



February 1, 1991

91-17

January Cooperative Program  
declines 29.18 percent

*N-CO*

NASHVILLE (BP)--Contributions to the SBC Cooperative Program unified budget in January totaled \$10,325,468.80, a 29.18 percent or \$4,255,044.95 decline below January 1990.

Total receipts for four months or one third of the 1990-91 SBC budget year were \$44,640,953.55, 6 percent below the same period one year ago.

The 1990-91 SBC basic operating budget anticipates average monthly receipts of \$11,444,377. Average monthly receipts for this budget period were \$11,160,238.

SBC Cooperative Program contributions were not received from at least one state convention in time to be reported as January receipts.

"The decrease of 29.18 percent in January deserves our careful analysis," Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, said after reviewing the report. He continued, "However, one month's record does not represent a trend. Southern Baptists are missions minded people. I believe we will respond faithfully to the Bold Mission Thrust challenge."

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Co-educational missions program  
to be implemented by Brotherhood

By Jack Childs

*N-CO*  
*AKOP*

Baptist Press  
2/11/91

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--After hearing a detailed progress report on the development of World Changers, a Sunday School Brotherhood Commission co-educational mission education and missions involvement program for youth, the executive committee of the commission voted unanimously for the program to be implemented and in place no later than October 1992.

Meeting in Memphis Jan. 26, the committee also reviewed the agency's audit report, received an update on an experimental farming project and heard a progress report from the presidential search committee.

In his review of World Changers, Brotherhood Commission President James H. Smith said, "This may be the most significant thing I have presented to you in my years as president."

The commission began research in 1982 that pointed to need for co-educational missions education in local churches, especially among youth groups, Smith said.

Research revealed that more than 700,000 Southern Baptist youth enrolled in Sunday school are involved in neither the Brotherhood Commission's High School Baptist Young Men's program nor Acteens, a mission education program for young women that is part of Woman's Missionary Union.

"This is the group we are targeting," Smith said. "We have no interest in simply moving young people from one program to another. We want to involve in missions that energetic force of young people that presently have no involvement."

During the commission's October 1990 board meeting in Memphis, the trustees endorsed the World Changers concept and instructed the commission to proceed with implementation pending availability of resources and after working through appropriate denominational channels, Smith said.

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"We have done all that and more," Smith told the executive committee. "We received approval from the Southern Baptist Convention to change our program statement to permit involvement in co-ed missions education. We made staff changes to provide resources, and we secured endorsement of the concept from state Brotherhood leaders and the national leadership of Woman's Missionary Union."

"We have asked WMU to be partners in World Changers and work with us in this exciting missions venture. WMU has scheduled a meeting with us in Nashville, April 1-2 to explore options for co-educational missions education."

A successful pilot project of World Changers last August has intensified the interest of the Brotherhood Commission, Smith added. "Twelve homes were renovated by 135 Southern Baptist youth in the economically depressed area of Briceville, Tenn., as they invaded the community with hammers, saws and a vigorous, youthful, Christian countenance," Smith said.

Trustees also learned that volunteers from First Baptist Church of Collierville, Tenn., have been clearing a portion of 12 acres of land in Memphis donated to the Brotherhood Commission by the Judge John McCall family.

Experimental farming techniques will be conducted in an effort to find ways to combat hunger domestically and in foreign countries.

Dedication of the McCall Center for Global Study is scheduled in April 1991.

Wendell Reed, a layman from Salem, Va., and chairman of the committee assigned to find the successor to Smith, told the executive committee his group expects to recommend the person to be the next president at the April board meeting. Smith will retire June 30, 1991.

Reed also reminded the committee that resumes for the presidential position will continue to be received until March 1.

Glen Melton, partner in the firm of Melton & Petty, Certified Public Accountants, declared the Brotherhood Commission in excellent financial condition and advised that the agency finished 1989-90 with \$67,396,89 in income over expenses.

