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SBC Cooperative Program ends
year slightly below budget

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts finished fiscal year 1991-92 slightly below budget needs as well as below the previous year, according to Morris H. Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee.

Chapman said the funds received by the Executive Committee for 1991-92 totaled \$138,234,734 compared to the budget goal of \$140,710,282 or 98.24 percent of the budget goal. The 1991-92 receipts also are 1.40 percent or \$1,965,659 below the previous year's receipts of \$140,200,394.

"The recent trends in Cooperative Program receipts appear to reflect both the continuing downturn in the nation's economy and the transitional adjustments occurring in the (SBC)," Chapman said. "However, I am extremely optimistic about the future. The Cooperative Program is a tried and proven method for funding world missions. I believe a new momentum is building among our Southern Baptist churches which will result in previously unreach heights in mission giving."

The September 1992 receipts totaled \$10,392,118 compared to that month in 1991 of \$10,800,923 or a decrease of \$408,804 (3.78 percent). The monthly basic operating budget requirement for that fiscal year was \$11,725,856.

A brighter spot in the year's report was designated gifts received by the Executive Committee. For the fiscal year which ended Sept. 30, designated gifts totaled \$127,916,369 compared to the previous year of \$124,181,625 or a 3.01 percent increase.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Offering for Foreign Missions, the Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions, world hunger and other special gifts.

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 funds to the Executive Committee for national and international ministries. The percentage of distribution is at the discretion of each state or regional convention.

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Congressmen: Baptist's book
is budget deficit wake-up call

By Carey Kinsolving

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WASHINGTON (BP)--A couple of congressman worried about disinterest in the national debt have been offering colleagues free copies of a book.

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Its title: "The Coming Economic Earthquake."

The book offers came from Reps. Dan Burton, R-Ind., and Frank Wolf, R-Va. They met with 10 colleagues and the book's author, Larry Burkett, in the Capitol Sept. 30 to discuss strategy for dealing with America's national debt.

"Whoever is elected president in November could be sitting on a time bomb," said Rep. Phil Crane, R-Ill.

Such is the rhetoric of those who already feel the tremors of an economic earthquake. The soft-spoken Burkett, a Southern Baptist layman from Georgia, doesn't appear as a fire-breathing prophet of doom. He purports no degrees in economics and has no fancy theories to sell. Rather, Burkett speaks from years of counseling on how to apply simple biblical principles to money management.

In the early 1970s, Burkett began organizing the 600 verses on money he had underlined when reading through the Bible. He applied these principles to his own pocketbook and shared them with friends. His pastor at Park Avenue Baptist Church in Titusville, Fla., asked him to counsel church members.

Soon, he began conducting seminars. Large churches, such as First Baptist in Atlanta where Burkett later became a member, encouraged members to attend. Now, he dispenses financial advice to millions daily on several hundred Christian radio stations. Burkett now is a member of First Baptist Church in Gainesville, Ga.

Congressmen tout Burkett's book as a wake-up call to colleagues who seem not to hear the rumblings of a financial earthquake -- an earthquake that could shake the foundations of the republic.

Burkett said his book, which has sold more than 600,000 copies in hardback since its release a year ago, merely puts the economic hieroglyphics of government reports into language and charts that people can understand. Burkett writes: The "on budget" interest payments in 1991 consumed 17 percent of all tax revenues. The most conservative estimates, he says, place it at 50 percent of tax revenues by the year 2000. The number of days a taxpayer must work to pay Uncle Sam his due has risen from 36 days in 1960 to 121 days in 1991.

Burton has used Burkett's graphs even in talking to senior citizens about capping Social Security payments -- a politically risky think to do. Burton said he showed a seniors' group a graph in which the interest payments from a projected \$13.5 trillion deficit equals the total revenues from all income tax. Burton said seniors have "an entirely new perspective" when he paints an inflation scenario in which a loaf of bread may cost \$30 or \$40.

The congressmen seemed frustrated at times by the lack of interest in their message. They agreed there is enough blame to go around for the deficit.

But if blame were to be assigned, Crane noted an apathetic electorate could share part of it. "Special interest groups salivate" in non-presidential election years because only 35 percent of Americans vote.

