

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367. Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas, 75246-1798. Telephone (214) 828-5100
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234. Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230. Telephone (804) 353-0151

April 17, 1991

91-59

Nominating committee chairman
calls report very positive

By Herb Hollinger

N-10

NASHVILLE (BP)--The chairman of the 1991 Southern Baptist Convention Committee on Nominations says the committee's report demonstrates a "broadening of the tent."

The report was released yesterday by chairman James W. "Jim" Richards, Jr., pastor of Southminster Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La. In order for the nominees to serve they must be elected by messengers to the SBC annual meeting in Atlanta, June 4-6.

The Committee on Nominations is composed of two people, a layperson and a clergy or denominationally-related worker, from each of the 34 state or regional conventions qualified for representation. Committee members met in Nashville Mar. 21-22 to nominate people to serve on the boards of trust of the 24 entities related to the 15-million-member denomination.

Under convention bylaws, the report has to be released through Baptist Press, the denominational news service, at least 45 days in advance of the annual meeting.

Richards said the report, in his opinion, is a demonstration of the "broadening of the tent" in SBC life.

"There are more women (nominees) going on than went off," said Richards, "more ethnics and the wide spectrum of Southern Baptists is represented (in the committee's report)."

Richards said he was not aware of any challenge to the committee's report.

The Louisiana pastor indicated there was no criteria set "as far as a quota" representation of a particular kind of people.

"There was no quota system" in the committee's deliberations, said Richards.

Richards described the committee's deliberations as a "delightful experience." He said the committee members were a "wonderful representation of the Southern Baptist Convention, had a harmonious spirit and the meeting was very positive and productive."

In a bid to clear up confusion concerning the annual report each year of the committee, the SBC Executive Committee has proposed a bylaw change that will treat the annual slate of proposed nominees as a report rather than as nominations.

The Executive Committee said the new bylaw would not alter the way the nominations have been handled in recent years but only clear up the existing ambiguity by clarifying the current practice. A vote on that bylaw change is scheduled for the Atlanta meeting.

The Nominating Committee each year considers about a quarter of the trustees of the convention-related entities. In 1991, the committee considered 223 vacancies among the nearly 1,000 trustees and directors of SBC-related agencies and institutions. The nominees include 113 renominations and 110 new recommendations.

Under the SBC's system of staggered representation, trustees may serve two consecutive terms. The majority of trustees serve four-year terms. Trustees serve five-year terms on the six Southern Baptist Convention-related seminaries.

--more--

The committee also approved eight members to be a subcommittee which will meet June 2 in Atlanta to fill vacancies or last minute changes in the report.

In addition to Richards, subcommittee members are Carol A. Sutton, vice chairman of Humble, Texas; Michael L. Trammell of Jonesboro, Ark.; Jose Luis Cano of Pueblo, Colo.; Larry D. Nail of Eldorado Springs, Mo.; Robert Holmes of Henderson, Nev.; Guy S. Sanders Jr., of Bamberg, S.C.; and Sue Redman of Surrey, Va.

--30--

Committee nominates
seminary trustees

Baptist Press
4/17/91

N-CO

NASHVILLE (BP)--Trustees to serve on the boards of the six Southern Baptist seminaries have been nominated by the 1991 Committee on Nominations.

Under convention bylaws, seminary trustees serve five-year terms and are eligible to serve two consecutive terms.

In order to serve, the trustees must be elected by messengers to the 1991 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 4-6, in Atlanta.

SOUTHERN SEMINARY (63 members): 15 nominations considered; 8 new trustees; 7 renominations.

Nominated to terms to expire in 1996, replacing trustees ineligible for re-election are:

William R. Hann, pastor of Mid-Cities church, Westminster, Calif., replacing John J. Swartz of Escondido; Freddy L. "Buddy" Crowder, businessman and member of Roswell Street church, Marietta, Ga., replacing S. Ernest Vandiver of Lavonia; J.D. Cutrer, retired businessman and member of First church, Pascagoula, Miss., replacing Kent Wyatt of Cleveland; and Tim Piland, pastor of Nansemono River church, Suffolk, Va., replacing William C. Carter of Richmond.

Michael A. Northcutt, pastor of Eastmont church, Montgomery, Ala., will replace David Dykes of Gardendale who moved. Delton M. Beall, pastor of First church, Forrest City, Ark., will replace Ron L. Herrod of Fort Smith who also moved.

Dennis Saller, dentist and member of First church, Merritt Island, Fla., will replace James W. Ballard of Merritt Island who died. James Parrish, pastor of Lankford Memorial church, Greensboro, N.C., will replace Sam H. McMahon of Charlotte who was eligible for re-election.

Nominated to second terms are Neal Gresham, Wing, Ala.; Larry L. Adams, Oklahoma City; Harry S. Dent, Columbia, S.C.; Dorothy Barker, Morton, Texas; local Louisville, Ky., trustees Ron Meredith and John L. Smith; and at-large trustee James M. Bullock, Clarksville, Ind.

SOUTHWESTERN SEMINARY (38 members): 9 nominations considered; 4 new members; 5 renominations.

Lu Walker, community leader and member of First church, Beaverton, Ore., will replace Jack Robertson (1993) of Pullman, Wash., who resigned. Danny Williams, pastor of North Metro church, Thornton, Colo., will replace David Bruce (1993) of Denver who moved.

