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NATIONAL OFFICE  
SBC Executive Committee  
901 Commerce #750  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203  
(615) 244-2355  
Herb Hollinger, Vice President  
Fax (615) 742-8919  
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

**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) 828-5232*  
NASHVILLE *Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300*  
RICHMOND *Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151*  
WASHINGTON *Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223*

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Put aside differences and unite  
for Lottie Moon, asks FMB head

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press  
11/10/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists should lay aside their differences and unite to reach the \$84 million goal for the 1992 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, said Don Kammerdiener, the Foreign Mission Board's interim president.

"The \$84 million goal is not only reachable -- just 3.5 percent higher than what was actually given last year -- but it is one we must meet if the board is to keep from curtailing some of its work," Kammerdiener said.

Kammerdiener's statement came soon after he took the helm of the board, which sustains work in 126 countries. He follows former President R. Keith Parks. Parks retired Oct. 31 after 38 years with the board -- but not before sending a letter to missionaries to further explain why he felt compelled to retire this year. The letter criticized changes he said had occurred at the board under present trustee leadership. Parks' letter triggered separate responses from Kammerdiener and trustee chairman John Jackson, a California pastor.

Also, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a group of Southern Baptist moderates, has announced a new world mission offering campaign that will compete both with Lottie Moon and the denomination's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions.

"I have faith that Southern Baptists will overcome the weak economy and attempts by a Southern Baptist splinter group to raise money for an alternative mission program, and remain true to the heritage that has guided us in the past," Kammerdiener said.

Since the first \$3,315 offering 104 years ago, many Southern Baptists have given faithfully to the annual foreign mission campaign. During the past 11 years giving has doubled, fueling some of Southern Baptists' fastest expansion overseas.

If the goal is reached this year, the \$84 million will fund about half of next year's foreign mission program. Receipts from Southern Baptists' unified giving plan, the Cooperative Program, will pay for most of the rest.

Next year \$66 million -- more than three-fourths of the goal -- will go just to help support the 3,900 missionaries under appointment.

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Much of it, too, will pay for various evangelism programs. For example, nearly a decade ago Southern Baptist workers in the Middle East began writing an Arabic Sunday school curriculum. Last year the program won acceptance among churches in many groups, from Catholics to Pentecostals. This year some 20,000 new Christians reportedly have emerged from a revival in Egypt that began with the Arabic Bible studies.

The Lottie Moon offering is the largest of its kind in evangelical history. As it has grown, so has the percentage of foreign mission work it underwrites.

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GBC unanimously elects White  
as executive director-treasurer By R. Albert Mohler Jr.

Baptist Press  
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MACON, Ga. (BP)--Ignoring those who said it couldn't be done, the Georgia Baptist Convention's executive committee voted unanimously Nov. 9 to elect Paducah, Ky., pastor J. Robert White as GBC's new executive director-treasurer.

White, pastor of First Baptist Church in Paducah and a former pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Carrollton, Ga., told the committee he was not looking for a job. "I have a wonderful church -- we have had a marvelous 11 years," he said. "The only reason I would ever consider (the GBC position) is if God is in it. I feel God is in this."

The committee evidently agreed, electing White without dissent or opposition. The standing vote revealed a united committee, meeting in its traditional pre-convention session.

The meeting came less than 60 days after the committee elected Home Mission Board administrator Gary S. Jones by a 69-34 vote after a heated and divisive debate. Jones subsequently declined to accept the position, citing the split vote.

Search committee chairman James M. Ramsey, pastor of First Baptist Church in Albany, presented White to the committee, citing his pastoral spirit, commitment to missions and effectiveness in supporting Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program for funding national and international missions and ministry. White's Paducah church ranked second in Kentucky CP giving, with over \$300,000 in 1991-1992 contributions.

White shared with the committee his struggle in considering the GBC position, telling them of his late-night wrestling with the matter in prayer. Looking up at the stars, White recounted, he reminded the Lord of his calling to be a pastor. But White said he felt God telling him, "I need a pastor in Georgia."