Burkett calls for balancing the budget during the next five years by slashing government programs: federal payrolls by 40 percent, welfare by 25 percent, defense by 25 percent and entitlement programs by 25 percent. All this would save only \$146.5 billion. More cuts would have to trim an additional \$200 billion.

Some congressman expressed disappointment over the failure of Congress to follow the Gramm-Rudman Act guidelines for reducing the budget deficit, but agreed a new effort must be mounted to convince colleagues and constituents of the need for immediate deficit reductions.

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The congressmen agreed to a two-pronged approach. They plan to sponsor a bipartisan seminar on the national debt in January for the estimated 100 to 150 freshman congressmen. They also hope to use media more effectively to expose "pork barrel" additions to bills and educate constituents.

But the problem may lie at a deeper level. Ultimately, Burkett writes, America's budget woes are a symptom of its spiritual condition. God has been removed from "the decision-making process," Burkett explains. "When any nation does this, evil will prosper. This is not the fault of the politicians; they are responding to the wishes of the most vocal groups."

Burkett observes that unethical people seem to be more committed to evil agendas than Christians are to ethical ones. He notes that Jesus made this same observation in his day, when he said: "And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light" (Luke 16:9).

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Kinsolving is a Washington-based free-lance writer.

Washington Post details
budget deficit crisis

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
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WASHINGTON (BP)--Interest payments on the nation's \$4 trillion budget deficit "are now the third-biggest item in the federal budget and soon will rival all military spending," according to a three-part series in The Washington Post.

The newspaper's series, titled "The Mortgage on America," appeared Sept. 27-29.

To pay the debt, \$65,000 would have to be levied against every four Americans, the paper reported.

"The accumulated national debt has quadrupled since 1980," the newspaper noted, "following a series of runaway federal budget deficits. ... Never before has the nation's debt increased at this pace during peacetime and rarely even in time of war. The debt increase constitutes perhaps the most lasting economic legacy of the past 12 years of government."

However, the debt "is a threat that remains vague and impersonal to most Americans, opinion surveys show," The Post said. Sen. Warren Rudman, R-N.H., is quoted as saying a "conspiracy of silence" exists among Republican and Democratic politicians fearful of the spending cuts and tax increases needed to shrink the debt.

"Americans don't have to face directly the costs of the national debt as they do their mortgages or car payments," The Post added. "But the national debt belongs to all Americans and it is diminishing their standard of living and eating up part of their paychecks as surely as any tax.

"During the long economic expansion from 1982 through 1989, most people shrugged off the idea of a day of reckoning," the paper said. "Now an entire era of reckoning has arrived. For the next decade, if not the next generation, every government policy decision -- from raising taxes and overhauling the health-care system to restoring American cities and helping the former Soviet republics establish stable capitalist democracies -- will be taken in the shadow of the national debt."

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Gregory resignation rejected
by First Baptist, Dallas, group

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
10/2/92

DALLAS (BP)--A leadership group of First Baptist Church in Dallas has voted unanimously not to accept the sudden resignation of Joel Gregory, pastor of the Southern Baptist Convention's largest congregation.

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About 25 men, including deacons, members of an executive committee and chairmen of several church committees, voted Oct. 1 to refuse to accept Gregory's resignation. Gregory resigned suddenly at the Sept. 30 Wednesday night prayer service citing frustrations over the lack of progress in the transition between longtime pastor W.A. Criswell and himself.

However, Gregory played down the prospect of returning to the church by telling news media he didn't see how it could work out, humanly speaking, but was open to God's direction that might reveal something beyond what has been seen.

Gregory has been in seclusion since his startling announcement Sept. 30.

Ron Harris, a church spokesman, said Gregory had indicated he would be willing to meet with the executive leadership but no time or date has been set.

The church has scheduled a formal meeting of the Fellowship of Deacons, about 250 men, for Oct. 4 at 4 p.m. If the deacons vote to reject Gregory's resignation, it could be dealt with and a vote taken by the church membership in the Sunday evening worship service.

However, even a vote of the church membership to reject Gregory's resignation wouldn't necessarily change his mind. Gregory, in his Sept. 30 announcement, said "I immediately and irrevocably submit my resignation."

Bo Sexton, chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons, told the Dallas Morning News he hoped the crisis could be worked out.

