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89-177

Baptists to spend \$1 million  
to reach Eastern Europeans

By Art Toalston

N-FMB

**RICHMOND, Va. (BP)**--Sensing "extraordinary opportunities in Eastern Europe," the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has appropriated \$1 million to advance the gospel there.

"The funds are immediately available," Carl Johnson, vice president for finance, told board trustees in a special meeting two days prior to their Dec. 13 vote approving the allocation. The \$1 million will help Baptists in Eastern Europe evangelize their nations and to strengthen their churches during a time of sweeping political change across the continent.

The U.S. dollar has been stronger abroad than projections indicated at the outset of 1989, Johnson reported. Thus, about \$1 million remains in board funds originally earmarked for missionary cost-of-living supplements.

"The days in which we're living are some of the most momentous and cataclysmic ... in a long, long time," said Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks.

Freedom of religion, long forbidden by communist ideology, is among the guarantees in laws already adopted in Poland, promised in the Soviet Union and Hungary, broadly advocated in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, and now being sought even in Bulgaria by a fledgling reform movement. Only Romania and Albania have yet to bend to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's call for reforms. Yugoslavia's relative religious freedom dates back to the 1960s.

Possible uses of the \$1 million in Eastern Europe include the purchase and distribution of Bibles and the production of evangelistic and Christian education materials, said Isam Ballenger, vice president for the board's work in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

The Soviet Union alone needs between 40 million and 60 million Bibles, according to Bible society leaders.

The \$1 million also could help launch partnership projects in which Southern Baptist volunteers assist in evangelistic campaigns undertaken by the Baptists of Eastern Europe, Ballenger said. Foreign Mission Board officials will meet with Eastern European Baptist leaders to decide the best uses of the money.

The mission board's Global Strategy Group, composed of Parks and his key administrators, has assigned a four-member task force headed by Ballenger to study needs targeted by the Eastern Europeans. It will participate in a meeting sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance Jan. 22-23 in Dorfweil, West Germany. The task force plans to meet again with Eastern Europe's Baptist leaders in late February or early March.

Horace Hall, a Foreign Mission Board trustee and retired minister from Wilmington, N.C., urged that efforts to broaden evangelism in Eastern Europe begin as quickly as possible. "If we wait until we have all the answers, it's going to be too late," he said.

"There's got to be a little process time," replied trustee Chairman C. Mark Corts, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C. "But we also have to act with dispatch."

Parks acknowledged that many Southern Baptists want to respond immediately to the new climate in Eastern Europe. But "we don't want to make the mistake of doing 'the American thing' in Eastern Europe," he cautioned. For any new outreach to succeed, Eastern Europeans must regard it as "their program," he said.

No capital projects such as church buildings will be funded by the special appropriation, Ballenger said. The Foreign Mission Board budget, however, does include grants for various construction projects in the Eastern bloc. In the past, the board has helped renovate seminary buildings in Romania and construct new seminary facilities in East Germany, Hungary and Poland.

Also, Southern Baptists are doing more than sending money to advance the gospel in the Eastern bloc.

Southern Baptist workers assigned to the board's Eastern Europe Mission have increased to 10 in recent years, with some residing in Eastern bloc countries. They are involved in a range of cooperative endeavors with Baptists in most of these countries. The mission dates back to the late 1940s and is an outgrowth of Southern Baptist mission work in Eastern Europe from earlier in this century.

Among the mission's current members, one couple is working in Hungary to help launch the new International Baptist Lay Academy to provide theological training to church leaders from throughout Eastern Europe. Another worker resides in Yugoslavia and assists in theological education.

A new couple is being sought to work with Baptists in Moscow and other parts of the Soviet Union; another couple is needed to aid Polish Baptists.

Perhaps the best-known member of the Eastern Europe Mission has been John David Hopper, who worked with Baptist leaders throughout the Eastern bloc for nearly 20 years until he became president of Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, in 1988.

Another Foreign Mission Board assignment currently being filled entails Christian broadcasting to Romania. Southern Baptist workers and funds also have been involved in radio broadcasts into Albania and in theological training for pastors from various Eastern bloc countries through a special program, Summer Institute of Theological Education, each year at the Ruschlikon seminary.

