



March 4, 1991

91-32

February and five months'
CP exceed budget goal

N-CO

NASHVILLE (BP)--SBC Executive Committee President/Treasurer Harold C. Bennett announced Cooperative Program unified budget contributions received by the Executive Committee set a record for February.

Although receipts for the first five months of the budget year remained below receipts for the same period in 1989-90, they were above budget requirements for both February and the first five months of the budget year.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' way of supporting ministry and missions through state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. State and regional conventions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining percentage to the SBC Executive Committee for national and international ministry.

February SBC receipts totaled \$13,682,656, which was 12.61 percent or \$1,532,360 above the previous record for February reached in 1990.

The 1990-91 SBC basic operating budget anticipates average monthly receipts of \$11,444,377. Average monthly receipts for this budget period were \$11,644,722.

Comparing 1990-91 year-to-date receipts with the previous year, February contributions reduced the deficit to 2.59 percent from the 6.46 percent reported in January.

Designated gifts have not fared as well during this same period. Contributions, most of which are designated for the Foreign Mission Board's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, the Home Mission Board's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, and world hunger, are 8.69 percent, or \$5,639,682, below 1990 contributions.

May, June and July are the primary months for the receipts of gifts for the Annie Armstrong Offering.

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Feeding Somali refugees
stirs spiritual hunger

By Craig Bird

N-FMB

Baptist Press
3/4/91

MOMBASA, Kenya (BP)--The sounds of bullets, the colors of gunshot wounds and burning buildings and the feelings of hunger and terror live vividly in the memories of Somali refugees washed up on the shores of Mombasa, Kenya.

Their past is fearful. Their future is heavy on hope, light on concrete prospects. Yet because of the aid they are receiving from Christians in Kenya, the future of the estimated 10 million ethnic Somalis around the world might include a greater openness to Christianity.

"I've never been involved in a relief project before," said Southern Baptist missionary Ralph Bethea of Memphis, Tenn., "But working to help feed these people has given me a new perspective on how effective it can be as a means of sharing the gospel.

"We could have drilled wells in Somalia for a hundred years without getting a hearing like God has given us in just a few weeks here. The people, after overcoming their initial distrust, have been open and gracious. God is starting to do some great things among the Somali people."

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The refugees fled an impoverished country that has collapsed into total civil war. Kenyan officials say more than 30,000 Somalis have walked across the land border between the two countries while more than 4,000 have made the 400-mile jump by sea from the Somali capital, Mogadishu, to Mombasa. Thousands have fled to Ethiopia. The fighting and the human flood continue.

One to three boats arrive in Mombasa almost every day carrying handfuls of refugees. Most of them load passengers at a cost of \$100 each in Kismayu, 250 miles up the Indian Ocean coast from Mombasa. "Kismayu is the largest city in Somalia now," one refugee said. "Mogadishu is abandoned. There is no food there. No water. Just tribal groups fighting each other."

Kenyan authorities have allowed more than 3,000 refugees to live temporarily at the Mombasa agricultural fairgrounds. Another 1,000 are scattered throughout Old Town, the island core of Mombasa.

Mogadishu fell in mid-January when President Said Barre and his troops fled to the south. The first and largest wave of refugees arrived in Mombasa Jan. 17 after two days of sailing.

Within a few days reports reached Southern Baptist missionaries that the boats were sitting in the harbor with little or no food, awaiting government permission to unload the refugees. The Mombasa missionaries requested hunger relief funds from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"We got verbal permission the same day we asked and started cooking food on shore and hauling it to the ships by boat on Jan. 22," Bethea said.

Three days later the Kenyan government moved the refugees to the fairgrounds and the United Nation and Red Cross began trying to set up aid programs. But organized aid other than the Baptist help didn't begin reaching the Somalis until mid-February.

Until then, missionaries brought food, blankets, stoves, medicine, Bibles and tracts, and Mombasa Baptists had daily contact with 4,000 refugees.

Many of the refugees -- although they sleep on the ground in the only clothes they possess like everyone else -- wear expensive wristwatches and carry stylish attache cases bulging with official-looking documents.

A large percentage of the intelligentsia and leadership of Somalia is in Mombasa, trying to find a way out of the temporary camp. The heads of the country's supreme court and university, the minister of financial affairs, the minister of fisheries, about 30 college professors, other high-level government officials and 15 medical doctors -- all sit in the Kenyan sunshine and wait in line for food, medicine and blankets.