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Life threatening illness alters  
priorities, brings new lessons

By Terri Lackey

F-SSB

Baptist Press  
2/1/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--When Bill Young discovered suddenly at age 59 he had an illness which could rob him of life, he realized he still had some lessons to learn.

In August 1989 Young learned he had acute myelogenous leukemia.

"One comes in contact with one's mortality instantly when he learns he has a life-threatening disease," said Young, manager of the preschool/children's section of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship training department. "It helps us realize life is really a gift which we oftentimes take for granted.

"After all the shock and as many emotions as you can imagine have a chance to subside, you realize you need to prioritize some things," Young added.

"I was forced to realign my priorities and really value life and people. I have come to a profound appreciation of my family and see their unique skills and attributes. I have learned my first responsibility is to be a husband, a father and a grandfather. And my second is to fulfill the duties of my job and my church," he said.

Young and his wife, Mary Todd, have two sons (Jeff and Todd), a daughter-in-law (Carol), and an infant granddaughter (Emily Marie), born soon after Young's illness was discovered.

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Young was leading a workshop on early childhood education at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary when he became so ill he decided to go to a hospital emergency room to get medication for what he thought was a sinus infection.

"I knew I was exhausted, but I got alarmed when I started having difficulty walking," he said.

The doctor performed blood work on Young after questioning him about his symptoms and came back to tell Young, "You are a very sick man."

"I asked, 'What do you mean very sick,' and he said, 'I think you have a life-threatening illness. I think you have leukemia.'"

Young, whose leukemia is now in remission, has trouble recounting the story of his shocking visit to the hospital emergency room. The fear he felt causes his voice to break even now.

"The last thing Mary Todd said to me before dropping me off at the airport in Nashville for the Louisiana work assignment was, 'Don't go to New Orleans and get sick and get in a hospital. I don't have time to fly down there.'"

"Well, she found the time. We laugh about that now," he said.

Young stayed in the New Orleans hospital until he was well enough to be transported to a hospital in Nashville. He immediately began four weeks of chemotherapy treatment. A second series of chemotherapy treatments was completed in January 1990.

Recently, when Young entered his upstairs playroom looking for Christmas decorations, he encountered four large boxes containing cards and letters from friends and colleagues all over the world.

The boxes and their compassion-filled contents are symbols to Young that people really do care in times of crisis and that each person expresses his or her support differently.

"Since my illness I have categorized people into three groups on how they deal with other people's illness. And this is merely an observation."

The first group, Young said, are those who are "genuinely concerned and are so in touch with their own emotions" that they make the initial contact and periodic contacts on a regular basis. "They are open, supportive and remarkably sensitive."

Then there are those, he said, who are "genuinely concerned," yet who make only one contact. They stop because they may feel uncomfortable in dealing with someone who has a life-threatening illness.

And the third category are those "who are concerned, but do not know how to handle what you're going through. They really don't avoid you, they just don't know what to say or how to react."

Young says all this only to point out that a person's gift of ministry to the ill can be cultivated.

"Physical presence at appropriate times and contact beyond the initial illness are some of the positive things people can do," he said.

Young is taking "these new lessons I learn every day" and using them in his own ministry to others he knows and some he has never met but who have terminal or life-threatening illnesses.

"God has opened some interesting doors for me in expressing my concern for those who also have cancer. I try to be very positive, affirming and encouraging. I let them know I am open to answer any questions they might have," said Young.

"I have been ministered to, and I seek to do likewise."

Young said he is constantly examining his life "and trying to find purpose in situations."

"I live every day aware of the fact that this is another day God has given me to live."

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

Pastoral leadership, vision  
keys to growth in black churches

By Mark Wingfield

F. HMB

Baptist Press  
2/1/91

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (BP)--Providing appropriate pastoral leadership and communicating a vision to the congregation were cited as keys to growing black churches during a Holistic Church Growth Conference.

