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91-184

**Southeastern Seminary given
2-year probation by agency**

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Being put on probation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is a "serious matter," but does not indicate a loss of accreditation to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Wake Forest, N.C., seminary was put on probation by SACS during the agency's annual meeting in New Orleans Dec. 4-6.

The school has one year to answer all questions presented to it by SACS regarding problems in such matters as faculty selection and long range planning.

In 1989, SACS issued a warning to Southeastern citing the school as deficient in four areas: planning and evaluation, selection of faculty, the role of faculty and its committees, and governing board.

The school had two years to respond to SACS's questions, but, it failed to do so by the December 1991 deadline. At that time, SACS had only two options -- to either affirm the school's accreditation or to place it on probation.

Southeastern President Lewis Drummond said, "I am disappointed. We were making progress in the evaluations. In fact, in one area -- planning and evaluation -- SACS had upgraded our evaluation to just a 'notation.'"

Drummond was notified by phone of the commission's decision late Dec. 5 at his home by David Carter, the assistant director of SACS. Carter said the commission had cited the seminary on four criteria and had felt probation would give the school the additional time it needed to clear up these final difficulties.

The criteria the commission cited related to two areas, that of planning and evaluation and trustee involvement in the faculty selection process.

"We are taking this very seriously and are disappointed with the commission's decision. However, this is not the loss of accreditation. We were delighted to see that we have satisfied SACS's concern about whether or not we were eligible for accreditation."

The fact that a school is put on probation generally has little effect on enrollment, said Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Education Commission. "Historically, individuals who are seeking admission to a school may have some questions, but it doesn't seem to make that much difference," he said.

In a letter addressed to students, Drummond explained the news concerning probation. He also gave his views as to what probation means for the seminary. Drummond stressed the school would address the remaining SACS criteria forthrightly and energetically. He said the difficulties cited could be addressed easily within the time frame granted by probation.

James Rogers, executive director of SACS's commission on colleges, said SACS's disclosure policy prevents SACS from revealing specific violations, but added, the school may disclose them if it wishes to do so.

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L. Russ Bush, vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty, said he felt most of the remaining concerns could be addressed very rapidly and expressed optimism the school's probation might be short. He added, "We have another on-site visit in April for our ten-year self-study. If we have the matters related to our accreditation in order, the on-site team will recommend that we reaffirmed."

"According to SACS guidelines, probation could last for up to two years, but there is no doubt in my mind that we will have the commission's concerns cleared up well before that time." Bush added.

Walker added he thought the trustees would take the situation seriously. "I was there for the trustee orientation and they (trustees) were dealing seriously with the matter. Russ Bush was giving the matter a lot of attention."

All points in question will be discussed again in December 1992, then a decision may be made by SACS whether to restore or revoke Southeastern's accreditation.

If the school's accreditation is revoked, according to Walker, it will probably take a minimum of two years to get it back.

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FMB committee refuses to recommend
restoring Ruschlikon seminary funds

Baptist Press
12/9/91

By Robert O'Brien & Art Toalston

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustee committee refused Dec. 6 to recommend the agency's trustees restore \$365,000 cut from the budget of the Baptist seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

The final vote, a 13-10 defeat of a motion by trustee John Simms of Virginia, came near the end of about nine hours of intense, blunt and sometimes emotional discussions between representatives of the trustees, board staff and European Baptist leaders.

Simms said he based his motion on the fact the Foreign Mission Board promised the seminary the money through 1992 and should keep its promise. European leaders attending the session said their concerns centered not on the money cut but on the breach of trust it represents and the pattern that breach sets for future relationships in Europe.

The sessions, held Dec. 5-6, revealed increasing tensions over issues surrounding the Ruschlikon seminary. They resulted in head-to-head confrontation between the trustees, who want to implement their concerns over the seminary's theological direction, and the FMB staff and European Baptist leaders, who have urged that the mission agency keep its promises and treat European Baptists as equal partners.

Trustees have said they felt the seminary should move in a more conservative direction. Two European Baptist leaders attending the session, Karl-Heinz Walter and Wiard Popkes, affirmed their own conservative theology. So did Ruschlikon's missionary president, John David Hopper, FMB President R. Keith Parks and others.