M. Lynn Cooper, bank president and member of First church, Madisonville, Ky., replaces Lee P. Molloy III, of Paducah, Ky., and William Cutrer, physician and member of Audelia Road church, Dallas, replaces Kenneth E. Lilly (at-large trustee) of Fort Smith, Ark., in new five-year terms where incumbents were no longer eligible.

Nominated to second terms are C.A. Johnson, Jonesboro, Ark.; K.R. "Bud" Funk, Bloomfield, N.M.; John W. Patterson, Hampton, Va.; Everett W. Powell, Berkeley Springs, W.V.; and T. Bob Davis, Dallas.

--more--

NEW ORLEANS SEMINARY (38 members): 8 nominations considered; 1 new member; 7 renominations.

James K. Pierce, pastor of Porter Memorial church, Lexington, Ky., replaces William C. Ray of Elizabethtown who finished his terms.

Nominated for second terms are Fred L. Herring, Easton, Md.; W. Keith Huffman, Ironton, Mo.; Ronald F. Norman, Tonawanda, N.Y.; James Stephen Sells, Morgantown, N.C.; J. Eddie Gandy, Huntington, W.Va.; William Vernon May Sr., Madison, Miss.; and Robert Everett Lee, Baton Rouge, La.

SOUTHEASTERN SEMINARY (30 members): 6 nominations considered; 3 new members; 3 renominations.

Nominated to terms ending in 1996, replacing members ineligible for re-election are:

Dwight L. Smith, pastor of West Ellisville church, Ellisville, Miss., replacing Robert Earl Shirley of Tupelo; Hal Buckner Boone, retired minister and member of Sagemont church, Houston, replacing James R. DeLoach, also of Houston; and Ned L. Mathews, pastor of Parkwood church, Gastonia, N.C., replacing Billy H. Cline of Asheville.

Nominated for second terms are Roger William Ellsworth, Fairfield, Ill.; Kenneth L. Stevens, Novi, Mich.; and W. Dade Sherman Jr., Monroe, N.C.

MIDWESTERN SEMINARY (35 members): 8 nominations considered; 6 new members; 2 renominations.

Dennis Wood, pastor of First Southern church, Tempe, Ariz., replaces (term ending in 1996) Si Davis of Tucson who declined to serve another term. Ronnie W. Rogers, pastor of Lakeside church, Hot Springs, Ark., replaces Kerry G. Powell of McGeehee who resigned his term ending 1993.

Nominated to terms ending in 1996, replacing members ineligible for re-election are:

Donald J. Stuckey, school superintendent and member of Mt. Pleasant church, Medora, Ill., replacing Jeanette Marie Harlow of Clarendon Hills; Anthony T. Mattia, pastor of Trinity church, Wamego, Kan., replacing Doyle Smith of Great Bend; Roger S. Oldham, pastor of First church, Martin, Tenn., replacing Joseph L. Johnson of Knoxville; and Kent Cochran, sales manager and member of First church, Raytown, Mo., replacing Richard Adams of Festus as a local trustee.

Nominated to second terms are Jean Crady, Owensboro, Ky., and Lowell E. Socolofsky, Omaha, Neb., a local trustee.

GOLDEN GATE SEMINARY (37 members): 8 nominations considered; 4 new members; 4 renominations.

Nominated for terms ending in 1996, replacing members ineligible for re-election are James McCullen, pastor of First church, Mountain View, Mo., replacing Gerald Ray Davidson of Arnold; and Roetta B. Hudson, bank vice president and member of First church, Artesia, N.M., replacing Chester F. Stewart of Albuquerque.

At-large new trustees are Gene Dodson, pastor of North Hills church, Vallejo, Calif., replacing Cynthia Woodall of Poway who declined to serve another term; and John Funk, business executive and member of Calvary church, Westhills, Calif., replacing Joanne K. Hann of Orange who also declined to serve another term.

Nominated for second terms are Norman H. Taylor, Silver Spring, Md.; Dennis E. Zeidler, Floyds Knob, Ind.; Mrs. Robert C. Burch, Knoxville, Tenn.; and at-large trustee John D. Morgan, Houston.

Trustees nominated for
commissions, committees

N-CO

NASHVILLE (BP)--Trustees to serve on the commissions and committees of the Southern Baptist Convention have been nominated by the 1991 Committee on Nominations.

They will serve if elected by the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 4-6 in the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST FOUNDATION (35 members): 5 nominations considered; 2 new members; 3 renominations.

The Committee on Nominations nominates representatives from SBC agencies to serve on the Foundation. For 1991, three agencies have trustee representative vacancies.

Home Mission Board, Ralph Smith, pastor of Hyde Park church, Austin, Texas, replaces Lawson Lee Schroeder who finished a term. Southeastern Seminary's W. Dade Sherman Jr., Monroe, N.C., and American Seminary Commission's O. William Long, Nashville, have been renominated for terms ending in 1995.

At-large trustee slots, terms ending in 1995, include Marshall Albritton, attorney and member of Park Avenue church, Nashville, replacing Stanley M. Smith of Ashland City, Tenn., who finished two terms; Gorman J. Roberts, Louisville, Ky., renominated for a second term.

AMERICAN SEMINARY COMMISSION (16 members): 5 nominations considered; 3 new members; 2 renominations.

Nominated for terms ending in 1995, replacing members ineligible for renomination, are Alsie Banks, retired military/investments, member of Eastside church, Zachary, La., replacing J. Thomas Randall of Union Springs, Ala.; and Curtis Truesdale, automotive accountant analyst and member of Mt. Carmel church, Flint, Mich., replacing Rochelle Davis Jr., of Detroit.