"I'm still kind of in a state of shock that this has all happened, so what we're going to try to do is follow the wishes of the deacons and the congregation," Sexton told the paper. "We do not want to accept his resignation and we want a chance to sit down and talk with him to see what's on his mind and in his heart."

Gregory has been pastor of the church for nearly two years while Criswell, called the "senior pastor," celebrates his 48th anniversary with the church Oct. 4.

A special recognition of Criswell's anniversary has been put off for one week, Harris said. Criswell, 82, has indicated he may want to stay as senior pastor until his 50th anniversary, and that was cited by Gregory as an indication of the lack of progress in the transition of leadership.

Gregory, 44, indicated no immediate plans for the future.

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Southern Baptists fill request
by Red Cross for volunteers

By Steve Barber

Baptist Press
10/2/92

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--One week after the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission issued a call for 200 disaster relief volunteers to operate the remaining south Florida deeding units, the agency has announced that all slots have been filled.

The volunteers will serve for 10 days at a time through the end of October. The Red Cross will pay for their transportation to and from Miami as well as their meals and lodging.

"The Red Cross knew where the remaining needs existed and knew they could count on Southern Baptists to keep these feeding units open," James D. Williams, Brotherhood Commission president, said. "We are so grateful for the financial boost the Red Cross provided and so thankful for the willingness of these volunteers to answer the call so quickly."

The units remaining in south Florida are provided by state Southern Baptist conventions in Florida, Kentucky and Tennessee.

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The volunteers will work 12-hour shifts all 10 days. The daily operational cycle of a typical disaster relief unit requires some to rise as early as 3 a.m. to start breakfast. Others work a later shift and "lock up" for the night around midnight.

Williams stressed volunteers can still be used in other areas during the coming weeks, such as construction, but he noted financial assistance like that provided to those working the feeding units is not available.

Prospective volunteers are asked to contact their state convention Brotherhood offices in their respective states for more information.

More than 2 million meals have been served in south Florida since Brotherhood disaster relief units moved into the area after Hurricane Andrew came ashore Aug. 24.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: The following commentaries about Keith Parks and his era at the Foreign Mission Board are adapted from the October-November 1992 issue of The Commission magazine. The longer magazine versions, plus The Commission's interview with Parks and his wife, Helen Jean, are available on SBCNet Newsroom, along with photo cutlines. Five BP photos (one vertical and four horizontals) accompanying these stories were mailed Sept. 30.

Keith Parks: journey
to Rio and beyond

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
10/2/92

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP)--Weary from a long day, Keith Parks opened a complimentary travel packet from the flight attendant.

One by one he removed the contents: a toothbrush, a tube of toothpaste, a comb. His eyes lit up as he pulled out the comb.

Bald head glinting in the plane's cabin light, he held it aloft. "Sure glad I got a nice comb," he observed with a chuckle.

The somber mood of his traveling companions en route to Rio de Janeiro dissolved in laughter. If he could find something to joke about, even on his final overseas trip as Foreign Mission Board president, so could they.

Parks retires Oct. 30 after 38 years in Southern Baptist foreign missions. But he would lead by example to the end.

He would do it through consistent spiritual inspiration, which would transform the July 1992 Consultation on Global Evangelization in Rio into a potential breakthrough in world missions.

And he would do it with his characteristic humor and down-to-earth touch.

Those qualities have seldom waned, even in times of crisis, such as Parks' difficult decision to retire three years earlier than he'd originally planned.

"A lot of people don't have a sense of humor," he says. "I laugh at some strange things. It's better than crying."

Even when less candor could make things easier on him, his openness -- with information he believes Southern Baptists who support foreign missions deserve to know -- has won him both praise and criticism as Southern Baptists struggle through political, philosophical and theological differences.

While others ponder his many facets, he describes himself as "one-dimensional." That dimension is missions. It's linked to a vision to redirect foreign missions to "World A" -- that quarter of the globe where few or no Christians have gone before. Parks' sweeping vision has led to reorganization of the Foreign Mission Board's geographic regions and the sending of some resources to World A.

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He went to Rio, not just on a sentimental journey, but also on a spiritual quest to put another piece of his vision in place.