"Maybe a third of the people here are poor, very poor," said Bethea, who spearheaded the first relief effort to help the refugees. "In the panic and confusion of Mogadishu falling to rebel forces, many of them just got onto the escape boats in the harbor." They include 22 children from one orphanage who got on board a ship even though no adults from the institution made it.

But the remaining two-thirds had the wealth to buy a way out. "If you don't have the fare you don't get on the boat at Kismayu," one man explained. And most of them have contacts in Western countries they hope will give them a way out of the camps.

Several tenders overturned in Mogadishu harbor in the scramble to the escape ships, including one loaded with many of the high-ranking government leaders. One man admits he lost about \$500,000 in gold when his luggage tumbled into the water.

"But then," another said, gesturing around a group of 20 men, "we all lost gold. But what are possessions when your life is at stake? When the tender sank I was separated from my family. But when I got back to the surface I saw my 1-year-old son swimming right beside me! No one drowned! We were all very fortunate. At least God spared our lives."

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"I think God spared you for a reason. He has something special for you," Bethea said.

"Definitely," the man replied. Others nodded in agreement.

Somalis accepted the Christian materials handed out by the Baptists, but imams (Muslim religious leaders) grabbed a few Bibles, tearing and spitting on them. Then they began debating with Bethea and making refugees give back the Bibles they had received. At one point John Basham, another missionary, was standing back-to-back with Bethea "for protection in case the crowd got out of hand." But something unexpected happened.

"When people gave the Bibles back, they would circle around Ralph," Basham explained. "Ralph was talking to the imams, but handing me the Bibles and folks who had just been forced to give them back would take them from me and walk off. We named it 'backside evangelism.'"

By the time the Southern Baptist aid program wound up Feb. 15, the confrontations had ended and tracts and Bibles were being distributed freely. Numerous refugees even signed up for Bible correspondence courses.

"Somalia has been one of the countries most closed to Christian witness," Bethea explained. "Even among the 500,000 ethnic Somalis who live in Kenya permanently, the religious and cultural ties to Islam are very, very strong and response to the gospel is slow.

"But here some of the same imams who tore the Bibles and spit on them at first now come up and ask, 'Why are you Christians doing this for us? What makes you so kind?' Then we can tell them we love because Jesus Christ first loved us."

The refugees also appreciated the personal touch the missionaries added to the aid. "We could contract with someone to deliver the food and other supplies but we think it is worth it to do it ourselves," Bethea said. "We want contact with the people."

Extra touches -- like taking a set of matching cups to the recently powerful leaders so they could drink their afternoon tea with some style, or collecting names and phone numbers of overseas contacts who might help the refugees -- created an atmosphere of friendship in which the Somalis would listen to the claims of Christianity.

"In two weeks we've made several hundred dollars worth of calls on our home phone," Bethea said. "But it's worth it. Some of these people are already being processed to go to the U.S. or Canada or Europe." Two U.S. Southern Baptist churches are working to help one family in the camp.

One of the larger refugee groups, 80 Khoza-tribe Muslims, saw two members killed and five others wounded while escaping. "We had moved into the mosque and just given our homes and most of our possessions to the looting soldiers. Otherwise they would shoot us and rape our women," a young man said.

The Khozas are Shiite Muslims, apt to strongly resist Christian witness, yet missionaries and Kenyan Baptists working in the feeding program were warmly welcomed by them.

"Thank you for remembering our humanity," one man said. "Thank you for treating us like fellow human beings."

But while the Somalis were generally open, many Mombasa Muslims remained hostile. Bethea and two Kenyan evangelists attempted to show the film "Jesus" in Old Town Feb. 9. An interested crowd gathered and other Somali refugees even opened windows overlooking the street to watch.

However, local Muslims objected violently. They tore the film from the projector, rocked the truck, threatened to overturn it. "I thought for sure they were going to burn the truck," one of the evangelists said. "There were about 500 of them yelling at us and threatening us and we were only three."

But the next day the Baptists were back in Old Town, distributing food in the name of Jesus.

"There haven't been hundreds or thousands of people accept the Lord because of this program," Bethea said. "But around 30 Somalis have been saved. That is a huge response when estimates of the number of ethnic Somali Christians range from 50 to just a few hundred among 10 million people."

And most of the ousted government leaders expect to be invited back to Somalia to play major roles in whatever government evolves, "because none of the rebel groups have enough trained people to run the country."