Henry Linginfelter, vocational evangelist and member of First church, Alcoa, Tenn., will replace Steven A. Jett of Knoxville who resigned.

Nominated for second terms are C. Richard Dendler, Owensboro, Ky., and O. William Long, Nashville.

EDUCATION COMMISSION (21 members): 5 nominations considered; 2 new members; 3 renominations.

Tommy G. Middleton, pastor of Woodlawn church, Baton Rouge, La., will replace James H. Roach Sr., of Shreveport who is ineligible for another four-year term. For an at-large term, also ending in 1995, Edward D. Hodo, university president and member of Second church, Houston, will replace William H. Hinton of Houston who was ineligible for another term.

Paul J. Rea, Phoenix, Ariz.; Van D. Quick, Clinton, Miss.; and Fred A. Holt, Richlands, N.C., were all renominated for second terms.

BROTHERHOOD COMMISSION (38 members, being reduced to 36): 7 nominations considered; 3 new members; 4 renominations.

Nominated for four-year terms ending in 1995, replacing members ineligible for re-election are:

Robert Humber, salesman and member of Woodmont church, Florence, Ala., replacing Billy Summerlin of Gadsden; John Whitman, retiree and member of First church, Springfield, Ill., replacing Roscoe Orten Jr., of Washington; William D. Treese Sr., pastor of Odon church, Odon, Ind., replacing Leslie D. Albro of Jeffersonville.

Nominated for second terms are C.A. Easterling, Somerset, Ky.; Robert E. Hill, Cleveland, Miss.; Joseph S. Lennon, Warrenton, N.C.; and Daniel S. Hunt, Austintown, Ohio.

--more--

Two at-large terms ending this year will not be continued with replacements if the commission's request to eliminate at-large positions is approved by the Atlanta convention.

CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION (32 members): 8 nominations considered; 2 new members; 6 renominations.

Nominated for terms ending in 1995, replacing members ineligible for re election are:

William "Todd" Morris, pastor of Mt. Beulah church, Bessemer City, N.C., replacing Coy C. Privetter of Kannapolis, and Charles D. Betts, pastor of First church, Vandalia, Ohio, replacing C. Nolan Phillips of Middletown.

Nominated for second terms are Gary Ledbetter, Brownsburg, Ind.; Curt Scarborough, Ferguson, Mo.; Alma Ruth Morgan, Bartlesville, Okla.; Carl B Mitchell, Hixon, Tenn.; Mrs. Don (Skeet) Workman, Lubbock, Texas; and an at-large term, Mrs. Orman W. Simmons, Little Rock, Ark.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION (31 members, being reduced to 29): 7 nominations considered; 3 new members; 4 renominations.

Nominated for terms ending in 1995, replacing members ineligible for re-election are:

R. Mendel Lee, retired civil engineer and member of First church, Columbia, S.C., replacing John V. Platt of Lancaster, S.C., and Harry Grothjahn, financial planner and member of First church, Alcoa, Tenn., replacing Fred S. Rolater of Murfreesboro.

Robert L. Clegg, state convention official and member of Leesville Road church, Durham, N.C., will replace Dale E. Lawson of Charlotte who moved.

Nominated for second terms are Theodore D. Wilson, Indianapolis;; Sherry C. Parish, Davison, Mich.; William E. Bell Jr., Dallas; Anne R. Davis, Tabb, Va.

Two commission local terms which ended this year will not be filled.

RADIO AND TELEVISION COMMISSION (28 members): 7 nominations considered; 1 new member; 6 renominations.

Nominated for a term ending in 1995 is Gary Underwood, company executive and member of Beech Street First church, Texarkana, Ark., replacing Jewel R. Morris of Fort Smith who was ineligible for another term.

Nominated for second terms are Thomas Blackwell, Inglewood, Calif.; Richard O. Logsdon, Upper Marlboro, Md.; Garland A. Morrison, Marion, Ind.; August C. Peters, Hillsdale, Mich.; E.L. Helton Jr., Grove City, Ohio; and Sara Diaz Warren, El Paso, Texas.

STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION (28 members): 7 nominations considered; 2 new members; 5 renominations.

Nominated for a term ending in 1995 is Paul M. May, attorney and member of First church, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., replacing Jack J. Eassa of West Palm Beach who finished two terms. Alvin L. Reid, Indiana stewardship director and member of Memorial church in Brownsburg, will replace James Abernathy of Brownsburg who has retired as stewardship director in Indiana.

Nominated for second terms are Harry E. Litton Sr., Tucson, Ariz.; Levi Parish, Burton, Mich.; Gary D. Collins, Jefferson City, Mo.; and J. Lawrence Wood, Cross Lanes, W.V. John D. Wallace, Morristown, Tenn., declined to serve another term and a nominee will be named when the Committee on Nomination's subcommittee meets prior to the Atlanta convention.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (18 members):

The Southern Baptist Convention will vote on the merger of the Public Affairs Committee with the Christian Life Commission during the Atlanta annual meeting.

--more--

Norris Sydnor Jr., Fort Washington, Md., finished a four-year term on the PAC and will serve as a merged member, if approved, of the CLC or as a renominated four-year term on the PAC. The subcommittee of the Committee on Nominations will be prepared to name the chairman of the PAC in case it remains intact. Also, the committee will be prepared to nominate two people to replace Albert Lee Smith Jr., Birmingham, Ala., and Samuel T. Currin, Raleigh, N.C., who are ineligible for renomination, on the PAC if convention messengers do not approve the CLC/PAC merger.