About 100 key national and missionary Baptist leaders invited to the Rio consultation from countries across the Americas -- from Canada to Argentina, and others like them around the world, hold the key to a next step in his vision for world evangelization.

That step would have overseas Baptists moving out in force with the message of Jesus Christ. The traditional receivers of missions would redeploy some of their own forces and become the senders, not just to their own language and culture but throughout the world. Parks envisions that kind of teamwork must happen for Baptists to penetrate World A.

Parks' final overseas appearance as FMB president -- and worldwide respect for his vision -- provided a receptive audience. The leaders expected a helpful meeting. But they didn't expect to learn how they -- who had received missionaries for years -- could reverse their role.

As he spoke, Parks stood virtually in the shadow of the towering Christ the Redeemer statue, which dominates Rio's skyline from atop Mount Corcovado. Many see it as symbolic of Jesus blessing a city so full of needs you could spend a lifetime there and never look elsewhere.

Parks confronted the tension God's people have experienced throughout world history -- the tension between the human urge to look inward to self and the divine imperative to die to self and look outward to others -- in three addresses longtime observers called his most inspirational ever.

Both the ancient Jews and the early Christians, he said, had to learn the hard way that God isn't a local tribal deity for one people, but a global God of all nations and peoples.

People today still struggle with the local vs. global tension, he said. They, too, limit God with human barriers that turn them inward, such as the need for position, power, money, self-gratification, security and even the comforts of language and culture.

"Too many Christians in this world are convinced their responsibility is only to the people of their culture and language," Parks said. "We'll never reach the world for Christ if we restrict ourselves to our own language and culture. Local interest always wins when culture dominates Christianity. Global interest wins when Christianity dominates culture."

When you become a citizen of the kingdom of God, Parks told the leaders, you're no longer simply a citizen of a language or culture.

You can't wait to follow God's call to the world until all the local needs are met, he said. The Apostle Paul didn't, and we can't either, Parks challenged. Nor can we wait until we have all the resources. If we attempt only what's humanly possible, we'll achieve only what's humanly possible.

"Some pastors and teachers make the mistake I made as a young missionary," he said. "They rob new Christians of the whole gospel because they're poor. God wants us to lay the lost world on people from the day of conversion."

That struck home with an audience overwhelmed with the needs in their own cultures. If they began to shift nervously in their seats at the start, they could barely stay in them as Parks' message continued.

A light had turned on in their eyes. A sense of pride had begun to build. Later they explained how they felt:

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This man spoke to us, they said, as equals who had something to give to the world. We've heard before that the Foreign Mission Board sees us as partners. Parks didn't pretend to have all the answers. He sought our input. And most important, he spoke with authority from the Bible and moved us with stories of how God is changing lives in other parts of the world.

"If Dr. Parks said a bus was outside headed for Mongolia, I'd get on it," one participant said.

"Dr. Parks is a prophet ahead of his time," added Azariah McKenzie, Caribbean Baptist chief executive.

"He encourages and enables others to catch and fulfill a vision, not from a position of power, but sharing as an equal with due respect for the right of individual groups to carry out their responsibilities as the Spirit guides them and as they grow into maturity and interdependence."

In the end, Parks' challenge was irresistible: "If we reach the world for Christ in this generation, Baptists of the Americas must take a leading role."

When the leaders emerged from small-group meetings after Parks' challenge, they did so with a list of recommendations designed to project the countries of the Americas into missions beyond their own culture.

He hoped the Rio meeting would be the first of five regional meetings all over the world aimed at the same result and culminating with a global meeting in 1995. That idea headed a 10-point vision for world evangelization he said God led him to announce in August 1991, when he asked to continue as president until 1995.

Parks, who turns 65 on Oct. 23, won't be at the Foreign Mission Board to influence its further implementation because, he said, God led him last March, as his situation changed, to decide the time had come to step down. But he looks ahead with optimism.

"Let's not bemoan the past but see what challenges God has for us in the future," said Parks, who has received a number of job offers but hasn't slowed down long enough to consider them.

"Emotionally, I can't do my job (as FMB president) and look elsewhere," he said. "I'll decide about the future when this job is finished."

When he decides, it will be some type of missions.

"That's who I am."