But Parks and Hopper said the Foreign Mission Board must work with European Baptists as equals without insisting on uniformity. Parks said the board's responsibility in missions around the world is to send missionaries who represent Southern Baptist beliefs. But the board must work through influence and persuasion with others, not control, he added.

Walter and Popkes expressed the desire to work in partnership with Southern Baptists, but not under the condition that European Baptists must believe exactly as they do.

Several trustees throughout the sessions insisted they do not wish to force others into theological lock step.

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Trustee Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas, said "under no circumstances" are the trustees asking "that anybody walk in lock step with us. That does not even happen on the faculty of Criswell College. But what we are saying is that it is not conceivable to Southern Baptists to support those things that call into question the veracity and truthfulness of the Word of God."

The European Baptists, who believe the seminary does uphold the Word of God, said they would accept whatever decision was made on defunding but warned the breach of trust would affect future relationships.

The sessions preceded a meeting of the full FMB trustee board Dec. 9-11 in Richmond. The funding matter could be reconsidered at that time, but Parks said he could not predict what action the trustees would take on the matter.

Although declining to recommend restoration of funds, the trustee committee agreed to establish a committee of staff and trustees to meet with European Baptist leaders to discuss how they might re-establish partnership relations in Europe. The committee will report back to the board in April.

But European Baptist leaders left the meeting, which began and ended with closed sessions, telling reporters the discussions had left them feeling pessimistic about rebuilding relationships damaged by the defunding.

"We need to have this partnership and I hope we find a way," said Walter, general secretary of the European Baptist Federation. "But at this moment I don't see a practical way to restore fellowship and trust. Oct. 9 is a date from which we have to start anew." Trustees voted 35-28 on that date to defund the Ruschlikon seminary and redirect the \$365,000 to other theological needs in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

In two other actions, the trustee committee asked FMB staff to review policy on fund raising by missionaries and overseas institutions and on selection of short-term volunteers who serve overseas.

The first action followed a belief by trustees that fund-raising efforts in the United States by the Ruschlikon seminary violate FMB policy.

The second was an outgrowth of the selection of E. Glenn Hinson by Ruschlikon as a short-term volunteer through the mission board to teach for four months this fall on sabbatical leave from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Several trustees emphasized that their unexpected decision to remove the funds promised to Ruschlikon through 1992 came not because of the selection of Hinson to teach, but because of longstanding concerns over Ruschlikon's theology. They said FMB staff and trustees and staff of the Ruschlikon seminary have not been sensitive to those concerns and that staff did not let them know of Hinson's selection in advance.

As is the practice on all short-term volunteers, trustees learned of the selection of Hinson, whom they perceive to be liberal, after the fact. Parks said Hinson is a professor in good standing at a Southern Baptist seminary, and was selected under the guidance of board policy.

Trustees variously described Hinson's assignment as the "lightning rod" or the "straw that broke the camel's back" which resulted in their swift action to defund Ruschlikon after several years of expressing their concerns without the seminary moving in a more conservative direction.

Both Walter and Wiard Popkes of Germany, chairman of the Ruschlikon trustees, explained they had understood the concerns that had been relayed by FMB staff. But, they said, the European Baptist Federation, which now owns the seminary, has the responsibility to decide on theological matters and policy related to Europe -- not FMB trustees.

Meanwhile, the Richmond News Leader, the city's afternoon newspaper, reported an anonymous source said a legal opinion requested by trustees about the validity of the defunding had found the board in violation of its agreement. Board attorney Lewis Booker said he could not comment because of privileged communication between a lawyer and client. Parks later told reporters he would not respond because of advice of the attorney that comment could cause legal complications.

In an emotional session on the first day of the meeting, several trustees apologized to Walter, Popkes and Hopper for their precipitous action in defunding without notice or consultation and for the hurt caused by that action. They asked the European leaders to forgive them. Popkes, Walter and Hopper said they would do so.

That seemed to be the consensus of the group as the first day closed with the European leaders asked to return the next morning and respond to a three-point proposal by trustee chairman Bill Hancock of Kentucky.