ORDER OF BUSINESS COMMITTEE (6 members, plus the SBC president): 2 nominations considered; 2 new members.

Nominated for one term, ending in 1994, are Sandra Butler Hodge, homemaker and member of First church, Princeton, Ky., replacing Ray Turner of Bedford, Va., and Steve Cookingham, banker and member of First church, Wichita Falls, Texas, replacing Chris C. Tecmire, Blanchard, Okla.

The Committee on Nominations nominates O.S. Hawkins, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., as chairman.

DENOMINATIONAL CALENDAR COMMITTEE (6 members): 2 nominations considered; 2 new members.

Nominated to terms ending in 1994, replacing members who are ineligible for reelection are Alena E. Brock, marketing consultant and member of Old Town Hill church, Muncie, Ind., replacing Mrs. Daniel Figgins of Elgin, Ill., and Walter Lee Partain, pastor of First Southern church, Pueblo, Colo., replacing Herman M. Savoie of West Monroe, La.

The committee also recommends Bob Piland, Tulsa, Okla., as chairman.

NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP (15 members): 1 nomination considered; 1 new member.

Jack Kwok, state convention official and member of Gravel Ridge church, No. Little Rock, Ark., is nominated to replace John B. Brashear of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, who resigned, to a four-year term.

--30--

Atlanta SBC housing
is still available

By Herb Hollinger

N-CO

Baptist Press
4/17/91

ATLANTA (BP)--Housing for the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Atlanta, June 4-6, is still available throughout the city, according to convention housing officials. Six weeks before the convention, 7,700 rooms have been reserved but there are still plenty of rooms available.

Atlanta is considered one of the best "convention cities" in the U.S. for large meetings, officials said. In various locations of the metropolitan area, a good selection of hotel and motel rooms is available for the SBC meeting. For information about rooms and a housing form, call (615) 244-2355. After May 14 persons seeking room reservations will need to contact motels/hotels directly, said housing officials.

In addition, Atlanta's public transportation system is very good, convention officials said, making rooms anywhere in the city easily accessible from the Georgia World Congress Center in the downtown. The Center is the site of the SBC meeting.

In fact, messengers and visitors are being encouraged to leave their automobiles at their hotels and ride the MARTA rail and bus system. Transportation information will be available at the World Congress Center, the airport and all hotels. Visitor passes giving unlimited daily bus and train rides have been reduced (5-day pass is \$7.00 and 1-day is \$3.00).

There will be no convention-operated shuttle service available, officials said, from motels and hotels to the World Congress Center.

--more--

There will be ample parking for motorhomes, campers and RVs but convention officials are still working on the details which will be released soon.

Care is also being taken to make the convention site convenient for persons with physical disabilities. A special block of rooms for the disabled has been reserved through the Atlanta Housing Bureau. For information about these rooms call the Executive Committee's office at (615) 244-2355.

As previously announced, childcare is available for children ages birth through kindergarten. Space is limited and registration will be available at the World Congress Center, Room 363 on the West Concourse.

The preschool registration table will be open Monday, June 3, from 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. for those who have not pre-registered their children. Cost is \$8.25 per session with a \$10 deposit required at registration. Childcare is available only during the sessions of the SBC annual meeting.

World Congress Center regulations prohibit bringing food and/or drinks into the convention center. Convention officials said there would be ample food facilities in the convention center, including a large food court.

Distributing materials inside the World Congress Center during the convention will also be restricted. Organizations holding meetings inside the center may distribute materials in their meeting rooms, exhibitors in the SBC Exhibit Hall may distribute materials around their booths as long as it is not disruptive, and materials of a helpful nature to messengers may be made available at the SBC Information Booth.

Any material to be placed on the distribution tables near the entrances must first be authorized in writing by the convention manager. Although SBC entities may elect to enlist individuals to hand out their material at entries to the meeting halls in lieu of placing it on the distribution tables, no ushers will be permitted to hand out materials.

No material will be allowed on the seats in the meeting halls.

Materials distributed outside the Convention Center are subject to local laws and regulations, officials added.

--30--

NOTE TO EDITORS: This story is being run as a special to Baptist Press. Please embargo it until April 24.

Associated Baptist Press
names Floridian editor

Baptist Press
4/17/91

WASHINGTON (BP)--Greg Warner, 36, associate editor of the Florida Baptist Witness, has been named the first full-time editor of Associated Baptist Press.

His unanimous election to the post of executive editor was announced by Charles Overby of Washington, chairman of the board of directors of ABP.

Warner will assume his new duties May 1 and maintain his headquarters in Jacksonville, Fla.

A native of Oneida, N.Y., Warner is a 1976 magna cum laude graduate of Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Fla., where he grew up. He received a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1980 and a master of arts degree in journalism from the University of North Texas in Denton in 1985.

The foundation for Associated Baptist Press was laid July 7, 1990, after a meeting of the Southern Baptist Press Association, the organization of Baptist state newsjournals, in Grapevine, Texas. The formation of ABP was announced July 17, 1990, immediately after the Southern Baptist Executive Committee fired Al Shackelford, director of Baptist Press, the official news service of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Dan Martin, news editor for the service.

--more--

The July 7 meeting of the Southern Baptist Press Association had been called because the firings were imminent.