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HMB trustees  
elect 5 staff

By Joe Westbury

*N-HMB*

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ATLANTA (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board elected five people to the Atlanta staff during their December executive committee meeting.

Jim Newton, director of news and information services for the past 10 years, was named director of public relations effective Jan. 1.

The Kingsville, Texas, native will succeed Kenneth Day, who is retiring following 29 years with the board. President Larry Lewis said Newton's current post is to be suspended indefinitely.

Newton is a former director of communications for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and was media director for the International Congress on World Evangelization last July in Manila, Philippines. He also was news director for Billy Graham's International Conferences for Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam in 1983 and 1986.

Before coming to the board, Newton was editor of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's World Mission Journal. He also was assistant director of Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, press representative for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and associate editor and business manager of The Bishop (Texas) News.

Board members also elected Bobby Eklund of the Baptist General Convention of Texas evangelism division as director of the church evangelism department.

Eklund, who supervises work with urban associations in the state, was pastor of Texas churches from 1952 to 1983 before joining the conventi n staff.

Marshall Chambers, director of evangelism for the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey since 1985, was elected associate director in the associational evangelism department.

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The Nacogdoches, Texas, native has been pastor of churches in Missouri and youth director for a church in Louisiana. He joined the Pennsylvania/South Jersey convention in 1982.

C. Nelson Tilton, assistant director in the metropolitan missions department, was elevated to associate director in the department.

Michael Bailey, national consultant for the board's volunteer department, was transferred to assistant director of the property department. Bailey has a special assignment in asbestos removal with some of the agency's 200 buildings it owns nationwide.

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Discipleship training called key  
to unlocking mission-minded churches      By Terri Lackey

N-SSB

Baptist Press  
12/13/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists have a history of looking "farther than their noses" when it comes to opportunities to minister, but that denominational distinctive now is becoming history, the leader of Southern Baptists' discipleship training program said.

"The history of Southern Baptists is to care," said Roy Edgemon, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship training department. "The distinctiveness of Southern Baptists is that they have always looked farther than their noses for missions opportunities"

However, Edgemon said, as discipleship training membership has declined, members of the denomination have lost sight of "what it means to be Southern Baptists."

And as a result, they are unable to call up the biblical commands of preaching, teaching, reaching, training, praying, tithing and discipling, Edgemon told state convention discipleship training directors meeting in Nashville Dec. 6-8.

"Our Baptist heritage means we have a love of the lost world. But we are creating churches without this heritage. We are creating churches that are not missions minded," said Edgemon, a former missionary to Japan.

With missions-minded churches on the decline, Edgemon said, Southern Baptists could lose out on a "golden opportunity" to achieve the Bold Mission Thrust campaign goal of sharing the gospel with every person in the world by the year 2000.

"The 1990s could be our greatest decade in all of history for the advancement of Christianity," he said, citing the new liberty of East Germans, glasnost in the Soviet Union and other freedoms being gained in Europe and other parts of the world.

"Doors are opening up all over the world," he said.

"We have talked so long about countries closing their doors on us, and suddenly God has opened up the world. We have got to seize this moment. This coming decade could be one of the most important in the history of Christianity."

Churches must be prepared to move out and take advantage of the missions opportunities created by this new openness, Edgemon said, noting, "We've got the resources and technology, and now we've got an open world to take the gospel to 3 billion people who have never heard it."

The role of discipleship training is to equip Southern Baptists to take on the mission of preaching, teaching, reaching, training and discipling, Edgemon said. But Southern Baptists are not taking advantage of the curriculum offered to teach them these Southern Baptist distinctives.

"We have self-centered, shallow and immature Christians who will never walk through that window of opportunity (of missions) unless they are discipled to be like Jesus Christ -- for discipleship is learning to be like Jesus Christ," Edgemon said. "Only people mature in their faith will ever be evangelistic."

"Southern Baptist churches are losing their identity, and we must not let this happen. A Southern Baptist church should be Southern Baptist -- and that means living in the heritage of evangelism and missions."

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Meanwhile, during their first year to meet under the name "discipleship training," Sunday School Board personnel and state directors discussed plans up to the year 2000. Plans included a new field service strategy to train and use a nationwide cadre of discipleship training consultants for starting, enlarging and improving programs in churches.