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The Parks era in missions:
shifting to a global strategy

By Leland Webb

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The nearly 13 years R. Keith Parks has led Southern Baptists' foreign missions have been packed: Daring new methods. Classic restatement of Baptists' primary mission goal. Clear reemphasis of basic principles. A surge in volunteers. Prayer emphasized as strategy. Closer cooperation with other missions-centered Christian groups. Reinforcing partnership with overseas Baptists. New focus on forgotten peoples.

But those are subtopics under the two-word theme of the Parks era: global evangelization.

"More than any other person, he has led us to focus on the whole world," says William Hancock, Foreign Mission Board chairman from 1990-92. Parks led Southern Baptists to realize "there are no countries closed to the gospel. He has been persistent in giving leadership that focused on the unreached peoples of the world."

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Adds Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Denton Lotz: "He has been a significant instrument of God for ... the missionary goal of evangelization of the world in this generation."

As always, historians looking back on the 1980s and 1990s will have to provide the long-range perspective. But from several of Parks' contemporaries who have been part of this missions era have come evaluations of his 153-month term. (His tenure ranks him sixth in length of service among FMB executives.)

The whole world.

The challenge to proclaim the gospel to all people came as a mid-course adjustment for Parks' presidency. It grew out of crushing statistical evidence that without an enlarged vision of the world, Southern Baptists would never contribute their full share to global evangelization.

"At a time when numerous denominations were pulling back from foreign-mission efforts, he was urging Southern Baptists to move forward," points out William M. Pinson Jr., Baptist General Convention of Texas executive director. "He helped Southern Baptists realize the extent of the world's lostness."

Parks' intensified move toward global outreach combined spiritual direction with hard data.

"He has accepted technology to a significant degree and helped Baptists and Christians around the world interpret faithfully the world statistics," Lotz says. "A data base for the population of the world has been set up which has been a significant contribution to all evangelistic groups"

Parks endured flak from some quarters for enabling widely known Christian researcher David Barrett, an Anglican, to become a board consultant. And a number of missionaries and others have not been comfortable with some implications of Barrett's research. But the overall outcome was to jar the status quo.

The impact of Parks on evangelization "is not yet fully measurable because the implications of his redrawing the map of missions reality are massive," comments Bill O'Brien, former FMB executive vice president and one of Parks' closest associates.

Global partners.

Reality often reinforces convictions. Parks sought early on to convince overseas Baptist leaders of his sincerity concerning real partnership. Over the years many of them accepted the fact that Parks meant what he said, even as they grasped the implications for their national Baptist conventions. Meanwhile in the United States, the research-supported picture of the massiveness of the global-witness task helped convince others of the need for partnership at all levels.

The first Global Evangelization Strategy Consultation, held at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center in June 1985, involved Baptist leaders from 21 nations and set in motion a growing sense of partnership among overseas Baptists.

One participant in that conference, Azariah McKenzie, identifies as one of Parks' most lasting contributions to missions the "unapologetic efforts he has made to emancipate (missions) from the old syndrome and stereotypes with their pronounced demarcations between 'givers' and 'receivers,' which reduced the relationship to little more than that of compassion and charity of the rich for the poor or the strong for the weak" McKenzie, of Kingston, Jamaica, is executive secretary-treasurer of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship.

Andrew MacRae, former general secretary of the Baptist Union of Scotland, now principal and dean of Acadia Divinity School, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, adds, "His single-minded dedication to the spread of the gospel ... and his evident avoidance of imposing a position of his own choosing on indigenous groups of Baptists around the world created an immense level of trust among other Baptist groups."

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As a kind of culmination of his efforts, in July Parks made his last overseas trip for the Foreign Mission Board to a Consultation for Global Evangelization in the Americas. Betty Law, vice president for the Americas, and others reported to trustees it had been a "watershed" for stimulating national Baptist leaders to recommend missions outreach by their own conventions.

Parks' consistent openness to others and his deep realization of the enormity of reaching the world helped him take initiatives to broaden the working fellowship for missions beyond the Baptist family. This open stance to cooperation has not always been seen as characteristic of Southern Baptists.