No formal action was taken by that organization at the time, but a group of Baptist state paper editors laid the foundation for Associated Baptist Press and chose its board of directors, which functions as an autonomous, self-perpetuating body.

The Southern Baptist Press Association endorsed the concept of ABP immediately after its formation. However, there is no structural connection between ABP and the press association, Baptist Press or any Southern Baptist agency.

Warner, who was present when formation of ABP was announced July 17, said he felt at the time a keen desire to be a part of it.

"The Baptist Press firings made it clear to all Southern Baptists that freedom of the press, which had been such an important part of our denominational heritage, had been seriously compromised," Warner said. "The Executive Committee proved itself an unfit guardian of that freedom, which made establishment of ABP as an independent, non-aligned news service a moral and practical necessity."

The news service got underway last September through the auspices of Craig and Associates, a communications consulting firm in Nashville, with Dan Martin working as interim editor through the Craig office. The ABP board of directors took over operation of the service Jan. 15 and began the search for a permanent editor.

"The directors of ABP, and all freedom-loving Baptists, owe a debt of gratitude to Floyd Craig, Craig and Associates, and Dan Martin, who helped get the dream of ABP off the ground," said Don McGregor, executive director of ABP. "Southern Baptists will benefit from their committed efforts for years to come."

Since September ABP has been distributing news stories to secular and religious media throughout the nation by facsimile reproduction. The service plans to begin electronic distribution soon after the new office is opened in Jacksonville, according to McGregor, editor emeritus of the Baptist Record, newsjournal of Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Warner will be ABP's first salaried employee. Plans call for an editorial assistant as quickly as that position can be filled, McGregor said, and for a system of correspondents to be put in place throughout the nation.

Warner became associate editor of the Witness, newsjournal of the Florida Baptist Convention, in 1985. Previously he was news coordinator for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission in Fort Worth from 1980-85. He also has been a newswriter for the public relations department of Southwestern Seminary.

He has been a member of the Baptist Public Relations Association since 1981. He has twice won that organization's grand prize for writing, the Frank Burkhalter Award, in 1988, 1990. He is the only state newspaper employee ever to win the award, which is rated by secular judges.

Warner also won the organization's award for first-place news story in 1982, 1988, 1989 and 1990; the first-place news series in 1987, 1989 and 1990; and the first-place investigative story in 1990.

Chairman Overby, himself a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and president of the Gannett Foundation, said: "I am excited about the future of ABP with a journalist such as Greg Warner on board. I am impressed by his ability and attitude."

Joining Overby on the 13-member board of directors are two state Baptist paper editors, Julian Pentecost of Virginia and R.G. Puckett of North Carolina. McGregor, who is retired, was an active editor when the board was formed.

Another journalist, Raymond McDaniel, retired editor of the Shreveport Times and a member of the board of Louisiana's Baptist Message, is a board member, as is Carl Kell, professor of communications at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green.

Al Shackleford, the former director of Baptist Press and former editor of two state Baptist newspapers, serves on the board. Two pastors are James Pleitz of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, and Donald Sharp of Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church in Chicago.

Four board members are women. Judy Strother of Mountain Home, Ark., is a partner in a law firm with her husband, Lane, who serves on the board of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

Catherine Allen is the director of the Sesquicentennial Commission for Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. Ardelle Clemons is a pastor's wife in Greenville, S.C. Anna Olive Bannister lives in Augusta, Ga.

Jack Brymer, editor of the Florida Baptist Witness, commended his associate. "Greg Warner has distinguished himself as an articulate and courageous journalist not only in the Southern Baptist Convention but throughout the religious community," Brymer said. "His award-winning news reporting, particularly on ethical issues such as abortion, AIDS and child sex abuse, have contributed significantly to the timeliness and importance of state Baptist newspapers."

In addition to Warner's journalism skills, Brymer praised his associate as "an outstanding churchman, family man and a dear personal friend."

Warner and his wife, Cheryl, have been members of Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church in Jacksonville since 1986. The couple has two children -- son Dane, 7, and daughter Shawn, 4.

--30--

Photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Associated Baptist Press

Baptists expand aid to Kurds;
Bible distribution also planned

By Art Toalston

N. S. M. B.

Baptist Press
4/17/91

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists have purchased nearly 35,000 blankets to help Kurdish refugees endure the nighttime cold in mountains along the border between Iraq and Turkey.

Meanwhile, a Foreign Mission Board representative in Europe is negotiating with Iranian officials to find ways Southern Baptists can aid Kurds pouring into Iran or stranded in the Iran-Iraq border region.

The board also has released \$92,600 for distribution of Arabic Bibles in the postwar Middle East.

Between 400 and 1,000 Kurdish refugees are dying daily of preventable diseases such as dysentery, according to reports from relief agencies. As many as 1.7 million Kurds have fled their homes in Iraq, fearful for their lives after a failed rebellion against Saddam Hussein's forces. Their plight rivals that of starving Ethiopians in the mid-1980s, a State Department relief official has testified before a Senate panel.

Some 500,000 to 700,000 refugees are in the Turkey-Iraq border region, while an estimated 1 million Kurds have fled toward and into Iran and are in acute need of food and relief supplies.

President Bush announced plans April 16 for a "greatly expanded" relief effort by the U.S.-led coalition, including the establishment of Kurdish refugee encampments in northern Iraq. However, Tim Brendle, executive director of the newly formed Foreign Mission Board Persian Gulf Response unit, said a broad range of supplemental efforts by Baptists and others still will be needed among the displaced Kurds.

