aiding refugees at First Baptist Church. The church sheltered about 200 people who fled fighting in their neighborhoods, but only about 50 people remained by the end of the day Nov. 21.

The Stennetts and missionaries John (Rusty) and Peggy Alums have begun distributing food aid from an emergency fund set up by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Stennett said they will do so as long as necessary.

Salvadoran Baptists also have housed refugees in their churches, supported by \$10,000 from the Baptist World Alliance's Baptist World Aid fund. Request for aid was initiated by Carlos Sanchez, executive secretary of the Baptist Association of El Salvador, a member of the alliance.

The rebels' latest attack on the Sheraton Hotel in San Salvador, where dozens of foreigners, including eight U.S. Green Berets, were staying, has not raised new concerns for the missionaries' safety, Stennett said.

"If we take care, and if we don't go into areas where we shouldn't be, I don't think there will be many problems," he said. "You might always find yourself at the wrong spot at the wrong time, but right now we feel we have a very important ministry to perform."

The latest rebel offensive in the decade-old civil war has left at least 1,000 people dead since fighting started Nov. 11, according to press reports.

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Indiana Baptists report recovery
from earlier financial hardship

N-CO
(Ind.)

Baptist Press
11/22/89

KOKOMO, Ind. (BP)--Messengers from Southern Baptist churches across Indiana met for their 31st annual meeting Nov. 14-16 at Indian Heights Baptist Church in Kokomo.

Executive board Chairman Donald Moore, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Evansville, called the previous year a time of change and transition resulting in strengthened ministries.

Moore cited Controller Jo Lammey's report, which noted the SCBI is "now working with a budget that is both balanced and attainable" after a year of facing "major financial challenges."

In his report to the convention, SCBI Executive Director/Treasurer Mark Coppenger recalled "drastic reductions" which he proposed last year in order to "stay in the black in 1989."

"The cure for overspending was painful, but effective," he said.

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Coppenger later called upon the Hoosiers to take up the challenge of trusting God for miraculous intervention in a state that is "spiritually drying out."

Convention President David Wood, pastor of Floyds Knobs Baptist Church in Floyds Knobs, urged support for the Cooperative Program unified budget, noting: "There are those in our convention -- some on the left and some on the right -- threatening to no longer cooperate. They need to hear afresh the danger which that poses today."

Wood expressed his concern that "we will not reach four and one-half million lost people in Indiana if we are not willing to make the sacrifices God has asked us to make." He added: "The Cooperative Program is not sacred in that it is the only way we can work. But it is a plan that has been blessed of God."

Reflecting upon recent history of the entire denomination, Wood said he felt Southern Baptists are stronger now. "We have come through those times with a deeper understanding of what God has called us to be, and we have moved on," he said, noting benefits to missions endeavors.

Messengers unanimously approved a \$2,366,324 budget for 1990, with \$1,540,000 in budget funds expected to come from SCBI congregations. Most of the balance will come from the Southern Baptist Home Mission and Sunday School boards. The convention will forward 32 percent of its undesignated receipts for Southern Baptist Convention causes, the same percentage as this year.

A long-range plan designed to assist churches and associations in fulfilling Christ's Great Commission was passed with goals directed at evangelism, new work and church growth.

Among the resolutions passed by messengers were statements which:

- Expressed confidence in the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's capacity to represent Southern Baptists in Washington.
- Affirmed the need for accountability of Southern Baptist seminaries.
- Urged restraint in partisan denominational political activity by Southern Baptist agency heads.
- Applauded SBC President Jerry Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla.
- Urged a ban on advertising and promotion of alcoholic beverages on Indiana colleges and university campuses.
- Opposed legalization of casino gambling.
- Supported the Christian Life Commission's boycott of Mennen Co. and Clorox Corp. in connection with obscenities and violence on television.

John Greever, pastor of Pleasant Heights Baptist Church in Indianapolis, was elected president, with Clarence Brock, pastor of Coventry Baptist Church in Fort Wayne, as first vice president and Leroy Wagner, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Richmond, as second vice president.

The 1990 SCBI annual meeting will be Nov. 13-15 at Ross Baptist Church in Gary.

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Kansas-Nebraska Baptists
welcome 6 new churches

Baptist Press
11/22/89

N-CO
(K-N)

OMAHA, Neb. (BP)--Kansas-Nebraska Southern Baptists welcomed six new churches into their convention during their annual meeting Nov. 13-15.

The 44th annual meeting of the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists was held at Westside Baptist Church in Omaha, Neb. It drew 317 registered messengers, with total attendance of about 350.

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Messengers elected Dave Sellars, pastor of Northern Heights Baptist Church in Norfolk, Neb., as president. They chose Ken Emerson, pastor of Sherm Baptist Church in Wichita, Kan., as vice president.