The conference in San Bernardino, Calif., sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and California Southern Baptist Convention, was the first of a series of regional conferences on church growth in predominantly black communities.

"We as pastors have not given the people the vision in a clear enough form for them to pick it up and run with it," declared Frank Thomas, pastor of New Faith Baptist Church in Matteson, Ill. "In most churches we don't have a strategy. Or if we do, the members don't know it.

"It's like trying to build a building without all the plans," Thomas explained. He compared a pastor who doesn't communicate the church's strategy to an architect who gives plans for the heating system one week, plans for the air conditioning system another week and plans for the plumbing still later.

"If you are serious about maturing people, somebody's got to put a target on the wall and develop a strategy to hit it.

"It's not enough that it's in your head or in your heart," Thomas said. "You've got to write it down and make it plain so the people can understand it."

Developing a vision or purpose statement also requires pastors to question why their churches do things the way they do, said Emmanuel McCall, HMB director of black church extension.

"Many times we don't know why we're doing what we're doing. They were doing it when we came and will be doing it after we die. Nobody has ever stopped to ask why."

Everything the church does should be based on Scripture rather than tradition, McCall said.

Such an evaluation should not result in throwing out all influences of the traditional black church or adopting all the traditions of the Anglo church, added HMB staff member Michael Cox.

"There are people who believe we ought to throw out everything our white brothers have given us," he noted. "If you did that, you might not like what you had left. On the other hand, there are some folks who act like they don't have any African heritage at all.

"We need to celebrate the mixture," Cox said.

Additional speakers identified the role of the pastor as crucial to fostering growth in other ways.

"One of the problems in the body of Christ today is we don't have many servants," said Willie McPherson of the HMB's black church extension staff. "We have a lot of preachers and some evangelists, but not many servants.

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"In many churches the people have the pastor up so high on a pedestal that if he stumbled he would fall so far he'd break his neck. I don't think the people did that on their own. We pastors have encouraged it."

McCall added that pastors must overcome the pride of their position in the community. "We're not going to be the kind of church God wants us to be as long as we're hung up on position and title."

Worship should involve both emotion and intellect, said Willie Simmons, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Los Angeles. While black churches should not shun their traditional spirit of celebration in worship, they should base that celebration on solid Scriptural teaching, he explained.

Further, worship should be focused upon Jesus Christ rather than heroes of the black community, Simmons declared.

"It is better not to have anything in the place of worship that does not magnify Jesus Christ. I don't want my children looking at a picture of Malcolm X when they ought to be focusing on Jesus Christ.

"There is a place for Malcolm X, but it is not in worship," he said.

"Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy, my father, my mother, your father, your mother do not belong as the focus of our worship."

Ministry can also be a tool for church growth, Thomas said.

The Chicago pastor said he has noticed that people often join his church at times of crisis in their lives. "Many of the folks that walk the aisle in your church are in some kind of crisis. If you don't minister to the needs they have, you're missing why they came."

Ministries to hurting people should lead to building up saints rather than perpetuating a cycle of suffering, Thomas said, explaining that the ministry offered by the church should not be like a pill that has to be taken again and again.

"The purpose of binding up wounds is to bring people to the place where they can bind up their own wounds and then help others."

Equipping the congregation will also lead to better evangelism, said Newton Carey Jr., pastor of True Vine Baptist Church in Oakland, Calif.

"Most preachers have the idea they are dictators," he said. "My strategy for evangelism is to know your job, preacher."

If the pastor models personal evangelism and servanthood, the congregation will follow, Carey claimed. "Evangelistic motivation has got to start with the pastor.

"You want to be an evangelist? Stop preaching sermons that kill and start preaching sermons that help people get out of the situations they're in," he added.

"You want to know why black men don't come to church? Because they don't understand what the preacher is saying."

Rather than being verbally beat up over the condition they are in, black men need to hear what the Bible says about getting out of those problems, Carey said.

Also, evangelism requires pastors to take the gospel into the community and bring people back into the church, he said.