The blankets from Southern Baptists -- 20,000 purchased with Foreign Mission Board relief funds and 14,400 purchased by Texas Baptist Men -- are being airlifted to Kurdish refugee camps as part of the Defense Department's "Operation Provide Comfort." In more than 200 flights by U.S., British and French cargo planes, some 14,000 tons of supplies have been dropped to Kurdish refugees at the Turkey-Iraq border.

--more--

In another development, the Foreign Mission Board's human needs coordinator, John Cheyne, reported Jerry Zandstra, pastor of the National Evangelical Church in Kuwait, has returned to the war-ransacked country to coordinate evangelical relief efforts there.

Once Zandstra makes the needed arrangements, Cheyne said, the board will purchase two-month supplies of food through a company in Bahrain for at least 10,000 workers and family members from India, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Sri Lanka who were stranded in Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion.

Cheyne and Maurice Graham, Southern Baptist worker assigned to Kuwait and a former hostage in the U.S. Embassy there, initially were part of a three-member survey team seeking to enter Kuwait. However, delays prompted Cheyne to travel to Jordan to survey ministry needs there and Graham decided against re-entering Kuwait because of uncertainty about obtaining an exit visa.

In the effort to aid the Kurds, it was Texas Baptist Men's reputation for effective disaster relief that helped open doors for Southern Baptist involvement. George M. Dykes, director of the U.S. Defense Department's humanitarian efforts, in an April 11 letter told Texas Baptist Men: "Your organization is well known in our office for its ability to generate large amounts of the most needed property for donation."

Bob Dixon, executive director of Texas Baptist Men, then worked with the Foreign Mission Board's Persian Gulf Response unit to purchase blankets and arrange for their delivery to assigned Air Force bases.

The crates of blankets purchased by the Foreign Mission Board were stamped in English and Arabic with the words, "Gift to the Kurdish People from Evangelical Christians--Baptists." Texas Baptists' crates were marked with the words, "Christian Humanitarian Relief," and the Southern Baptist disaster relief emblem. A North Carolina layman and trustee of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, Robert Stroup, organized a group of 12 men from his church, First Baptist in Spruce Pine, and Mt. Zion in Canton that traveled April 15 to the blanket manufacturing plant in Swannanoa, N.C., to apply the stickers for Texas Baptists.

Cheyne noted the board's \$121,000 expenditure on blankets has reduced its general relief fund to a marginal level. The board has two funds for emergency needs: "hunger" and "general," the latter used for a range of emergency supplies. Baptists wanting to make special donations above their church offerings to replenish the general relief fund may send gifts to the board at P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230.

Dixon and Brendle, in separate interviews, agreed the blankets are but "a drop in the bucket" of what is needed to ease the Kurdish refugees' plight. Brendle promised ongoing Foreign Mission Board efforts with Texas Baptists and other Southern Baptists to share Christian compassion in the postwar Middle East.

A Foreign Mission Board representative has visited a refugee camp, just inside Turkey, with 200,000 Kurds, Brendle noted. Children were at special risk, the representative reported, citing a number of deaths from intestinal disorders and dehydration.

The visit at the refugee camp may pave the way for volunteer medical teams, Brendle said.

The \$92,600 Bible expenditure will pay for 14,000 Bibles, along with "How to Read the Bible" inserts produced by the Arab Baptist Publication Center in Beirut, Lebanon.

In addition to its purchase of blankets, the Foreign Mission Board also has released \$25,000 in relief funds for Kurdish refugee aid and \$120,000 in hunger funds for food distribution in Baghdad and Basra, Iraq.

The funds for food in Iraq will be handled by an emergency relief committee of the Jordan Baptist Convention, in cooperation with evangelicals in Baghdad and the board's Persian Gulf Response field coordinator, veteran missionary Paul Smith.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Reporter Donald D. Martin and photographer Don Rutledge recently returned from a coverage trip to Africa, including a visit to Liberia, where thousands have died from the violence and hunger of civil war.

Missionaries find Monrovia
numb from killing and looting

By Donald D. Martin

N-SMB

MONROVIA, Liberia (BP)--In a suburban field of Monrovia, soldiers stacked 83 human skulls around a rectangular pile of bones.

Many of the dead were children, their bleached white skulls the size of small grapefruits.

Liberians living in the area said soldiers with the west African peacekeeping force now in the capital city used a bulldozer to bury the remains of hundreds of bodies found in the field. The troops left the neatly ordered pile as a stark memorial of the past chaos.

A skull atop a dirt mound and another on a stick mark other killing fields in the Monrovia area. Human skeletal remains -- most the victims of unleashed tribal hatred -- still lie scattered on roadsides and vacant lots. Certain areas of the city are now synonymous with death.

When Southern Baptist missionaries returned to Monrovia in late February, they found a city numb from killing and looting, slowly recovering from mass starvation caused by the civil war that has devastated the African nation. No one knows the exact death toll of the fighting, but conservative press reports estimate it has killed more than 20,000 people, mostly civilians.

"Most of the rebels who reached Monrovia were young men and boys from the rural areas who never had anything. I'm sure a lot of them had never been to Monrovia," said missionary John Carpenter of Toccoa, Ga.

"Here they came. They had guns, weapons. They had power. And when the looting started, it turned into a hostile outpouring of hatred toward anybody that had an education, possessions or anything they had never been allowed to obtain. ... If they couldn't have it, they were going to kill those that did. The only criteria here for killing people, at one point, was if you looked prosperous. ... It was totally crazy."