If that happens, men in key positions will remember a group of Christians in Mombasa who brought them food as they waited hungrily on the ships in the harbor, who brought medicine and blankets when they were sick and sleeping uncovered on the ground, who took the time to talk to them about their problems and their future.

And when the hardships finally begin to fade and the future becomes clearer, they may see a place for Christianity in Somalia.

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

Professions of faith
outnumber allied deaths

By Sarah Zimmerman

N-AMB

Baptist Press
3/4/91

ATLANTA (BP)--In what may be a wartime first, the number of professions of faith exceeded the number of U.S. casualties in Operation Desert Storm.

Lew Burnett, director of military chaplaincy for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, estimates that at least 1,200 professions of faith were recorded by Southern Baptist chaplains serving in the Persian Gulf. One news report estimated the number of allied casualties at less than 200.

Burnett bases his estimates on letters he receives from chaplains. One week in February, he received five letters which told of 100 professions of faith.

The number of Southern Baptist chaplains serving in the war reached 194.

Chaplains had to be creative in thinking of ways to baptize new Christians in the desert. Mike Langston, Southern Baptist Marine chaplain, used a metal coffin for the symbolic testimony of Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

"It was all we had that would hold enough water for complete immersion," Langston said. At the time he wrote, Langston had been at sea for 141 days. Of the 2,100 Marines on his ship, 38 made professions of faith and 24 were baptized. He noted 12 rededication in the Christian community of about 220 on board.

Christians other than chaplains were involved in the revival movement. Staff Sgt. Bereal Gee wrote Burnett and requested Bible correspondence courses and Bible study materials.

"God is moving fast over here, and it's hard to keep up with the demand," Gee said. The materials he requested were sent to him.

Jeff Bruns was in Saudi Arabia for three months as chaplain of an Army unit of 800 soldiers. He returned to the United States in January after he was injured in head-on collision with another Army vehicle.

His main ministry in Saudi Arabia was "just going from tent to tent to talk to the soldiers. The more time I spent, the more they shared. Eventually, the conversation turned to something of spiritual concern," he said.

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Bruns noted that during his tenure in Saudi Arabia, the troops were in a defensive posture. He said as they prepared for possible war, the soldiers had time to think and began to do some soul searching.

After being on convalescent leave in Missouri, Bruns returned to active duty as a chaplain at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., the last week in February. His primary responsibility is working with families of deployed soldiers, and he will continue in that role until the troops return.

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Peace Fellowship apologizes
to Land for including his name

By Louis Moore

N-10
CLCBaptist Press
3/4/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Ken Sehested, executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, has apologized to Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, for erroneously using Land's name in an endorsement opposing the war in the Middle East.

The Peace Fellowship issued a statement entitled "Call to Prayer & Fasting" and included with it hundreds of names of individuals said to have endorsed the statement.

"Because of a complex series of factors, your name is listed on it (the list), "Sehested told Land in a letter of apology. "I am deeply sorry for this very unprofessional mistake."

Land said he disagrees with some points in the Peace Fellowship's statement. He said his own position on the Persian Gulf conflict was stated in an ethics commentary entitled "The Crisis in the Gulf and Just War Theories." That statement was released by the Christian Life Commission in late December. Subsequently, Land has reiterated his belief that the just war criteria he enunciated had been met by the allies in their conduct of hostilities.

"I am grateful to God that the Persian Gulf conflict seems to be resolved with so few allied casualties. I am also grateful that now it appears that not only is Kuwait liberated, but deaths of Iraqis will cease as well," Land said. "Compared to such momentous events, erroneously listing my name in this endorsement is a relatively minor matter, but I am glad that Ken has acted swiftly to correct the misinformation."

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Southern Baptists join forces
to fight cholera in Peru

By Mary E. Speidel

N-FMB

Baptist Press
3/5/91

CAJAMARCA, Peru (BP)--Traveling through the streets of Cajamarca, Peru, Ken Bowie sees about eight funeral processions every day.

Funeral homes are doing big business lately in Cajamarca, where Bowie is a Southern Baptist agricultural missionary. Life -- and death -- haven't been normal since a cholera epidemic broke out in February.

Cholera is a bacterial infection of the intestines that can cause violent diarrhea, vomiting and rapid dehydration. If untreated, cholera can cause death within hours or days.