Messengers also adopted a 1990 budget of \$3,255,672, a 0.3 percent decrease from the 1989 budget. The convention, which has about 300 congregations, is expected to raise \$1,735,934 for the budget, with the largest portion of the balance to come from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

The new budget will send 32 percent of undesignated receipts from the churches to Southern Baptist Convention causes. That figure is up from 31 percent of current receipts going to the SBC.

Kansas-Nebraska Executive Director R. Rex Lindsay said the new budget is people-oriented, noting 47.1 percent of the budget will go to field missionaries within the state.

Resolutions adopted by the messengers included:

-- Commendation to the executive director and state convention staff for effective and spiritual leadership.

-- Promotion of awareness of legislation relating to the sanctity of life.

-- Affirmation of church members who support the boycott of corporations that promote distasteful television programs.

-- Expression of appreciation and best wishes for M.C. and Vina Redman of North Platte, Neb., on the celebration of 75th wedding anniversary. They are pioneers of Calvary Baptist Church in North Platte and supporters of the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget.

The 1990 Kansas-Nebraska annual meeting will be held Nov. 12-14 at Tyler Road Baptist Church in Wichita, Kan.

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Wyoming Southern Baptists
pick Moon, extend partnership

N-CO
(Wyo.)

Baptist Press
11/22/89

CASPER, Wyo. (BP)--Messengers to the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting elected Bob Moon as president and approved an \$899,704 budget Nov. 15-16 at Boyd Avenue Baptist Church in Casper.

Moon is pastor of Lander Valley Baptist Church in Lander. Other officers are Fred Stroud, pastor of Mountain View Baptist Church in Casper, first vice president, and Wayne Fultz, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Rock Springs, second vice president.

Wyoming Southern Baptists' 68 churches and 22 missions expect to contribute \$287,000 to their budget. The state convention will send 25 percent of undesignated receipts from the churches to Southern Baptist Convention causes, up from 24.5 percent currently.

The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board will contribute most of the balance of the budget, an expected \$474,000. Other sources of income are to include the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, \$34,000, and the Alabama Baptist State Convention, \$12,000.

Messengers voted to extend the partnership between Alabama Baptists and Wyoming Baptists, which was to expire in 1990, through 1992.

They also received a report from the Wyoming convention's properties committee noting that Wyoming Baptists had received \$40,000 toward repayment of an \$80,000 interest-free loan from the Alabama convention. Alabama Baptists had agreed to forgive the \$40,000 balance of the loan if Wyoming Baptists raised \$40,000 by June 1, 1990.

The 1990 Wyoming convention will be held at First Baptist Church of Powell Nov. 14-15.

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Ohio Baptists approve
budget on split vote

N- (O)
(Ohio)

COLUMBUS, Ohio (BP)--The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, meeting in suburban Columbus, adopted a 1990 budget by a vote of 134 to 130.

The action was the first ballot vote on any business before the Ohio convention in at least 15 years, longtime observers said. A show-of-hands vote and a standing vote both were declared too close to call.

The \$5,476,614 budget allocates \$3,241,628 to support statewide ministries and \$2,234,986 for national and world ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention, including both undesignated and designated receipts.

The budget anticipates \$3,357,598 in undesignated receipts from nearly 600 congregations; \$988,000 from special offerings; \$845,076 from SBC agencies for jointly supported educational, mission and promotional uses; and lesser sources of revenue.

The budget originally was adopted during the pre-convention meeting of the state executive board. An earlier proposal, adopted at the executive board's summer meeting, had been drafted again following protests, particularly by people who objected to cutbacks in student ministries, which were restored.

Budget opponents did not offer a substitute. Opposition appeared to develop from supporters of allocations to evangelism, the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget and the state paper, where cutbacks were made.

The portion of undesignated receipts that are to go to SBC causes was cut from 42 percent in 1989 to 41 percent in 1990. Twelve issues of the Ohio Baptist Messenger newspaper were dropped, cutting frequency to twice per month. A staff position in evangelism remains unfilled.

Messengers protested all three cutbacks. A spokesperson for the executive board said it faced "a very difficult time" in making the reductions to meet anticipated income.

After the vote was announced, convention President Darrel Gabbard said the "ultimate solution to this problem is for there to be an increase in giving" through the churches in Ohio.

A motion to change the method of circulating the Ohio Baptist Messenger failed on a standing vote by an estimated 3-to-2 ratio.

The paper is sent to all Southern Baptist families in the state and underwritten by budget receipts. Before 1975, it was supported through church budgets.

Opponents to returning to church-budgeted circulation noted that prior to 1975 the convention subsidized 80 percent of the cost of the paper, while church income covered only 20 percent.

Two studies of state convention ministries will be conducted in 1990. One, voted by the convention executive board, will focus on Baptist student ministries. The other, voted two days later at the convention itself, will examine the full range of convention activities.