White's election seemed almost a formality after executive committee member Wayne Hamrick, pastor of New Liberty Baptist Church in Ringgold and a recognized conservative who had opposed Jones, told the body, "I don't know of any better or greater individual anywhere than Dr. Bob White." Hamrick cited his experience as a neighboring pastor during White's tenure in Carrollton.

"I have prayed like never before that God would send the right man. ... I believe God is in your coming to Georgia," Hamrick said.

After the meeting, Ramsey said White's name had not come to the search committee's attention until after Jones declined the position. After that experience, Ramsey said the committee "made a recommitment to God and to each other" to find God's person for the position.

Ramsey said he interpreted the unanimous vote to mean "God's will can be found and a sense of unanimity can be experienced in our state convention." Prior to the meeting, few had predicted such a unified outcome. White was presented to the convention during its Nov. 10 morning session.

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Executive Committee chairman Napp Granade, pastor of Shirley Hills Baptist Church in Warner Robins, released a statement after the meeting in which he attributed the unanimous vote to prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit.

"My heart is filled with gratitude and thanksgiving to all Georgia Baptists for their prayers," Granade wrote. "It is my prayer that the unity and cooperation evidenced in Dr. White's election will become a ground swell of unity and cooperation among Georgia Baptists. I have prayed that our convention would become a role model that would set standards of Christian conduct that would unite and draw Baptists together."

White expressed a similar hope. His unanimous election, he said, "means a confirmation of God's call . . . . My hope is that it will send a signal, not only in Georgia, but throughout the Southern Baptist Convention."

He identified himself as "unaligned" in the Southern Baptist controversy. "When one becomes aligned, it becomes difficult to minister to persons of both perspectives." He said he will "move to crisis points" within the convention and described his style of leadership as "shepherding."

Addressing what has become an issue in some state conventions, White said he remains firmly committed to the Cooperative Program. "I have felt so strongly -- even more strongly in recent years -- that we are mandated to remain faithful to the Cooperative Program," he stated, adding he will oppose moves toward designation. "Our convention is the most wonderful evangelical body in the world today. We need to maintain our strength.

"My prayer is that the Southern Baptist Convention will experience renewal and that it will begin in Georgia.

A former president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, White also was vice president of the Georgia Baptist Convention and vice chairman of the convention's executive and administration committees. His father, the late J.R. White, was a well-known Baptist pastor who served more than 20 years at First Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala.

The executive director-treasurer-elect is married to the former Janice Gail Goodlet of Hialeah, Fla. They have three daughters, Katherine, 20, Karen, 17, and Jennifer, 14.

White's election is effective Jan. 1, 1993. At White's request, retiring GBC executive director-treasurer James N. Griffith will remain until March 1 to assist in the transition.

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(BP) photo available upon request from The Christian Index, Georgia Baptist newsjournal.

History made at meeting  
of Penn/Jersey Baptists

By Peggy Masters

Baptist Press  
11/10/92

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. (BP)--History was made at the 22nd annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey Nov. 5-7 in Williamsport, but not everyone was happy with it.

"In our diversity there is unity," said William A. "Bill" Johnson, convention president and pastor of the Christian Mission Fellowship Baptist Church in Philadelphia. He told the 282 messengers and visitors at the opening session it was historic that the first African-American president was presiding and a woman would be bringing the convention sermon.

Not all people attending were pleased with the direction of the program. Several pastors and wives left the meeting just before the message by Gaynor Yancey, a 22-year Southern Baptist Home Mission Board Christian social ministries missionary in Philadelphia.

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Yancey, invited by the program and arrangements committee to speak, told about sharing Christ with the homeless, abused women, people with AIDS, children at risk, people who are hungry and others.

Danny Crow, pastor of Pittsburgh Baptist Church and the convention's representative to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, brought the issue to the convention floor. He expressed deep appreciation for Yancey and her ministry, but said he felt the action was unscriptural.

"Philosophically and theoretically, we tacitly endorsed carte blanche women pastors/preachers by our actions last night. And this practice is not practiced nor it is approved in most of our churches. I think we should say that when we say a convention sermon."

Crow quoted Earnest Mosley, executive vice president of the SBC Executive Committee, as saying history had been made. Mosley, present for the meeting, came to the microphone to say he did not wish to be quoted and that he had not been giving a researched answer. He indicated that to his knowledge no woman had ever given a convention sermon before.