Since the first case was reported in the seaport town of Chimbote Jan. 23, the disease has spread up and down Peru's coast. It later moved inland, mushrooming into the Western Hemisphere's first cholera epidemic in almost a century. By March 1, cholera reportedly had infected about 45,000 people and claimed nearly 200 lives.

The epidemic couldn't have come at a worse time, according to Bowie. Peruvians are grappling with hyperinflation while trying to recover from an 18-month drought. Both factors have left many people malnourished, with low resistance to disease.

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"We were ripe for this type of disaster to happen," said Bowie, disaster relief coordinator for Southern Baptist missionaries in Peru. Bowie is from McLouth, Kan.

Cholera reportedly is transmitted through human waste. In areas with no sewage treatment or running water, cholera bacteria can contaminate drinking water and food. The first of Peru's recent cases was traced to infected fish.

Cholera treatment involves rehydrating patients and fighting the bacteria with antibiotics. But in order to curb the epidemic, Peruvians need medical supplies and education on how to avoid getting cholera, Bowie said.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has approved \$60,000 from relief funds to purchase and transport medical supplies needed to treat cholera patients, said Van Williams, director of the missionary health department.

Board officials expect to combine their efforts with donations of money and supplies from Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, Williams said. Officials at Baylor are working with vendors to secure donations of drugs and medical supplies, said Gary Collins, director of pharmacy at the hospital.

The shipment of supplies is expected to arrive in Peru in three to four weeks, when missionaries anticipate the disease will peak.

To meet immediate needs, Texas Baptist Men have helped coordinate an air shipment of about 1,300 pounds of medical supplies to Peru.

The shipment sent March 1 included 41 cases of supplies containing intravenous fluids and equipment needed to rehydrate cholera patients, antibiotics and other medical items. The supplies were donated by Baptists and others from the San Angelo and Dallas/Fort Worth areas. In addition, American Airlines provided free airfreight for the first shipment.

Texas Baptist Men expect to send another shipment of supplies around March 5.

Texas Baptist volunteer Danny Shaver, a member of Calvary Baptist Church in Pilot Point, first heard of the cholera relief needs in Peru through radio contacts with missionaries in Peru Feb. 15. A ham operator, Shaver talks several times a week with missionaries Luke Smith and Bowie. Smith, from Sweetwater, Texas, is based in Cajamarca.

Shaver helped mobilize relief efforts by relaying information to Foreign Mission Board officials, who had been unable to reach missionaries in Cajamarca because of poor phone connections there. After Shaver began private appeals for donations, he later sought help from Texas Baptist Men.

Medical supplies may still be donated through Texas Baptist Men at the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 333 N. Washington St., Dallas, Texas 75246-1798. For more information call 214-828-5354 or 214-828-5356. Financial contributions may be sent through the Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230-0767. Donors should specify gifts are for Peru cholera relief.

When supplies arrive in Peru, missionaries will work through local Baptist medical clinics to help distribute them where the need is greatest, Bowie said. Bowie also is working with Carlos Garcia, Peru's second vice president, to see how Baptists can provide help nationwide. Garcia, a Peruvian Baptist, heads the nation's social service programs.

Meanwhile, missionaries and Peruvian Baptists are leading clinics to teach people how to avoid getting cholera. Some pastors also are using church program time to teach people about prevention. Peruvians are learning about the disease through a media blitz sponsored by the government. But in remote areas where communications are poor, many people still do not know about the epidemic, Bowie said.

That was the case near Celendin, a town in the state of Cajamarca where about 100 cholera cases were reported. When Smith and a team of Peruvian doctors arrived to help treat patients there, they found people had heard nothing about the month-old epidemic. The people were unknowingly drinking and eating infected water and food.

While the epidemic is stabilizing in the coastal areas, "it's taking exactly the opposite turn" in the mountains around Cajamarca, said Bowie. The national death rate among cholera victims is about 1 percent compared to a 10 percent rate in the state of Cajamarca.

Since medical care is limited in this region, by the time some patients reach a hospital it's almost too late to help them, Bowie said. To help in those cases, missionaries in Cajamarca have converted a mission truck into an ambulance to transport patients from outlying areas. The truck is normally used for a Baptist well-drilling project.

But some patients arrive at hospitals only to learn there is no room for them and no medication available. Bowie told of a Cajamarca hospital where patients are packed into every available space. Examining areas have been moved outside under tents provided by Baptists. That hospital also lacks proper medications.