In addition to DiscipleALL, a plan to help all churches provide balanced discipleship training programs that involve all church members and their families, state directors heard of a new comprehensive six-year plan for discipleship training curriculum beginning in October 1991.

Also, discipleship training department personnel unveiled a new adult leader quarterly comparable in size and purpose to an adult Sunday school teacher's quarterly.

"The Baptist Adult Study Leader" is an answer to many requests from churches for additional content for adult group leaders, said Bill Stephens, curriculum development coordinator in the department.

The first issue of "The Baptist Adult Study Leader" will be for use October-December 1990, but copies will be distributed at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June in New Orleans and at discipleship training leadership conferences at Ridgecrest (N.C.) and Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist conference centers, Stephens said.

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Wingate College  
won't change name

N-CO

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WINGATE, N.C. (BP)--Wingate College will not change its name, trustees decided Dec. 7.

They previously had voted to change the name of the North Carolina Baptist school to Cannon-Wingate University. The new name would have honored the late Charles A. Cannon, a North Carolina Presbyterian businessman and benefactor of the college.

But North Carolina Baptists, attending their state convention's annual meeting in November, voted 3,426 to 1,063 not to change their constitution to allow trustees to change the name.

The trustees noted the opposition in a statement released after their meeting. It said:

"In response to the action of the North Carolina Baptist Convention expressed on Nov. 14, 1989, the board has reconsidered action taken earlier this year to rename Wingate College to Cannon-Wingate University and has decided that the name of the college shall remain Wingate College. ...

"The trustees of Wingate College regret that the North Carolina Baptist Convention did not make a constitutional change on Nov. 14, 1989, to accommodate the trustee action to rename the college. ... The trustees strongly feel that the name change was highly appropriate, would have served to recognize the confidence and vision that Charles A. Cannon had in Wingate College and its mission to educate our youth in a Christian manner and would have assisted the board in fulfilling its vision for the future of the institution."

The proposal to change the school's name grew out of "multi-year process of strategic planning to create a vision for the institution to move into the next century and into the college's second hundred years," the statement said. It thanked Wingate's students, faculty, alumni, trustees, friends and North Carolina Baptists "for their consideration of the trustee action to rename the college."

It also said: "During this year of controversy, our college enrolled one of its largest-ever freshman classes and enjoyed its most successful year in fund raising in the college's history. The board of trustees today authorized the funding for a new school of education to administer all undergraduate and graduate education programs of the college."

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New missionaries reflect  
on coming challenges

By Donald D. Martin

F - FMB

Baptist Press  
12/13/89

ROCKVILLE, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries Paul and Diana Davidson wonder what traditions their 14-week-old son, Andrew, will learn from a childhood of Christmases in Africa.

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"Andrew's childhood will be a lot different from mine and Paul's," said Mrs. Davidson, of Louisville, Ky., as she watched other missionary parents and their children trim a Christmas tree. "If we want him to have the traditional American Christmas, it will have to be provided in the context of our home. We will have to be more creative in our celebration of Christmas."

The Davidsons are one of 18 couples and 33 children completing a seven-week orientation at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va. They are the final group of new missionaries to be trained at the center in the '80s.

The Davidsons will live in Nigeria, where he will teach church music at Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomosho.

Each missionary family spends time during orientation working through the possible complications, frustrations and hardships of their future life and ministry. The process can become an anxiety-ridden experience, especially during the holiday season, when people reflect on the joy and security of family and home, explained Everett Burnette, associate director of missionary orientation.

It is a "sobering experience," admitted Davidson, of La Grande, Ore. "In one sense it revs your engine, but the orientation makes you think about yourself and your ministry like you never have before. And in one sense it has shaken whatever confidence I had in my own ability.

"Here (in the United States) I know who I am. I know what it means to be a professor, or to be a minister of music. Then you come to this orientation and realize the game is not going to be the same. I realized any fruit born through my ministry is not going to come from who I am, but who's living in and through me."

Still, as he looks back on his life, Davidson said, he can see how God prepared him for Nigeria and a different way of life.

"There is a sense of rightness, a sense of seeing God's work in me come together with the needs on the field," he said. "A friend told me, when I was thinking about going into missions, that when the right opportunity came along, it would fit like a glove. That's how it is now."

Missionary orientation challenges a person's world view, Burnette said: "Some people think they are coming to a seven-week Baptist retreat. But we tell them right at first: This is not a retreat. This is a work time. They will be challenged."