Referring to evangelists as "fishers of men," Carey said, "I don't know of any fish that walked out of the Bay and up the street. If you're not out witnessing, you're not doing."

RTVC doubles potential viewers  
with purchase of FamilyNet

By Toby Druin

N-CO  
N-Texas

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The bottom line of the purchase by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission of Jerry Falwell's FamilyNet television network, said Richard T. McCartney, was that the RTVC doubled its potential viewers at a fraction of the cost involved in developing the ACTS network.

The purchase price will not be revealed until the deal is completed to protect FamilyNet's interests, said McCartney, executive vice president of the RTVC.

"I can say there will be some cash involved and that it will be within money on hand from the fixed asset portion of the 1990-91 budget. We have simply reallocated the down payment money," he said.

He also noted the contract has not been signed, pending an audit.

"As nearly as we can determine they have about 740,000 homes on cable that we don't have," said McCartney, "and they have about 70 television stations covering some 10 to 12 million households, which gives us a chance to double our potential outreach in certain times of the day.

"Putting a pencil to it our cost is a fraction of what it has been to gain the households we now have, which is about 7.5 million on cable and 2.5 million over broadcast. This deal gives us the potential for 10 to 12 million more viewers for less than the cost to get our present 10 million."

Purchase of the network, owned by Falwell's Old Time Gospel Hour, Inc., and Liberty Broadcasting Network, Inc., was announced at the Jan. 14-15 meeting of the RTVC.

Aside from the down payment from 1990-91 funds, the balance of the purchase price will be paid out over the next three years through the granting of air time for the Old Time Gospel Hour, featuring the preaching of Falwell, and other programs on the ACTS network. After the three-year period, regular rates will be charged for the programs.

FamilyNet, which will be operated separately from ACTS, will be advanced some funds for operations during the rest of the RTVC fiscal year, McCartney said. The funds, again the amount undisclosed, will come from funds budgeted for program development but which were freed through the acquisition of programs from FamilyNet, McCartney said.

The arrangement calls for the Old Time Gospel Hour to be broadcast on ACTS for one hour daily and two hours on Sunday, McCartney said.

No ACTS-produced programs will be bumped to make room for Falwell's show, which is aired at 9 a.m. Eastern Standard Time on Sunday, McCartney said. ACTS broadcasts the Methodist Hour at that time. FamilyNet, in turn, is expected to carry such programs as COPE and the Baptist Hour produced by ACTS.

ACTS will continue its policy of prohibiting solicitation of funds on the air, he noted, but the policy will not be imposed on FamilyNet programs. McCartney pointed out that the no-solicitation policy is one imposed by the Radio and Television Commission, not by the Southern Baptist Convention.

There was no opposition to "linking up" with the Independent, non-Southern Baptist Falwell, McCartney said.

"Since we were buying the network and as a result he would in effect be buying time from us, the commission didn't see that as any different from our selling time to Adrian Rogers," McCartney said.

"We did recognize that some folks in the convention would not want Jerry Falwell on anything we have, but there are a lot who would. It was kicked around and they felt on balance there would be about as much positive said about it as there would be negative.

"We really looked at it as an opportunity to expand the outreach of our programs.

Acknowledging that the Old Time Gospel Hour, Liberty University and Falwell have been involved in lawsuits, McCartney said none had involved FamilyNet and the RTVC and ACTS "are not assuming any of Falwell's liabilities, except those related to FamilyNet."

"And in the contract we require them to indemnify us against any liabilities not revealed in the contract process," he added. He also noted that the contract has not been signed, pending an audit.

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N.C. Baptist Board adopts motion  
in support of Lloyd Elder

By Bill Boatwright

N-CO  
MC

Baptist Press  
2/1/91

CARY, N.C. (BP)--The General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina adopted a motion in support of ousted Southern Baptist Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder, stating the recent action of the SSB trustees has produced a "chilling effect" on the trust level of many North Carolina Baptists.