Lyle Dease, pastor of Yellow Breeches Baptist Chapel in Boiling Springs, Pa., and chairman of the program and arrangements committee, was asked to respond. "It was not our intention, and it was not any thought of ours that we were setting a precedent. All we did was in honor of the years of service that Gaynor Yancey has given to our convention. It was done out of a love and respect of a woman who has served faithfully within our convention."

Yancey was affirmed by Crow and others who were opposed to a woman delivering the convention sermon, according to a convention spokesperson.

"I want to go on record as president by saying I make no apology for what happened last night," Johnson said. "I praise God for what happened. I do not believe we have flown in the face of God. I do not believe that we have gone against scriptural authority. I do not believe that this convention went on record of endorsing women preachers at all. Gaynor Yancey is not a preacher. She is a member of this convention and she stood in that vein, and this was our privilege to hear her."

In the history of the convention, non-pastors giving the convention sermon in other years include two directors of missions, a language missionary and the executive director-treasurer. A woman has never given a major message at the annual meeting.

A motion that henceforth all convention sermon speakers be chosen from pastors in the convention was made by John Morris, pastor of Colonial Hills Baptist Church in Bedford, Pa.

In a conciliatory move, interim executive director-treasurer David Waltz offered a substitute motion that the program and arrangements committee bring the name of the person for the convention sermon along with the date and location for the following year. Waltz said he applauded the way the convention was trying to deal with differences. "When people have differences, the way to deal with them is to try to talk about them," he said. "By presenting it a year in advance, everyone can have a part in the decision."

The original motion was withdrawn and the substitute motion passed with six negative votes.

Johnson was elected to his first term as president. He assumed the office in February when the president moved out of state. He is the first African-American to serve as president of the convention.

A balanced budget of \$2,183,201 was approved. The Cooperative Program percentage for national and international SBC missions and ministry was increased from 22.1 to 22.5 percent. All of a challenge goal of \$41,400.00 will go directly to the national CP.

A resolution on parental authority giving parents the right to be informed about school programs passed. A resolution passed by the South Central (Pa.) Association in their fall meeting on homosexuality and pornography was presented to the convention for concurrence. It named Levi Strass Corporation, K-Mart and Waldenbooks. Messengers were confused about what they were being asked to do, and the question was raised about any expression of hope and redemption for those involved. While affirming their opposition to both homosexuality and pornography, the messengers defeated the resolution 53-43 because of the questions raised.

Next year's meeting is scheduled Nov. 4-6 at the Pittsburgh Baptist Church.

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Somalia peace delegation  
postpones November trip

By Donald D. Martin

Baptist Press  
11/10/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A Somali peace delegation which the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board agreed to transport to Somalia in November has postponed its plans to travel to the beleaguered east African nation.

The delegation, whose members are with the Somali Coalition for Action, put their plans on hold in light of attempts by Somalia's warring clans to negotiate a cease-fire.

At the same time, the coalition believes escalation of fighting among the warring factions in Somalia made it wise to postpone the trip until further notice, said Mohamed Ali Hassan, chairman of the coalition.

The Foreign Mission Board had agreed in September to transport five members of the coalition to Somalia as soon as the group secured written invitations from faction leaders assuring safe passage in and out of the country. The delegation had hoped to appeal for peace directly to several of the clan leaders. The board also planned to send relief supplies with the coalition delegation.

Postponement and possible cancellation of the trip does not disappoint board administrators, who still plan to spend more than \$1.5 million in hunger and relief aid for Somalia.

"The aim of the trip was to bring about a cease-fire for the distribution of food. That's great if that can be done without our presence, just as long as it's done," said Jim Houser, FMB associate area director for eastern and southern Africa.

One coalition member traveled to Somalia in October to make contact with the appropriate clan leaders. During the trip, he learned that several clan leaders plan to form a new alliance and agree to stop fighting each other.

Leaders of the new alliance publicly announced their intentions to unite in late October. The alliance, formed from eight rival Somali rebel groups, agreed to a cease-fire and joined forces in opposing rebel leader Mohamed Farah Aidid, one of the main combatants in the civil war. His troops control parts of the capital, Mogadishu.