Even when medicine is available, many people can't afford it, Bowie said. A bottle of dextrose solution needed for rehydration now sells for about \$6. Rehydrating a patient, which can require about a dozen bottles, costs about four times more than the average Peruvian's monthly salary.

People trying to avoid the disease also face obstacles, said missionary Rod Conerly. Conerly's wife, Caroline, a nurse, has been teaching Peruvians the importance of boiling their water and treating and cooking raw vegetables and fruits possibly contaminated with the disease. The Conerlys are from Osyka, Miss.

Unfortunately, many people tell her they can't even afford the kerosene needed to boil water.

But not taking those precautions may be a matter of life and death for Peruvians. "It's a very desperate situation," Conerly said.

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Persian Gulf chaplain cites
Southern Baptist heritage

By Frank Wm. White

F55B

Baptist Press
3/4/91

NORTHERN SAUDI ARABIA (BP)--Had he been given a choice, Dennis Whitaker would have elected to be right where the United States Army had placed him on Feb. 24, in the Saudi Arabian desert as the ground war with Iraq began.

As a lieutenant colonel and Southern Baptist chaplain with the 11th Aviation Brigade in the U.S. Army's VII Corps, Whitaker was doing what he had known since age 13 that God had called him to do.

Only hours after the ground war began, a shamal blew sand and dust across the nondescript, desolate desert around the canvas Army tent where Whitaker was holding his first of three brief chapel services of the morning.

About 15 soldiers from the aviation brigade sat on wooden benches placed on the sandy floor of the crowded tent in the center of a small compound surrounded by fortifications of concertina wire and sand berms.

Propped against the tent wall was a map with target locations marked in grease pencil. Within a few hours, some of the soldiers present for the chapel service would be guiding a weapon-laden attack helicopter toward the targets on the map.

Whitaker noted an increase in attention to matters of faith in the weeks of preparation before the ground war. And yet attendance at the services on that fateful Sunday morning was lower than usual.

"They (military personnel) had a lot of duty requirements. They're getting ready to go," Whitaker said after the services as he looked around the busy brigade operations tent, temporarily turned into a makeshift chapel and then returned to its intended purpose as an operations room.

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"I don't hold it against them that they were too busy to be at chapel. I'm sure God doesn't either," said the 48-year-old Atlanta, Texas, native.

Whitaker said the soldiers' increased attention to matters of faith was reflected in their mood and conversations.

"They realize they need something more than themselves to face battle. They want to know what God can do for them today," he said.

Whitaker said he appreciated the soldiers' questions and comments about God as an expression of their search for spiritual meaning.

"Any man who is searching for God will find him. It's the one who isn't looking that concerns me," Whitaker said.

The slight, soft-spoken chaplain said his role is not that of a morale officer or a talisman for good favor.

"I'm their spiritual officer, not their morale officer. As they go out, I wish them God's presence for their comfort, and I pray that each will return," said Whitaker.

At the worship service, Whitaker followed the Scripture text from the lectionary which many chaplains use as a source for texts. The words from 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 offered words of comfort for the soldiers with a message that God's grace provides that needed power in times of weakness.

Whitaker added a Scripture reading from Psalm 91, a psalm praising God's protection in battle.

Whitaker said his role as an Army chaplain has all of the excitement of ministry with people plus the added benefit of constant presence with his parishioners.

"I'm with them all the time," he said. "I'll be there for them when the choppers land. If needed, I'll be at the hospital to provide comfort for any who are there."

Whitaker said he realized God was calling him to be a military chaplain when, at 13, he read about the chaplaincy profession in Royal Ambassador materials.

"There was no strike of lightning, but it was a clear calling," he said.

As the son of a Texas Baptist pastor, Sunday school and training union had a big impact on his life. He was a Sunday school teacher by age 14 and a department director at 16.

"Training union allowed me to go 'off line' with my peers and probe ways to look at different passages of Scripture," Whitaker recalled.

He graduated from Arlington State University in Arlington, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. He then was a pastor of churches in Kansas and Illinois for eight years, meeting Southern Baptist requirements for appointment as a chaplain. His last pastorate was at Calvary Southern Baptist Church in Joliet, Ill.

As Whitaker listened to situation reports from the front lines, he said he would not want to be anywhere else.

"This is an exciting and exhilarating experience because things are happening. There is a great deal of anticipation here," he said.

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Frank Wm. White, a news writer in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's office of communications, is a public affairs officer in the Tennessee Army National Guard. He is assigned to the U.S. Army VII Corps in Saudi Arabia. He was with the 11th Aviation Brigade on Feb. 24.