Missionaries today face a complex and increasingly hostile world, but this group of new missionaries is excited about their future, said Burnette: "They are a positive group. They have been very open to change and are flexible in their attitudes."

That flexibility is vital as the world changes. Even the sharp lines between home and foreign missions have blurred, he said.

"In the past we saw foreign missions as 'over there' and home missions as 'over here.' Now in our own country, we have an influx of Islam, Buddhism and all types of sects. There is a mission field here, a foreign mission field," he explained.

Missionaries Andrew and Connie Flagg are an example of shrinking world boundaries and the mixing of mission fields.

He is from Oakland, Calif. She is from San Salvador, El Salvador. They will live in Mexico and work with Baptists in church growth and development. Their lives unite two cultures that sometimes seem to share only a common border or hemisphere.

"We are both excited about going to the Spanish-speaking world," Flagg said. "Before, I was working with Mexicans in this country. Now I'll be working with them in their country. It's exciting to see how God moves you along."

While in seminary, Flagg was asked to preach to a Spanish-speaking congregation on two days' notice. He hesitated because of his low level of Spanish ability and lack of preaching experience. But a desire to work with Hispanic people urged him on.

"I went ahead and did it," he said. "Now I would be embarrassed to hear that sermon again, but it made me see how God will help us rise to the occasion, no matter how large or small. I can see how that was one hurdle in a step-by-step process that brought me here."

Mrs. Flagg marvels at her own path leading to a commitment to missions.

"I never thought I would be a missionary -- never," she said. "I better understand the Bible verse: 'Your thoughts are not my thoughts. Your ways are not my ways.' I can see how God has worked in my life and how he put us in Mexico."

Through the ministry of Miramonte Baptist Church in San Salvador, Mrs. Flagg, her mother and sister became Christians in 1979. The three were baptized together, she said.

She left El Salvador in 1981 because of the civil war in her country and applied for political asylum in the United States. The fighting and political unrest made studying at her university in El Salvador almost impossible and life unbearable, she said. She settled in the San Francisco area and worked as a maid.

By the time she met Flagg, she was studying English and secretarial skills at a community college in the San Francisco area and operating her own small cleaning service. The two met when Flagg became pastor of her church, Betania Baptist Church in San Rafael, Calif.

"When I met her, she was well on her way to achieving the American dream, with all the material things that go into a middle-class lifestyle," Flagg said. "She came up here to find freedom and a better life, but God is sending her to Mexico to help others know God's freedom."

As the Flaggs look to the United States' southern neighbor, the Gallaways look north to Canada as their new home. Randy and Mary Ann Gallaway, of Austin and Lubbock, Texas, respectively, will direct Baptist student ministries in the Toronto area.

Gallaway has worked in student ministries for more than 10 years. As he prepares to work with young Canadian Christians, he thinks Canada has the potential of becoming a great missionary-sending nation.

"Canadians have an open door virtually all over the world," he said. "Many countries that are closed to Americans are wide open to Canadians. So part of the Father's work in reaching the nations of the world may be through a missionary force from Canada -- a nation at peace with the world."

Some people are surprised Southern Baptists send workers to Canada, Mrs. Gallaway said. But only seven of every 100 Canadians are evangelical Christians, according to studies. Baptists of any kind total less than 1 percent. Among young people, only 16 percent of Canadians age 15 to 16 attend church.

The Gallaways' ministry in Toronto will be the only Baptist student work in an area that is home to 200,000 full-time and 168,000 part-time college students. The numbers would be overwhelming if not for the exciting potential they represent, said Gallaway.

"My vision is to win and train students who will be the groundwork for a Baptist church that will spread Christianity throughout the world," he said.

"There is a need (in Canada), and I have the ability to meet that need. Some have said that is what a call is -- need plus ability equals a call. I would add God's Spirit to the equation. When I put all that together, I find a place that fits, and so a responsibility."

The Flaggs and Davidsons nodded in agreement with Gallaway.

"For us that's what it means to be disciples," Davidson said. "We take our Christianity and our relationship to God seriously. The Lord says, 'If you love me, you will obey me.' Once we know what we believe his will to be, we can't do anything but respond. So we're going. With our eyes wide open."