However the alliance's announcement launched a new round of bitter fighting in the country. Press reports said some rebels in the renewed fighting have targeted foreign aid workers, which forced many of the groups to temporarily pull out of the country.

The United Nations military commander in Mogadishu also warned of attacks on foreigners, kidnappings and vehicle thefts.

Political observers believe the new violence towards foreigners and the United Nations is the result of Aidid's loss of power due to the alliance's united front. Aidid also has promised an "unprecedented bloodbath would occur if the U.N. sends troops into Somalia."

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Relief supplies to several areas have been cut off completely after German military planes and Red Cross planes carrying relief aid came under fire.

Houser urged Southern Baptists to continue praying for Somalia. The United Nations estimates a minimum of 300,000 Somalis, mostly children, have died in the last 18 months from war and famine.

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Southern search committee aiming  
to select nominee by mid-March

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press  
11/10/92

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--The presidential search committee at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary plans to select a potential president for the Louisville, Ky., school by mid-March, according to committee chairman Wayne Allen.

Allen, pastor of Briarwood Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., said the search committee is "prayerfully optimistic" a nominee will be presented to the 63-member trustee board at its April 19-21 meeting.

The seven-member trustee committee has not decided whether it will announce the name of its choice prior to the board meeting, he said. Committee members are seeking a successor to Roy L. Honeycutt who announced Oct. 12 he will retire from the seminary presidency at the end of 1993.

Meanwhile, the search committee is developing a profile for the school's ninth president with input from various seminary constituency leaders, Allen said. The committee met Nov. 5-6 with the seminary's deans, vice presidents, provost and faculty representatives. "All our meetings were very positive," said Allen, who is also chairman of the trustee board. "We had good input from each group."

December meetings have been set with Alumni/ae Association officers, student leaders and Southern Seminary Foundation board members. Meetings also have been scheduled with Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Morris Chapman and the presidents of the other five seminaries. Earlier, the committee met with SBC president and Houston pastor H. Edwin Young and Honeycutt.

The search committee also will survey each student and trustee as part of its information gathering strategy for the presidential profile, Allen said. Work on the profile should be finished in December, he said, adding, however, the committee has decided not to make the profile public.

A "short list" of candidates for the presidency will be developed at a meeting in mid-January, Allen said. "If anybody hears a rumor that we have a short list now, that is false," he said. "We have no short list." Speculation about possible candidates for the position already has begun in both Baptist and secular media.

Interviews of candidates on the short list will be conducted in mid-February, Allen said, noting that search committee meetings in 1993 will be held off campus.

Allen said the search committee hopes the next president will be able to assume full-time duties as president-elect in early summer and serve alongside Honeycutt through December. The lengthy period of full-time service as president-elect was suggested by Honeycutt as a way to provide a smoother transition, he added.

Nominations for the Southern presidency are being accepted through Dec. 18. All letters of recommendation should be accompanied by a complete resume and mailed to Presidential Search Committee, Box 7767, Louisville, KY 40257-0767.

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**New England Baptists work  
to maintain CP support**

WARWICK, R.I. (BP)--The Baptist Convention of New England adopted a \$2.2 million 1993 budget, roughly equal to the current year's, during its annual meeting Nov. 5-6.

"We truly did experience a great time of fellowship, unity and challenge as we met together," added John Ambra, director of business services and stewardship for the convention. "Our theme for the meeting was 'Bold Believers in a Broken World,' and we left with a greater sense of urgency to share the gospel with those who are lost without Christ."

Some 200 messengers representing the 200-plus churches and missions in the convention attended the 10th annual meeting of the six-state body at Faith Baptist Church in Warwick, R.I.

The 1993 convention budget includes Cooperative Program allocations of \$434,500 for missions causes in New England and \$115,500 for national and international missions and ministry funded by the Southern Baptist Convention.

The SBC Cooperative Program allocation is 5.2 percent of the 1993 budget, compared to 5.3 percent for the current year, stemming in part from a change in accounting procedures for the convention.