The Baptist Hour receives
'Golden Mike' award

*NCO
Texas*

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission has received the National Religious Broadcaster's Golden Mike Milestone Award for The Baptist Hour's 50 years of continuous service in religious broadcasting.

RTVC Executive Vice President Richard T. McCartney accepted the award at the 48th Annual National Religious Broadcasters Convention & Exposition in Washington.

Purpose of the NRB Golden Mike awards is to recognize outstanding service and merit in religious broadcasting. The Baptist Hour's award resembles an old-fashioned radio microphone.

One of the longest-running radio programs in history produced by a denomination, The Baptist Hour airs on about 500 radio stations in the United States. In addition, arrangements recently were made for the Armed Forces network to carry the program on 500 stations reaching U.S. military personnel overseas.

A six-month-long nationwide celebration of the Baptist Hour's golden anniversary was launched in January in Shreveport, La., where the first Baptist Hour sermon was preached in 1941, and will culminate at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in June in Atlanta, where the original RTVC office was located.

The Baptist Hour features a modified worship service format with music and a spoken message. It follows the RTVC's no on-air solicitation policy.

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Dunn accents role of religionists,
rationalists in guarding liberty

By Larry Chesser

*NCO
BAC*

Baptist Press
3/4/91

WASHINGTON (BP)--Those who see the First Amendment's religion guarantees as the exclusive product of either religionists or rationalists have missed part of the picture, according to a Baptist spokesman on church-state issues.

"It took the combined and collective strength of the rationalists and the radical religionists to produce in the context of the American revolution the religious freedom guarantees of the Constitution and the First Amendment," Baptist Joint Committee Executive Director James M. Dunn told an audience at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

"Many of today's church-state conflicts might be diminished with a more complete understanding on the beginnings of church-state separation," he said.

Addressing a colloquium on the Bill of Rights sponsored by the University Honors Program, Dunn highlighted the contributions of four key figures -- Roger Williams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and John Leland -- to the emergence of the Bill of Rights, particularly the First Amendment religion protections.

Williams "is disproportionately important because he first challenged the old world patterns of toleration, theocracy, church-states and state-churches," Dunn said. "He died poor and rejected, nothing much to show for his labors ... except the American experiment of religious liberty and the most vital churches in the world."

Jefferson "initiated intellectually the chain of legislation that led to the First Amendment and through agitation for it to the Bill of Rights," Dunn said.

Madison, author of the Bill of Rights, institutionalized religious liberty, Dunn said.

Leland and other religionists supplied the popular support and public demand for the Bill of Rights, he added.

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"The Enlightenment leaders teamed up with frontier preachers of a liberating religion," Dunn said. "Together they brought about the first nation on the face of the earth with real religious freedom, full religious freedom for all, even those who are not religious."

Dunn criticized those who seek to interpret the meaning of the First Amendment without listening to the words and music of both the religionists and the rationalists.

He challenged the view held by some, including Chief Justice William Rehnquist of the U.S. Supreme Court, that First Amendment bans only the establishment of a national church and governmental preference for one religion over another.

"That view was, indeed, one of the views held by some of the founders," Dunn said. "It is specifically the approach that was rejected."

The Supreme Court, history and common sense "consistently contend that the establishment clause embraces much broader restraints on government than these simple prohibitions, he said.

"The record of the Senate debates over the approval of the First Amendment eloquently refutes all claims that a sort of preferential establishment was all the amendment was intended to prohibit."

Dunn said some American religionists "see the First Amendment as one-way street designed only to protect religion from the state. These revisers hold that the Bill of Rights restricts and limits only the government."

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Samford president Thomas E. Corts
wins national award from educators

N-CO Samford

Baptist Press
3/4/91

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Samford University President Thomas E. Corts has been named winner of a new national award as Teacher Education's Most Supportive President by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE).

Corts received the award Feb. 27, during the AACTE national conference in Atlanta, in recognition of his "significant contributions to advancing the education of educators" through Samford's Orlean Bullard Beeson School of Education.

AACTE honored Corts, who has been president since 1983, category.

Corts provided leadership and helped secure funds for such innovative school of education programs as the Samford Institute for Teaching Excellence which "allows outstanding teachers summer study with nationally know researchers," according to education school dean Julian D. Prince.

