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-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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November 14, 1990

90-157

Hawaii Baptist Convention
approves first \$2 million budget

N-CO (Hawaii)

HONOLULU (BP)--The Hawaii Baptist Convention meeting in annual session at the Korean Baptist Church of Honolulu approved a record \$2 million budget and elected a pastor, two laymen and a church staff member as officers.

The convention's budget in excess of \$2 million was adopted with 28.90 percent of undesignated funds to be forwarded to the SBC for the Cooperative Program unified budget. This is an increase of 0.65 percent over 1990.

The new convention officers are: Kenneth Newman, pastor of Hawaii Kai Baptist Church, president; Paul Oyer, layman from Olivet Baptist Church, first vice president; Leon Hicks, layman from Wai'alae Baptist Church, second vice president; and Benny Kilgo, minister of education at Olivet Baptist Church, recording secretary.

A strategic plan for the 1990s was adopted under the theme of Mission: Hawaii 2000, Phase I 1991-95. It included priorities of growing churches and starting churches. Among several specific goals were proposals to baptize 4,000 people, begin 30 new congregations, attain a total membership of 20,000, and raise \$5 million to purchase 10 new church sites over the next five years.

Mori Hiratani, Hawaii coordinator for the Mission: Hawaii 2000 site fund project to raise \$5 million to purchase the new church sites, reported that Hawaii Baptists had pledged over \$800,000 toward their goal of \$1 million for the project. John Earl Seelig, mainland coordinator for the project, shared information concerning the beginning of efforts to raise \$4 million from churches and individuals on the mainland.

Messengers referred to the convention's executive board motions to designate funds from the SBC portion of the Cooperative Program to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and to study and bring back information to the convention on the alternate funding proposal of the "fellowship" of moderates and the Baptist Cooperative Missions Program, Inc.

A motion was passed asking the convention executive board to study ways to provide counseling and other assistance to women seeking alternatives to abortion as well as post abortion counseling for those who have abortions.

Messengers gave a standing ovation to the address of outgoing president Donna Farr in which she expressed concern for the pain caused by the current SBC controversy and called on Hawaii Baptists to give a high priority to love and concern for each other as they pursued the goals of Mission: Hawaii 2000.

The 1991 annual meeting will be Nov. 7-9 in the Mid Pacific Institute Auditorium in Honolulu.

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Wilson honored for 20 years
at Michigan convention meeting

M-CO (Michigan) Baptist Press
11/14/90

GARDEN CITY, Mich. (BP)--The Baptist State Convention of Michigan met in its 33rd annual meeting Nov. 6-8 at Merriman Road Baptist Church in Garden City.

The 280 messengers adopted a budget of \$2,667,135 with \$1,106,444 to come from the Michigan churches. Of the Michigan contributions, 30 percent will be forwarded to the Cooperative Program unified budget. This is the 20th year the convention has increased their contributions to world wide causes by 0.5 percent.

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Re-elected president of the convention was Mike Lee, pastor of Columbia Avenue Baptist Church in Pontiac. Levi Parish, pastor of Eastgate Baptist Church in Flint was elected first vice president.

Convention participants honored Robert Wilson who has been executive director of the convention for the past 20 years. E. Harmon Moore, long time friend of Wilson and former executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, participated in the service. Also honored was Joyce Mitchell, a native Michigianian, who is now vice president of Woman's Missionary Union.

Messengers adopted a resolution affirming the Cooperative Program method of giving and encouraging convention churches to continue their support for the giving plan.

The convention will meet next at Packard Road Baptist Church Nov. 12-15, 1991.

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Penn./So. Jersey Baptists
celebrate 20 years

Baptist Press
11/14/90

N. CO (Penn. So.)

MECHANICSBURG, Pa. (BP)--A record 420 messengers and visitors celebrated 20 years of Southern Baptist work in Pennsylvania/South Jersey Nov. 8-10 at the Country and Town Baptist Church in Mechanicsburg.

Charles Teague, host pastor was re-elected president by acclamation. Other officers also were re-elected to a second term.

Following a debate on an alternate motion, the 1991 budget was approved. The alternate motion asked that no funds be allowed for the use of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. It was defeated 145-41.