Local Baptists and the three missionary couples who returned to Monrovia to begin food and medical relief work agree a willingness to forgive is one of the country's greatest needs. "The desperate need for forgiveness is critical now -- the basic need to accept and welcome those who were on the other side back into the fellowship," Carpenter said.

The returned missionaries are Carpenter and his wife, Betty, of Gainesville, Ga.; Bradley and Carolyn Brown, of Marietta and Atlanta, Ga., respectively; and Jim and Jane Park of Paducah, Ky.

When the civil war started on Christmas Eve 1989 with the invasion of rebel leader Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia from the Ivory Coast, there were more than 50 Southern Baptist missionaries working in the country. The fighting forced most of them to evacuate last June. The current mission force stands at 10 missionaries. Besides, the six in Monrovia, there are two missionary couples in Yekepa, a small town in northern Liberia.

Taylor's NPFL sought to overthrow President Samuel Doe and his government, charging the government with corruption, nepotism and human rights abuses. Doe was killed by a splinter rebel group last September.

For most Liberians, to talk about the killings is to talk about loved ones. Survivors recount whom they have lost, how they escaped death and how they managed to find food, Mrs. Park said.

--more--

"It was the same when we talked to Liberians at the (refugee) camps in Ghana" before returning to Liberia, she said. "The first thing they would say was, 'My name is I lost my. ...'"

"It reminded me of the psalm, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' I thought, 'This really is the shadow of death.'"

It is still too early to know how many Baptists and their churches survived the war. Before the war there were 248 churches and 58,300 members in the conventions to which missionaries related. Some churches were hit harder than others.

"Take Second Providence Baptist Church, four of their six deacons were killed and a lot of their membership are dead or still missing," Carpenter said. "Many of their members were of the Krahn tribe, which were targets of the rebel forces."

To fend off starvation during the fighting between July and November 1990, Monrovia stripped the city of palm trees. They chopped down the trees to harvest the center of the palm, then make palm cabbage. It was filling, but not very nutritious. They also ate roots, leaves, grasses and plants. Few cats or dogs still roam the city.

Since they often didn't know if the cooked vegetation was poisonous, they formed tasting groups. After cooking an unknown leaf or grass, one person would eat a portion. Others would watch the taster for about an hour. If the person lived, the whole group would eat.

United Nations food and medical relief is now reaching most people in the Monrovia area, which is controlled by the west African peacekeeping force.

Originally, local Baptists and the Southern Baptist mission relief team offered to plug into United Nations relief plans by setting up greeting stations at the city's major points of entry. Church volunteers offered to hand out packets of food and give arriving refugees food ration cards and resettlement information.

The U.N. relief team coordinating relief work in Monrovia not only approved the Baptist plan but adopted it as one of its main focuses for relief distribution. Baptists along with other relief groups now are applying to operate various greeting stations.

Liberian Baptists also are considering other avenues of relief work. They may help with food distribution to the sick and elderly. Many of these cannot easily travel to U.N. distribution centers, so Baptists are seeking ways to bring food to them. The missionaries plan to draw from the Foreign Mission Board's hunger and relief funds to help supply Liberians with food and medicine. So far, the Foreign Mission Board has released \$221,800 for relief work with Liberians living in Ghana and Ivory Coast and \$235,000 for use inside Liberia.

It's now possible to drive through most of the city. The main streets are clear of rubble, but little traffic can be seen. Hundreds of cars in the city sit abandoned, little more than rusted chunks of metal stripped to the chassis.

In the downtown area, heavy fighting left most government buildings pockmarked with bullet holes. Most homes and buildings have been looted several times. Electrical and telephone lines are down throughout the city. Thick, black high-voltage lines draped across streets and pathways are so common pedestrians think nothing of pulling the once-lethal cables out of the way like overgrown vines.

Preparing for the peace talks between opposing factions, city officials draped downtown streets with small Liberian county flags, similar to the plastic banners that crisscross American used car lots. With almost no automobile traffic and most people walking slowly in the streets, the flags made the area look like the aftermath of a small-town parade rather than the heart of a capital city.

--more--

Two of the main forces vying for power in Liberia are Charles Taylor and his NPFL, which controls most of the country; and Amos Sawyer, head of the current interim government, which controls the Monrovia area and is kept in power by the west African peacekeeping forces.

Most roads into Monrovia are still closed by Taylor's troops. If the rebels open the roads, many relief workers believe refugees will flood into the city.

The fragile peace in the 15-month civil war has most Monroviens simply waiting to see what happens next. Although Taylor's group recently walked out of the peace talks, many Monroviens are optimistic.

But when pressed why, many say they just cannot imagine the killing will start again.

--30--

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

Silent listening ministry
helps heal Liberian lives

By Donald D. Martin

NFMS

Baptist Press
4/17/91

MONROVIA, Liberia (BP)--Ezekiel Bamolo could barely stand. His body trembled with emotion. When he tried to speak, his words dissolved into cries like those of a wounded animal, penned and mistreated.

As tears ran down into his graying beard, the Liberian shook his head in disbelief and hugged Southern Baptist missionaries John Carpenter and Jim and Jane Park. Grief and joy mixed in a kaleidoscope of feelings as they reunited after months of terror caused by the civil war that has ravaged Liberia.