The general board, the 110-member group which oversees the work of the state convention between annual sessions, adopted the motion with no discussion and only two dissenting votes during their regular meeting Jan. 30.

The motion, presented by John Hewett, pastor of First Baptist Church of Asheville, called on general board President Glen Holt of Fayetteville to send a message of support and encouragement to Lloyd and Sue Elder, "assuring them of our earnest prayers for them during these difficult days of termination and transition."

The motion called for a second message to be sent to the trustees of the Baptist Sunday School Board expressing "our alarm over their decision to force Lloyd Elder out of office and our concern for the chilling effect this decision has had on the trust of many North Carolina Baptists in the programs and publications of the Baptist Sunday School Board."

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Diverse coalition releases  
new equal access guidelines

By Larry Chesser

N-CO  
AC

Baptist Press  
2/1/91

WASHINGTON (BP)--Consensus guidelines to help school officials understand and comply with a 1984 act designed to end discrimination against religious speech in public secondary schools were issued Jan. 31 by a broad coalition of educational and religious groups.

The publication, The Equal Access Act and the Public Schools: Questions and Answers, represents the end product of four months of work by the diverse coalition, which included both supporters and opponents of the 1984 act.

In light of the Department of Education's earlier decision not to issue regulations, the guidelines likely will serve as the baseline for understanding the act, according to Oliver S. Thomas, general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and a chairman of the coalition of groups that issued the guidelines.

A number of coalition members were involved in drafting an earlier set of equal access guidelines in 1985. The new version represents the input of a larger coalition, including a number of key educational organizations. The new version also includes, based on the 1990 U.S. Supreme Court ruling upholding the act, clear definitions of what types of student groups qualify for free speech protection under the act.

Under the Equal Access Act, public secondary schools that permit groups to meet for student-initiated activities not directly related to the school curriculum must offer equal, but not preferred, treatment to those seeking to exercise religious speech rights.

The act requires that such student meetings be student-initiated and student-led. Additionally, the act assures the concept of local control, protecting the authority of the school district to maintain order and discipline and protect the well-being of students and faculty.

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According to the guidelines the 1984 act is triggered when a public secondary school creates a "limited open forum" by providing an opportunity for non-curriculum student groups to meet on school premises during non-instructional time.

The act applies to all public secondary schools receiving federal financial assistance.

According to the guidelines, outsiders may attend student-initiated meetings if invited by students and the school does not have a policy barring all outsiders.

Teachers or other school employees may be present for student religious meetings but only in a "non-participatory capacity." However, no teacher or employee may be required to attend a student religious meeting in violation of his or her conscience.

The guidelines also note that some student groups may be excluded under the law.

"The law gives schools the latitude to prohibit groups from meeting if they are going to be disruptive," Thomas said. "But that doesn't mean they can be prohibited just because their ideas are unpopular."

Thomas said the guidelines should provide a "safe haven" for school officials seeking to comply with the act.

"The Equal Access Act strikes a nice balance between the requirement that government refrain from promoting religion and the students' right to exercise their religion in ways that do not impinge upon the rights of others," Thomas said.

In remarks delivered at a press conference at which the guidelines were released, Baptist Joint Committee Executive Director James M. Dunn noted that the religious liberty agency, while opposing various proposals for government-sponsored prayer, began in 1981 "searching for an appropriate vehicle to affirm the free exercise of religious expression."

Dunn said the Equal Access Act "fit our interest in maintaining the balance between 'no establishment' and 'free exercise,' making creative tension between the two clauses."

He applauded the release of the guidelines. "They clarify and bring within reach of ordinary citizens the legal tangle related to religion in the public schools," he said. "They clear the air regarding the free exercise of religion for secondary students without inviting chaos and cacophony on one hand or attempting to provide sterilized silence on the other."