The Cooperative Program unified budget part of the 1991 budget of \$629,361 is a reduction of the 1990 figure in an attempt to bring the budget into line with receipts from the churches. Of that amount, 21 percent will go to worldwide mission and educational causes. Every dollar above the budget amount will go to the Cooperative Program.

Messengers unanimously passed a resolution "that this convention reaffirms its support for and dependence on the Cooperative Program as the most effective means of cooperative missions funding, and that this convention calls upon SBC leaders to deal with this sense of alienation and enhance the spirit of cooperation by 'lengthening the cords' and 'enlarging the tent' of the SBC leadership by nominating/appointing candidates for representative positions those who have shown a commitment to the Cooperative Program through sacrificial giving irrespective of their stance in the on-going controversy."

Messengers approved an overseas partnership with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Next year's meeting will be Nov. 7-8 at the Paoli Baptist Church in Paoli, Pa.

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Churches warned of woman
who claims to be Satanist

By Mark Wingfield

F-HMB

Baptist Press
11/14/90

ATLANTA (BP)--Churches are warned to beware of a woman who has conned at least four Alabama churches by claiming to be a Satanist trying to escape death by ritual sacrifice.

Three Assembly of God churches and one Southern Baptist church in Mobile, Ala., have given the woman food, clothing, bus tickets and other assistance. The tickets were later cashed in and not used for transportation, says Doug Shelton, an interfaith witness associate trained by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

The woman left Mobile several weeks ago, supposedly en route to North Carolina. However, she never arrived at her destination and was reportedly seen later in Washington state, where she claimed to be on her way back to Alabama.

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Shelton, minister to children at Sage Avenue Baptist Church in Mobile, reported the incidents to Tal Davis, associate director of interfaith witness at the HMB's Atlanta headquarters.

When Davis first heard about the Alabama case, he thought the woman claiming to be a Satanist might be Bobbie Dintino, who conned numerous churches in 1988 and 1989 by claiming to be a former Mormon.

Dintino, who escaped from a county jail in Utah, was identified with incidents in Pennsylvania, Florida, Georgia, West Virginia, Kentucky and Indiana.

However, Davis and others now say they don't believe the woman recently helped by Alabama churches is Dintino, even though there are some similarities in the way the women operate.

A counselor at Mike Warnke Ministries, who asked not to be named, said the Alabama woman has been in contact with her for at least two years. Warnke is a Christian comedian who was heavily involved in the occult before his conversion.

"She calls for help, wanting out," the counselor said. "She's wanting people to help her. She says they're going to kill her, they're going to sacrifice her. I think there's something deep down inside her really wanting help."

Shelton said the woman claims to be 18 years old, but could be as old as 24. She has shoulder-length blonde hair, is approximately 5 feet 8 inches tall and weighs about 230 pounds.

She has used several names, including Melanie Cartwright, Melanie Lexington, Stacy Thornton, Carrie and Ariel.

The woman left Mobile last month after Dauphin Way Baptist Church sent her to a Teen Challenge camp in North Carolina. However, she never made it to the camp, says youth minister Stuart Hall.

Since that time, another group supposedly sent the woman to a ministry in Alaska -- where she never arrived. Hall said the woman was last seen in Washington state, where she told several people she had to get to Mobile.

Meanwhile, another woman who claims to be the mother of the suspect has appeared in Mobile with a similar story about Satanism. She has not approached churches for assistance but is currently being helped by a local ministry, Hall said.

The second woman claims her daughter is coming back to Mobile to kill her because she is leaking information about the occult, said Cpl. Danny Walker of the Saraland, Ala., police department.

Walker got involved in the case when the first woman claimed there was going to be a ritual human sacrifice in Saraland. He is also a member of First Assembly of God Church in Saraland, another of the woman's targets.

The true relationship between the two women is unclear at this point, Walker said. Also unclear is what they are trying to accomplish.

The first woman told Hall she was sent to Mobile specifically to curse two churches, Dauphin Way Baptist and Knollwood Assembly of God. He claims she has a book with addresses, telephone numbers and even home phone numbers for pastors of prominent churches across the United States.

The Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department warns churches to use caution in dealing with people claiming to be escaping cults. While all such claims should be taken seriously, church leaders should take the time to check out the stories before becoming involved, Davis said.

Also, churches facing such situations may contact the HMB's interfaith witness staff for assistance, he said.