In addition, Cort's efforts helped equip the education school's media center with up-to-date technology and "encouraged the school to build a working relationship with public schools, to perform research, and to develop its faculty," said Prince.

"It's an exciting time to be in teacher education at Samford," said Prince. "We attribute this to the leadership of Dr. Corts, and strongly applaud this national recognition of his efforts."

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Study looks at new churches
and denominational growth

By Mark Wingfield

N-NMB

Baptist Press
3/4/91

CHICAGO (BP)--Does church starting cause membership growth in a denomination or is church starting the result of growth?

The answer to both questions is yes, according to a new study of five U.S. denominations by Kirk Hadaway of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and Penny Long Marler of Hartford Seminary.

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Results of the study were presented to Southern Baptist Convention state directors of missions and church extension during their annual leadership meeting in Chicago.

The study found a strong correlation between church starting and membership growth, but could not identify a uniform cause-and-effect relationship for all denominations.

Throughout the 38-year period studied, church starting in the SBC tends to be an indicator of membership growth more than a direct cause of growth, Hadaway and Marler say.

Of the five denominations studied, the two that maintained the highest levels of church starting -- the SBC and Assemblies of God -- were the only ones to avoid membership decline.

In the Assemblies of God, church starting tends to be more equally a cause and symptom of growth, the study finds. "The Assemblies of God is the most interesting case. New churches have added more to their growth than new churches have added to any other denomination."

In mainline churches, when church starting is attempted it tends to cause growth, the two researchers say. "Not much growth has come from new (mainline) churches in recent years because they have started so few. When these denominations make the effort to start new churches, they tend to grow, or at least moderate their declines. When they do not make the effort they tend to decline."

Other denominations included in the study were the United Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and the Presbyterian Church. For years prior to the Presbyterian merger of 1983, data were combined for the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.)

A high statistical relationship between church starting and membership growth may be a "barometer of the times," the report claims. "When the times are favorable to American churches, denominations will plant new churches, but when times are bad, few new church starts will be attempted."

The late 1950s were "very good years" for church starting among both evangelical and mainline denominations, the researchers say. But by the early 1960s, church starting was declining among all denominations.

In the SBC, the rate of new church starts rebounded in the 1970s and has now increased to the point where Southern Baptists are almost starting as many churches annually as they did in the 1950s.

However, the increase in church starting did not immediately translate into a similar growth in membership. Church starting probably did keep the SBC from declining the way mainline denominations did, the researchers concede.

Hadaway and Marler conclude that church starting is important but is not the sole factor influencing denominational growth.

For example, between 1983 and 1988, new churches added 214,120 members to the SBC, the study says. During that period the denomination grew 4.7 percent in membership. Subtracting the members added by new churches leaves the denomination with a growth rate of 3.2 percent.

"The SBC would have grown during this period without its new churches, but the rate of growth would have been reduced," the report states.

Among Southern Baptists, a conservative ideology provides motivation to use church starting as a way to evangelize unreached people, the team says. "Fluctuations (in the rate of new starts) do not reflect changes in the strength of this ideology or hard work, they reflect changes in the dominant culture.

"The motivation to start new churches is constant, but the feasibility and success of this activity are dictated by the times. In recent decades, a shift away from the liberal values of the sixties helped conservative denominations more than mainline denominations."

However, Hadaway and Marler say growth of evangelical denominations has not come at the expense of mainline denominations. The study shows that while evangelical denominations grew more than mainline denominations, even evangelical denominations were affected by social and cultural changes that devastated mainline churches.

Evangelical denominations like the SBC continued to grow during this period, but grew less rapidly than before, they note. "Southern Baptist churches avoided decline at an aggregate level, but the SBC certainly experienced no true resurgence during the past three decades. In fact, SBC (percentage) growth is now at its lowest level since the 1930s. Clearly, the social and cultural changes affecting the mainline also affected evangelical denominations."

Other findings of the Hadaway and Marler study include:

-- The more a denomination grows in membership, the larger the average size of its congregations tends to be, and the more a denomination declines in membership, the smaller the average size of its congregations tends to be.

-- Smaller churches and larger churches tend to grow more than medium-sized churches. In the SBC, churches with less than 50 members were found to grow the fastest, followed by churches with more than 1,000 members.

-- The initial size of a new church has little to do with its likelihood of future growth.

-- "Superchurches" do not suppress the growth of other churches of the same denomination in any given community. Instead, the study found that smaller churches located near superchurches tend to grow more than similar churches not located near superchurches.