He said the guidelines will not solve all problems associated with the role of religion in public schools, but insisted "They do represent a much higher and broader level of consensus among those who are profoundly affected than the sloganizing, petty politics and insensitive blunderings so often characteristic at the intersection of religion and politics."

Religious groups in the coalition sponsoring the guidelines include the American Academy of Religion, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Baptist Joint Committee, Christian Legal Society, Department of Education of the U.S. Catholic Conference, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the National Association of Evangelicals, the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the National Council of Churches.

Educational coalition members include the American Association of School Administrators, the American Federation of Teachers, the Americans United Research Foundation, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the First Liberty Institute at George Mason University, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Council on Religion and Public Education, the National Council for the Social Studies, the National Education Association, the National Parent Teacher Association and the National School Boards Association.

'Missionary' con artists  
still preying on churches

By Erich Bridges

SANTA FE, N.M. (BP)--Let us now prey.

N-5ms

That's the daily watchword of one or more swindlers who continue to rob collection plates by targeting generous churches and pastors.

It's getting to be a familiar story -- except for the unsuspecting victims. A man places long-distance calls (collect, of course) to churches and asks for the pastor. He claims to be a missionary or pastor in Brazil who once attended the church. He says he has been robbed in New York or another American city while preparing to fly back to Brazil. Please send money via Western Union, he pleads -- just enough to finish paying for a plane ticket.

He knows the pastor's name; sometimes he mentions the names of other area pastors or church members. He talks fast and supplies enough authentic-sounding details to fool some. He is a master at exploiting his listeners' good nature -- as well as their little imperfections.

"The thing that angered me the most is he tries to get you to lie," said one recent target, James Erlich. Erlich, pastor of First Baptist Church in Santa Fe, N.M., and another Southern Baptist pastor in Santa Fe both received calls from the scam artist in late January.

"He keeps saying, 'Now you remember me, don't you? My wife was so impressed with you. You talked with her after the service.' He tries to get you to say, 'Oh yes, I remember you.' And of course then you're committed. He's worked with enough preachers to know he can make 'em lie if he tries," Erlich related. "He was talking 97 miles an hour."

The caller identified himself as "Mark Bennett" to both Santa Fe pastors.

"He said he was robbed in what sounded like New York. He was calling from a Wendy's restaurant and he needed \$46 to make up his plane ticket," Erlich said. "He said we should use Western Union to send him a telegram where he goes up (to the Western Union desk) and answers a code question. The question is, 'What is my son's name?' The answer is Johnny. Therefore they would give him the money without him needing identification. I called Western Union and they said he could have been calling from right here in Santa Fe or anywhere. All a person has to do is go up to any Western Union desk and say 'I'm Mark Bennett. Do you have a will-call money order for me?'"

Erlich also contacted the FBI.

"They didn't want to talk to me," he reported. "They said it was too 'Mickey Mouse.' I said, 'Well, he's using Western Union and calling interstate, so that sounds like a federal offense to me. But if you guys don't want to talk to me that's fine.' But they did take the information."

The caller -- or others trying the same con -- has used the names "Dr. Bill Slater," "Bill Jennings" and "Bill Harmon" in the past. He targeted Southern Baptist churches in at least three states -- Oklahoma, Kansas and South Carolina -- in 1989 and 1990. And he probably has called churches in many other states, and other denominations, since the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board first heard about the scam.

Bill Damon, the board's associate area director for Brazil and the Caribbean, knows of no such missionary or minister in Brazil and repeatedly has warned churches about the caller.

Telephone and FBI officials advised Oklahoma Baptists last year that the best defense against such scams is to be forewarned. Telephone traces must be arranged in advance of calls.

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In another apparent swindle, someone identifying himself as "Herbert Met" sends letters and brochures to many churches soliciting funds for special projects. He says he is a native of Haiti, but some have understood him to say he is a missionary. He gives as a reference the name "D. Shultz," whom he identifies as an American and a Southern Baptist missionary.

Southern Baptists have no missionary in Haiti named D. Shultz, and Foreign Mission Board officials have never heard of Herbert Met.