Drama revival called
good outreach tool

By Terri Lackey

F-SSB

NASHVILLE (BP)--Members of Brookwood Baptist Church of Shreveport, La., believed staging drama productions in place of sermons during a revival would bring in people who might not otherwise attend services.

They were right.

But what they had not anticipated was the impact the revival would have on those who acted in the play and the church members who helped produce it, said Bruce Edwards, associate pastor/education.

"A drama revival will revive your church and your people as a whole," Edwards said during a seminar at the first National Drama, Puppetry and Clowning Festival, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church recreation department.

Edwards brought to the festival several members of Brookwood Church who have had acting roles in the two drama revivals sponsored by the church in 1988 and 1989. The church is expected to hold its third drama revival in the spring of 1991.

The drama revival consists of various Christian skits and plays, Edwards said. Clowns and puppetry are also involved. Brookwood has also staged a production of "The Living Last Supper" every April for the last three years on Palm Sunday, he said. A fourth is planned in 1991.

"Following the first drama revival we did in 1988, we saw more families brought together and more involvement of young adults. It was really a key to bringing young adults into the church," Edwards said.

He said the drama revival Brookwood Church presented in the fall of 1989 met with a "larger outpouring of saved. More people met the Lord during that one."

The second drama revival also had a higher approval rating of church members. "People were not sure about the first one," Edwards said. "In our last one, they were."

He said Brookwood has grown by 310 members since 1988.

Edwards said he believes a drama revival "is the most effective method of presenting the gospel to the people of today simply because they are so in tune to the visual.

"Preaching is not the only way to present the gospel -- especially today," he said. "We've just got to find other ways to get them in."

Nicky Nix, an attorney who has acted in Brookwood's drama revivals each year, agreed the plays "are a peculiar opportunity to achieve the goals of drawing people in who might not otherwise come. It's a wonderful chance for renewal for those people who might be touched by other means than a sermon. We get from drama some things we might not otherwise get from a sermon."

Nix said the drama revival was a personal growth experience.

"When I played the part of Jesus, it caused me to think more about what he did than I ever have. The renewal is for the players -- for all involved."

Edwards said more members volunteer to help with a drama production than with any other assignment of the church.

"Everybody can help," he said. "You need carpenters for the set, seamstresses for the costumes, people who can paint, people who can blow up balloons."

Drama revivals can be "slow starting," Edwards acknowledged. It takes time to build sets, learn lines and prepare for opening night.

"But I promise you it is one of the most rewarding ministries you will ever become involved in."

D.C. convention names task force
on budget and reorganization

N-CC (OC)

WASHINGTON (BP)--Anticipating a serious budget deficit in the current year and following, District of Columbia Baptist Convention leaders announced formation of a special 16-person task force of budget, reorganization and structure/staffing at the annual meeting Nov. 8-9.

The task force, approved by the executive board in October, will have the responsibility of studying a broad range of convention-related issues. The task force is mandated to present its short-term recommendations to the executive committee by Feb. 21, 1991, and its long-term recommendations by early April 1991.

Until this fall, the D.C. convention has been the only state convention in which member churches could designate all their contributions. A significant number of churches follow that practice, and thus the percentage going to the Cooperative Program unified budget principally has been determined by the churches. The percentage given to the Cooperative Program and its counterpart in the American Baptist Churches USA (the D.C. convention is aligned with both the ABC and SBC) in 1990 is 32.23 percent and it is anticipated the percentage will continue at about that percentage in 1991.

Meeting in Montgomery Hills Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Md., the convention honored its executive director, James A. Langley, and his wife. The November convention marked Langley's 20th year in the post.

Aldon Nielsen, a layman who recently retired from government service, was elected convention president. Nielsen spent over 40 years in federal service as an agricultural economist, administrator, executive and consultant to foreign governments in water resources development and management. Following the convention's custom, alternating between laity and ministers, Kenneth Burke, pastor of East Washington Heights Baptist Church in D.C., was elected vice president.

New churches received into membership included a black church, and deaf and Hispanic congregations.

Emphasis was given to prayer in several sessions, one month after the convention's executive board engaged in a call to prayer and repentance.

The 1991 meeting of the D.C. convention will be Nov. 7-8 at Clinton Baptist Church in Clinton, Md.