When Paul McKaughan, now executive director of the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies, returned from service as a Presbyterian missionary in Brazil, his view was that Baptists simultaneously maintained "a denominational arrogance" and a "personal warmth and love for the Lord." But after McKaughan became mission board director for the Presbyterian Church in America, he reports, "I met Keith Parks, and my view of Southern Baptists as a perceived autonomous entity was broken forever."

Innovation, recommitment.

The realistic view of the world Parks embraces has led to emphases in two seemingly divergent directions. Yet when understood in the context of Parks' consistent missiology, these directions can be understood as complementary, not contradictory. The two developments: 1) fostering dramatic new approaches to restricted nations and unreached peoples; 2) renewed emphasis on "evangelism that results in churches." Both elements relate to making the best use of available personnel and money.

In his "innovative approaches to 'frontier' mission efforts," Parks showed he has "a heart for the lost, the least and the forgotten," says Jimmy Maroney, director of the FMB's Global Desk. "He tried to move this board beyond the safety of 120 countries into the high-risk countries of the Muslim, Hindu and animistic world. The final frontier. That area of the world that has received the least attention by Christians for centuries.

"He moved from seeing missionaries go only to countries requesting personnel to countries-people groups that would never request missionaries because of a dominant Muslim or Hindu population."

At the same time, Parks called missionaries' attention to the board's longstanding stated intention: where possible reduce missionary profile in overseas churches and institutions, relinquishing responsibilities to overseas Baptists. This, in theory, would allow missionaries to push farther into unevangelized areas.

Parks "refocused Southern Baptist missionaries on evangelism," says C. Mark Corts, Winston-Salem, N.C., pastor who was an FMB trustee in the 1970s and 1980s and chairman from 1988-90. "The concept of the 70/30 plan, which was misunderstood by so many, was an expression of Keith Parks' personal commitment to evangelism and was not an attempt to diminish Baptists' commitment to institutional missions, so much as it was a response to the social and nationalistic realities of our day."

"The call for the redeployment of Christians' resources to have greater impact on the unevangelized world is always going to be in competition with the established work to which people have become deeply committed," reminds Tom Houston, international director of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. "There are few examples in history of anyone doing this successfully."

Another seeming overlap lies in the fact that more Southern Baptists than ever in history have served overseas as volunteers during the leadership period of Parks, whose missiology demands the incarnational approach -- missionaries devoting their lives to cross-cultural witness.

Corts points out the president's "emphasis on the career resident missionary living in the customs, the culture and the language of the people" and notes the value of Parks' stability: "Often he was pushed and nudged by people to go off on tangents, but he was never one to take those tangents too quickly.

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"A good example is the matter of mission volunteers. ... His commitment to the value of the career and resident missionary made volunteerism possible and successful. Without those career missionaries, volunteers would have no opening, no base and no planning for their work."

Personal integrity.

"The real assessment of Keith Parks will have to be made in terms of the man," suggests Avery Willis, a former missionary colleague in Indonesia, now discipleship and family adult department director at the Sunday School Board in Nashville. "He has been a brilliant strategist, a concerned and burdened missions leader, a loyal and principled individual who has set a personal example by his own spiritual life, his family, his Christian life and his faith.

"Everything he espoused had already been thought out and lived out in the crucible of the mission field. He did not ask others to do what he had not already done himself."

The tenure for Parks as FMB leader has fallen entirely within the era of restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, with its sweeping changes in leaders and loyalties. Yet he remains one of the most respected convention leaders.

As part of who Parks is, an integral part of his vision from the first day of his presidency has been the necessity for prayer. "He has emphasized prayer," says Ed Sanders, missionary to Indonesia, "to the extent he has made it an integral part of the FMB program by hiring Catherine Walker and Minette Drumwright to lead this emphasis."

"He has taught Baptists to practice prayer as a mission strategy," agrees Walker, a former missionary colleague of the Parkses. "His focusing attention on leading Baptists to pray ... for the specific mission needs has permeated the SBC churches, missionaries overseas and national churches in many foreign lands."

Difficulties.

Despite the directions altered during the Parks years, some feel more progress might have resulted had conditions been different. "Communicating vision and winning support for it are never simple," advises Winston Crawley, longtime staff member who once directed the board's former overseas division and retired while director of planning. "Inertia is not just a principle of physics; it is also a reality of human interaction. Change does not come easily, and there are always those who resist it."