"Even though our convention receives a significant amount of assistance from outside New England," Ambra told Baptist Press, "we are continually doing more to increase our share of SBC world mission funding."

An amendment to delete \$200 from the budget designated for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs was passed by ballot vote after roughly 10 minutes of debate.

The New England convention's top officers were unanimously re-elected: president, Ken Hale, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, N.H.; first vice president, Mary Beth Caffey, member of Thomas Memorial Baptist Church in Lewiston, Maine, and church development worker for the Maine Baptist Association; and second vice president, Richard Wright, pastor of Warwick's Faith Baptist.

Speakers during the meeting included James T. Draper Jr., president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board; Jack Johnson, president of the Radio and Television Commission; Paul Powell, president of the Annuity Board.

Messengers voiced appreciation for their partnership with Virginia Baptists the past five years and Georgia Baptists the past year. The convention now is in a partnership with South Carolina Baptists.

The 1993 annual meeting will be Nov. 11-12 at Rice Memorial Baptist Church in Northboro, Mass.

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Allyson Clark, news editor of the New England Baptist newsjournal, contributed to this report.

**Illinois Baptists boost  
Cooperative Program goal**

By Bill Webb

Baptist Press  
11/10/92

HERRIN, Ill. (BP)--Illinois Baptists adopted an increased Cooperative Program goal for 1993 when they met Nov. 4-6 at First Baptist Church in Herrin.

Host pastor Charles Dampeer was elected new president of the Illinois Baptist State Association. He has served the past two years as vice president.

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Roger Ellsworth, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Benton and immediate past president of the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees, was elected vice president in a three-way race.

Messengers raised their 1993 Cooperative Program goal to \$4,895,057, an increase of \$186,217 over the 1992 goal. Illinois Baptists are on target this year to exceed their CP goal for the first time since 1976.

The state association will maintain the same distribution ratio as 1992 -- 59.75 percent (\$2,924,797) for Illinois Baptist causes and 40.25 percent (\$1,970,260) for Southern Baptist Convention ministries.

An amendment to delete a \$1,200 subscription fee for Associated Baptist Press failed.

During their opening session, messengers welcomed 11 churches as new affiliates with the state association.

Messengers adopted 11 resolutions, including a call for churches to adopt AIDS policies, opposition to casino gambling, affirmation of human sexuality and sanctity of human life, appreciation for the ministry of retired Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks and affirmation of the state's 1993 evangelistic emphasis, "I'm Sure."

Other resolutions affirmed four retiring staff members: executive director Maurice Swinford, church-minister relations director Don Dillow, stewardship services and Baptist Foundation director Jim Doom and rural-urban missionary Jonah Reynolds.

Messengers honored Swinford and his wife, Charlotte, with a reception following the opening session of the meeting.

The 1993 meeting will be Nov. 2-4 at Thelma Keller Convention Center in Effingham.

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Nevada Baptists maintain  
25 percent mark for CP

Baptist Press  
11/10/92

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--Messengers to the 14th annual meeting of the Nevada Baptist Convention approved a \$1.7 million budget, maintaining a 25 percent allocation to Southern Baptist national and international missions and ministry supported by the Cooperative Program.

The 1993 budget is roughly equal to the 1992 budget and includes a 3.5 percent salary increase for the 11-member staff at the Nevada convention's headquarters in Reno.

A resolution adopted by the 160-plus messengers at the convention calls for Nevada Baptist churches to prepare public service announcements to promote Christian family values and the work of the Nevada convention.

The resolution notes that the Federal Communication Commission "requires public radio and television stations to air public service announcements ... ."

Elected as convention officers were president, John Randolph, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Elko; first vice president, Kevin White, pastor of First Baptist Church in Fernley; and second vice president, Jesse Diaz, pastor of Segurada Islesia Bautista in Las Vegas. Each officer won in a race against another nominee.

The meeting at College Park Baptist Church in Las Vegas, Oct. 20-21, was the first under the leadership of David Meacham, the convention's new executive director-treasurer.

Nevada Baptists' 1993 meeting will be Oct. 19-20 at Temple Baptist Church in Sparks.

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Mike McCullough contributed to this report.