"You made it through. ... Thank God you made it through," Carpenter whispered as Bamolo wrapped his arms around him again and tightly gripped the back of Carpenter's shirt with clenched fists.

Bamolo, vice principal of Ricks Institute, a Liberian Baptist school, is now little more than a refugee on his own campus. He told the recently returned missionaries of his ordeal, beginning almost in mid-sentence, as if he had flipped on an internal recording that plays over and over again his personal nightmare.

"They (rebel soldiers) carried me to one of their jails," Bamolo recounted. "They would point to me and say, 'Kill him. Go and zero that man. Zero him. He's a mercenary, not a missionary.' They tied my arms behind my back so tightly that my elbows touched. I could do nothing while they pointed their guns at me. But I made it. Thank God, I made it through."

Soldiers with the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, loyal to rebel leader Charles Taylor, arrested Bamolo last November. They accused him of not cooperating with them when NPFL forces occupied the Ricks campus.

"They accused me of not giving them all the school's food and fuel," he said.

The rebels jailed Bamolo for a week with no food and little water. Then, standing bound before a kangaroo court, Bamolo watched as a group of armed rebels, some in their teens, argued and passed judgment on his life.

"I thought I was going to die," he said. "Some of them were shouting, 'Kill him! Zero that man!' But God delivered me. One man asked what crime had I committed. If I was hiding food or fuel, where was it? They argued for a long time and finally took me back to my cell. The next day they let me go."

The missionaries listened to Bamolo tell his story as they walked across the Ricks campus.

--more--

Parts of the campus were in shambles. War planes of the west African peacekeeping force fighting against the NPFL rebel faction bombed Ricks twice. Looters repeatedly ransacked the buildings and faculty homes. Bombs and small rockets ripped holes in the administration-library building. Library books that escaped damage from the fighting were later drenched in rain that poured through gaping holes in the roof and blown-out windows.

As Bamolo and the missionaries walked through the deserted buildings, they talked about mutual friends they had seen or heard about.

With about half of the country's 2.5 million people displaced, news of friends and loved ones moves slowly. There is no mail service or working telephone system. The current cease-fire in Liberia's 15-month civil war continues to hold. But peace talks between warring factions have bogged down.

Most Liberians can only wait to see what will happen next. For now, trading bits of personal news and words of encouragement can be a person's lifeline.

Later, when Carpenter, from Toccoa, Ga., recalled other reunions similar to the one with Bamolo, his eyes filled again with tears.

"To hear them talk about it, over and over again, telling how many times they were threatened -- it's unbelievable," Carpenter said. "Some of them were awakened every hour of the night and told they would die in the morning.

Those of us that have not gone through this cannot begin to imagine what they have experienced.

"But I realize they need to tell the story. They open a little of their own lives and release a little of their own bitterness. That's one of the greatest needs here -- forgiveness and simply listening," Carpenter said.

Returning missionary Bradley Brown, from Marietta, Ga., calls it a ministry of presence. "We did not wait until everything was in working order and patched up," he said. "We needed to be here now."

Brown and his wife, Carolyn, from Atlanta, along with the Parks, both from Paducah, Ky., and Carpenter and his wife, Betty, from Gainesville, Ga., returned to Monrovia in late February to begin relief work.

They had visited the Ricks campus to see if they could open a relief medical clinic there. Mrs. Park, a nurse, said a clinic would be possible as soon as they cleaned up the mess left by looters. Bamolo later arranged with people living in the area to come help clean the clinic area.

Relief groups are beginning to meet some Liberians' physical needs. United Nations supplies of food and medicine are reaching Liberians living in the Monrovia area controlled by the west African peacekeeping force. Liberian Baptists and the Southern Baptist missionaries are planning ways of augmenting U.N. relief plans, possibly delivering food to the elderly and disabled. Yet the emotionally draining ministry of listening is just as necessary, said Mrs. Brown.

"It's not always easy, but each person has his own story, and he needs to tell it," she said. "The stories mean as much to me as they do to family. We know them; we know their children. A woman came yesterday. She stayed and talked for more than three hours. She was telling me that one of her daughters is behind rebel lines with her four children. Her daughter can't get out." Mrs. Brown said the woman was not looking so much for a solution as for someone to talk to.

At times the emotions of returning have been overwhelming, Carpenter said.

"The other day so many people kept coming in here, each with his own story of grief. When that day was over, I wanted to scream out, 'How much more can I hear? How much more can I stand?' Tale after tale after tale. They share their hurts and I share that hurt. I realize they need to tell it. The church has a tremendous role to play."

--more--

Park expects the waves of grief as well as the joy of reunions to last for years.

"The other day, before a relief meeting at Providence Baptist Church, I walked down one of the streets to see how the area had fared," Park said. "I was walking down the street, looking at such senseless destruction, when this fellow ran across the street. Before I knew it he had his arms wrapped around me and almost knocked me down.

"I didn't know what to think. But it was one of my seminary students. He was just so glad to see me. For us to come back was important to him. That turned out to be a ministry to me, to have that kind of welcome. But it's an emotional roller coaster."

--30--

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

CORRECTION: In the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting program run 3/22/91, please make the following correction:

In the 6:50 p.m., Wednesday, June 5, session, the Call to Celebration, please substitute the name Mike Huckabee, Arkansas Baptist Convention president and pastor of Beech Street First Baptist Church of Texarkana, Ark., for the name and title of Mike Huffman of Aurora, N.C.

Thanks,
Baptist Press