Observers have suggested some specific factors that affected the outcome of the Parks era. Summarized in two categories:

-- Southern Baptist interests have been focused on matters other than missions: SBC changes, a slowing national economy, a trend toward U.S. isolationism in the 1980s, world conditions.

"The greatest factor hindering global evangelization is illiteracy and/or apathy among Southern Baptists as to our responsibility for reaching out to the world," FMB trustee Ginny Brant declares.

Suggests Cortis, "The diminished denominational loyalty was hard for him to understand, and individuals' increased concern with issues and faithfulness to those issues rather than faithfulness to a denomination were difficult for him to grasp."

Willis notes with regret, "For whatever reasons, he was not able to affect as much change on the Baptist constituency in the United States as he was on the missionary force and the rest of the world. He did inspire integrity and stability on the part of most Baptists. He was not able to overcome the difficulties enough to encourage Baptists to give more generously to missions."

Brant and Hancock charge the media with contributing to difficulties by majoring on negative reports rather than positive ones. And Hancock feels Parks could have tried to communicate better with trustees.

Parks "did not take a great deal of time to build bridges," says Cortis. "To him, that seemed to take time away from nurturing his larger vision of global evangelization. That often left him in an adversarial role with the trustees more often than was healthy for his vision."

-- Organizational drawbacks. Managing a worldwide enterprise is intricate in any arena, but a foreign mission effort is made up of a unique collection of individuals, at home and overseas, most of whom feel led by God to serve in their role. To this milieu Parks brought a participatory management style, assigning responsibility and calling for accountability. He prefers to move by consensus, something hard to achieve consistently.

Parks' administrative style "did not hamper the vision, but it probably hampered equal implementation of the vision," suggests O'Brien. If, for whatever reason, staff members "do not share equal enthusiasm for the vision, that is bound to come out in the ways it is communicated and implemented ... or not implemented, as the case may be."

But O'Brien, Parks' fellow visionary, feels that Keith Parks "has embraced the best of our heritage while innovating for the future. He has done so while remaining inclusive of all Southern Baptists, seeing the FMB as a servant agency for all the churches and people who call themselves Southern Baptists."

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Webb is editor of The Commission, the Foreign Mission Board's magazine.

Nine have led Foreign
Mission Board since 1846

Baptist Press
10/2/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Nine men have led the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board since 1846.

The chief executive has been designated by different terms, including corresponding secretary, executive secretary, executive director and president.

It took a year to find the first corresponding secretary. The first man chosen when the board was founded in 1845 was C.D. Mallery, who declined for health reasons and prior commitments. Four others elected to the office declined. At the 1846 convention in Richmond, James B. Taylor was unanimously elected.

The executives, their length of tenure and the number of mission fields entered during each tenure include:

James B. Taylor, June 1846-Dec. 1871; four mission fields entered.

Henry Allen Tupper, Feb. 1872-June 1893; three fields entered.

Robert J. Willingham, Sept. 1893-Dec. 1914; three fields entered.

James F. Love, June 1915-May 1928; three fields entered.

T. Bronson Ray, Oct. 1929-Dec. 1932; no new fields entered.

Charles E. Maddry, Jan. 1933-Dec. 1944; two fields entered.

M. Theron Rankin, Jan. 1945-June 27, 1953; 20 fields entered.

Baker James Cauthen, Oct. 1953-Dec. 1979; 67 fields entered.

R. Keith Parks, Jan. 1980-Oct. 1992; 40 fields entered. *

* The pace of new fields entered was faster during Parks' presidency than during any other executive tenure, averaging one new field every 3.8 months, compared, for example, to one every 4.7 months during the term of Baker James Cauthen. In addition, during the Parks' presidency service was provided to more than 10 other countries without official designation, since missionaries cannot be assigned there.

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Sunday school, bold witness,
Bible broke his ties to crime

By Ferrell Foster

HOMEWOOD, Ill. (BP)--Tom Wozny has a past -- dealings with the mob, an expensive lifestyle and a live-in girlfriend. But there is a part of his past that has changed everything: He accepted Christ as Savior in 1984.

"As a young boy I had only really had one idol, ... my father," the 43-year-old Wozny said.