The latter calls for establishing priorities for convention work; examining budget allocations; realigning the 1991 budget according to priorities and resources; and recommending changes in programs and staff.

Gabbard, a Columbus-area pastor, was re-elected president without opposition, as were Lonnie R. Riley, a pastor from Carlisle and a former convention staff member, first vice president; and Ronald Ford, a bivocational pastor from Dayton, second vice president.

Resolutions urged restrictions on abortions and opposed tax-supported child care for church-sponsored facilities.

The convention drew 550 messengers and 461 guests.

The 1990 convention will be held Nov. 6-8 in the Cleveland suburb of Parma.

South Carolinians hold
2nd-largest convention

N-CD
(S.C.)

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--South Carolina Baptists in their second-largest convention in history elected a moderate president, adopted a budget of \$24.1 million and passed eight resolutions ranging from opposition to abortion to support for a free press.

Robert E. Cuttino, pastor of The Baptist Church of Beaufort and a former member of the Southern Baptist Convention's Peace Committee, won the presidency by 96 votes over conservative candidate Troy Gregg, pastor of First Baptist Church in Chesnee. The vote was 1,124 to 1,028.

The convention, which met in Columbia's Carolina Coliseum, attracted 3,119 messengers, topping last year's registration by three messengers. The record was set in 1965, when 3,148 messengers attended the convention in Greenville.

Elected first vice president was Jack Ellenburg, pastor of Riverland Hills Baptist Church in Columbia. Second vice president is Simpsonville businessman Greg Horton, who chaired a committee to update the convention's constitution.

The 1990 budget of \$24.1 million, up \$1 million from the current budget, designates 39.05 percent for the SBC causes while keeping 60.05 percent for South Carolina Baptist Convention causes. The budget reflects an increase of 0.05 percent for the SBC over the current budget.

In other business, three statements on abortion were refined into one resolution that declares, "There is a strong consensus in this convention that abortion on demand, abortion for convenience and abortion as birth control are contrary to the word of God, morality and nature."

The resolution says abortions should be permitted only when the life of the mother is in danger.

Other resolutions asked Congress to increase the federal excise tax on alcoholic beverages, urged opposition to child-care legislation that permits tax monies to flow directly into church-related child-care programs, gave support to "unhindered reporting of news of our Southern Baptist Convention," reaffirmed the principle that each Baptist church is related directly to each denominational body "without intervention or interference from any other body," called on legislators to oppose legalized gambling and encouraged churches to eliminate racism in local communities.

South Carolina Baptists will return to Columbia for their 1990 annual meeting, gathering Nov. 13-14 at Carolina Coliseum.

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CORRECTION: Please change the 20th paragraph of the BP story titled "Defying tradition, missionaries start church where Baptists failed before" to read:

"There is a real dearth of evangelical work ...

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Philippine president honors
missionary for farming work

N-FMB

Baptist Press
11/22/89

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Corazon Aquino of the Philippines has awarded Southern Baptist missionary Harold Watson a special citation for helping develop agriculture in her country.

Aquino presented the award in November to representatives of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board during a Washington luncheon sponsored by the Philippine American Foundation.

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Watson was one of three award recipients at the event, which recognized significant contributions to the Philippines by nongovernmental organizations. The others were the Rockefeller family, which has funded health and agricultural assistance in the Philippines since 1913, and CARE, which has operated there since 1949.

The citation recognized Watson for establishing the Baptist Rural Life Center, an agricultural training center on the Philippine island of Mindanao. It noted his leadership in developing Sloping Agricultural Land Technology to help the country's resource-poor farmers, and it cited the support he has received from Southern Baptists in the United States.

"The Rural Life Center provides a working model for alleviation of poverty for the poorest Filipino farm families subsisting on infertile upland soils," the citation said. "The government of the Philippines hereby expresses appreciation to the American members of the Baptist Church who have supported Reverend Watson's work in Mindanao and who have provided support for the establishment of the Rural Life Center."

Watson, an agriculturist from Brooklyn, Miss., moved to the Philippines about 25 years ago. He began battling the climate and a tradition of poor farming techniques in an attempt to turn denuded hillsides into thriving gardens. For years he tried and failed to grow food on a 47-acre demonstration farm in the island nation.

Then he and his Philippine assistants developed Sloping Agricultural Land Technology, a natural terracing plan that has formed the backbone for countless programs integrating farming technology, health, nutrition and faith. Its influence is visible throughout the Philippines and many parts of Asia.

Watson and the center have won numerous awards, including the Ramon Magsaysay Award for international understanding, considered by many people in Asia to be as prestigious as a Nobel Prize.

Guests at the Washington awards luncheon included officers and directors of multinational corporations, ambassadors and U.S. senators and representatives. After presenting the awards, Aquino praised the role U.S. nongovernmental organizations have played in the Philippines.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press