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Lawyer volunteers time  
to Baptist Joint Committee

By Larry Chesser

N-BOC

Baptist Press  
2/1/91

WASHINGTON (BP)--When health problems helped him decide four years ago to cut short his career as a government lawyer, W. Allen "Al" Sanders was advised by doctors to get more exercise.

In response, the Virginia Baptist layman took up hiking. It worked. Reinvigorated after trekking the 2,100-mile Appalachian Trail earlier this year, Sanders, 57, began looking for ways to use his skills and experience. What he found was an opportunity to serve as a volunteer staff attorney at the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Baptist Joint Committee Executive Director James M. Dunn called the arrangement an ideal missions volunteer match.

"It sounded like the sort of activity that would dovetail with my background," Sanders said of the Washington-based agency's work. "I thought it would be a place where I could perhaps do something significant."

Sanders becomes the third attorney on the BJCPA staff, joining General Counsel Oliver S. Thomas and J. Brent Walker.

Among his chief duties will be providing constituent services to pastors and churches and monitoring the Federal Register for changes in laws affecting church and state.

Sanders' career as a federal government lawyer includes stints with the Panama Canal Company, a former government corporation that operated the Panama Canal, and the U.S. Postal Service. When he retired with 31 years of government service in 1986, he was serving as associate general counsel at the Postal Service.

"The addition of such an experienced attorney to our staff will increase our expertise in the legislative field and free more of our resources to assist Baptists at the state and local level," Thomas said. "During this time of financial belt tightening, Al Sanders is a godsend."

Sanders earned his law degree at the University of Alabama in 1957 and an advanced law degree from George Washington University in Washington, in 1968. Additionally, he served as editor of the Alabama Law Review.

During his first week at the Baptist Joint Committee, Sanders provided constituent services to a northern Virginia congregation in a matter dealing with zoning regulations.

"The church's concern is that it be treated in a fair and non-discriminatory manner," Sanders said.

Sanders, a member of Westwood Baptist Church in northern Virginia, completed the Appalachian Trail hike on his second attempt. His first try, in 1987, was cut short by a snow storm. In April, Sanders and a group sponsored by George Mason University began the trail trek in Georgia and arrived at the trail's end in Maine 126 days later.

"We hiked the 2,167.9 miles," he said. "We measured the trail from the beginning to the end, which had never been done before. We used a surveyor's wheel."

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After completing the hike, Sanders, recognizing that it would be a few years before his wife, Carolyn, was ready to retire from her job at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, began scouting for an opportunity to put to use his considerable experience as a government lawyer.

He describes the Baptist Joint Committee volunteer assignment as an "opportunity to do something that I'm interested in. Plus it's an opportunity to work with James (Dunn) and the agency, which I have long admired."

Sanders' volunteer tenure at the Baptist Joint Committee is indefinite, but he said he sees the assignment as an attractive opportunity to be of service until his wife retires in several years.

Sanders is a former Brotherhood director at Westwood.

"The Mission Service Corps concept opens the door for Al to offer his specialized stewardship of skills in a way that will ultimately bless thousands of individuals, touch dozens of churches and contribute to the historic public witness of Baptists to religious liberty and its corollary the separation of church and state," Dunn said.

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Chapman sends open letter  
about Persian Gulf war

N-00

Baptist Press  
2/1/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Morris H. Chapman has sent an open letter to state Baptist newspaper editors addressing the Persian Gulf War.

In his letter Chapman asks that Southern Baptists uphold U.S. President George Bush and all military personnel stationed in the Persian Gulf in prayer. This coincides with the Feb. 3 day of prayer proclaimed by Bush.

In his letter, Chapman says "We pray for a swift end to the war. We pray for the safe and speedy return of loved ones serving our country and the cause of free people everywhere. Finally we pray for a genuine and lasting peace."

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(Full text of letter mailed to state Baptist newspapers)