His dad was a self-employed accountant who took his son on visits to clients. Those visits included stops at taverns and restaurants where Tom was "treated like a king."

"I always knew that's what I wanted to be when I grew up," Wozny said. "As I was growing up I spent less time with kids and playing ... and more time with (my father). ... By the time I was 10 or 11 years old I was pretty well versed in accounting."

By age 15, Tom had discovered that some of the people his dad worked with were "pretty influential."

"In our family situation we dealt with a lot of the syndicate. They would have front businesses, restaurants and taverns ... to funnel illegal money through," Wozny recounted.

But the law caught up with one of the clients and the senior Wozny told his son he either had to reveal "some ways money was being handled in some of the businesses" or go to jail. He chose jail.

"At 16, I took over the family accounting business," Wozny said. "At that time I decided this was really the power I wanted and went all out to get it Actually, it was the money." He said it was not unusual to visit a client and be handed \$500 or \$600 in cash for "just answering a question."

By the age of 18, Wozny was married, had a big house and was financially able to "pick up and go anyplace I wanted." He told of sitting at a Chicago bar with friends and deciding on a whim to go to Las Vegas.

But he was not happy with anything and eventually lost his family.

Wozny moved in with a waitress named Pattie. She was a "Baptist girl" and had parents who continued to pray for her.

The two eventually attended a revival service and began regularly attending Temple Missionary Baptist Church in South Chicago Heights on Sundays, becoming members of a Sunday school class.

"I enjoyed the church, the people," he said. "The Sunday school teacher really took an interest in me. I was raised Catholic ... This was something totally different."

A Christian whom Pattie had known paid the couple a visit. Pattie eventually "threw her out" of the house for saying God did not hear the couple's prayers.

"I decided I'm going to show this goody-two-shoes Christian that I could beat her at her own book," Wozny said. "I started reading the Bible. ... I read it from front to back ... and it convicted one area of my life after another."

"By the time I got to the New Testament I knew I had to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. ... I knew he loved me and really wanted me."

In September 1984, Wozny accepted Christ, made the decision public, was baptized and married Pattie.

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With his decision for Christ, Wozny knew he had to cut his ties to organized crime figures. The morning after his baptism "one of the main guys called ... and said, 'Close out my books, I'm moving to Florida.' ... The other gentleman was arrested in a foreign country and is now in a federal prison."

God "totally removed that part of my life."

Since then, "the Lord has done mighty things" in Wozny's life. He and his wife have become Home Mission Board Mission Service Corps volunteers in youth ministry for Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association and are active members of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Country Club Hills, Ill.

Still an accountant, Wozny works a lot in January through April each year to free up time for ministry the rest of the year.

Wozy credits his early involvement in Sunday school as being a key to his spiritual growth. "It was the Sunday school, that group, the teacher (John Hibbs) who looked past what I was." Hibbs was "always there to encourage me."

And, Wozy said, "It was God's Word that told my story over and over as I read it. If he could do that for all those other characters in (the Bible), he could do it for me."

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Claude King resigns post
to write on awakening

Baptist Press
10/2/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Out of "a sense of emergency" for the need of spiritual awakening in America, Claude King has resigned his supervisory position at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, effective Oct. 31, to give full attention to writing materials on the subject.

King, supervisor of the LIFE support unit in the board's discipleship and family development division, has agreed to write "A Fresh Encounter with God: God's Pattern for Revival" in conjunction with Henry Blackaby, director of prayer and spiritual awakening at the Home Mission Board. They hope to have the materials published by April 1993 and promote their use in simultaneous revivals to be held in many Southern Baptist churches in 1995.

King and Blackaby collaborated on an earlier project, "Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God." King is co-author of WiseCounsel and editor of Disciple's PrayerLife, both published by the BSSB.

"The magnitude of the project and the need for significant blocks of time to study, pray, experience and write these materials began to impress on me the impossibility of the task without my making major adjustments in my life," said King, who is giving up a salaried position to undertake the writing project.

King said when he has shared portions of the content with groups, "people are deeply moved to repentance. It is evident this is a message God has for his people."

Avery Willis, director of the discipleship and family adult department, called King a "key in the resurgence of depth discipleship training materials. We will miss him, but we recognize that he feels God's call on his life."

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