Hancock said he would recommend trustees restore the \$365,000 for 1992 "if there can be a positive response" from the European Baptist leaders on the proposal. It asked seminary leaders (1) "acknowledge their insensitivity to the conservative concerns" of the FMB trustees regarding the seminary's theological direction, (2) provide FMB trustees with advance "awareness" of the selection of professors to teach there, but "not to determine or dictate policy" and (3) give an accounting of funds received from all U.S. sources other than the Foreign Mission Board.

The trustee committee added a fourth point: that they acknowledge their own insensitivity for failing to consult with the seminary leaders in advance of the defunding.

The next morning Walter and Popkes, following a discussion of what the trustees mean by "conservatism," declined to accept the three points.

Walter said acceptance would allow FMB trustees to intervene in the work of the trustees of a seminary now owned by the autonomous European Baptist Federation and would set "a pattern" for that type of partnership with other Baptist bodies in Europe. In 1989 FMB trustees transferred the property to European Baptist ownership.

"We understand partnership as being a partnership among equal partners," Walter said. "We understand that partnership means to have a mutual respect for the unique position and of the autonomy of the partners."

Partnership also includes dialogue among equals that results in "mutual respect" and requires "trust and confidence (which) cannot be substituted by anything else," he added.

Popkes said European Baptists fear involvement with "militant fundamentalism" and being drawn into destructive internal conflict.

"What has been going on in the SBC ... frightens us," he said. "It is a spirit that would work out in control. It doesn't start from confidence and trust, but from control. It reminds of the situation we just got rid of in some of the communist countries."

His comments brought a strong response from SBC President Morris Chapman, an ex officio trustee of the Foreign Mission Board, who said such fears misrepresent "any thought or person known to me in Southern Baptist life." He said European Baptists should not interpret discussion on financial support for Ruschlikon as a lack of interest in working in partnership with European Baptists to reach the world for Christ.

Except for a closed opening session and a brief closed session at the end, the discussions were taped for distribution from the Foreign Mission Board to interested people for a cost of \$16 for a set of five tapes.

Anderson family, Cadiz
church celebrate Christmas

By Marv Knox

CADIZ, Ky. (BP)--Christmas came to Cadiz three weeks early this year. Terry Anderson, the American journalist held captive by pro-Iranian Muslims since March 16, 1985, was set free last Wednesday, Dec. 4.

And Cadiz, a small west Kentucky lake town that adopted Anderson's two sisters during the 2,455 days of his captivity, cheered for joy.

"Thank God Almighty, Free At Last!" declared a sign on the lawn of Cadiz Baptist Church, where his sisters, Peggy Say and Judy Walker, now worship. Across town, people began taking down the faded yellow ribbons that had reminded them of Anderson's captivity. They replaced them with fresh ones, sprucing up their hamlet in anticipation of a pre-Christmas "homecoming" for their hero, who never has seen their town.

That evening, Cadiz Baptist Church preceded its annual study of foreign missions with a brief prayer service focused completely on Anderson, Say and Walker.

The next morning, television networks across the nation and around the world broadcast Pastor Harold Skaggs' words of gratitude for the life and freedom of Terry Anderson. "It's been an extremely happy time and a time of rejoicing for all of us here," Skaggs told the Western Recorder the day following Anderson's release. "We've been so caught up in this tragedy; a great burden has been lifted off our shoulders."

Say and her husband, David, moved to Cadiz more than three and one-half years ago, Skaggs recalled, counting the number of times the Cadiz church has marked the anniversary of Anderson's captivity as a way to help him remember when Say joined the congregation. Walker and her family followed the Says to Cadiz late last summer.

Now, the sisters hope Anderson will join them in their adopted hometown, at least for awhile, Skaggs reported.

"The assumption all along has been that Terry will return" with them, Skaggs added, noting the Says have purchased a cabin next to theirs near Lake Barkley as a place where her brother can readjust to freedom and get to know Sulome, the 6-year-old daughter he never saw until his release.

Say has named her pastor chairman of a committee of Cadiz leaders who are planning a reception for Anderson. They're preparing a post-Christmas gala event, complete with marching bands, and they hope former U.S. President Jimmy Carter will be able to deliver the keynote address.

Even before that, members of Cadiz Church hope to finally meet the object of their prayers, Skaggs said, explaining Say has said she intends to bring her brother to the church's Christmas Eve service.

Cadiz Baptists don't expect the most famous member of the Anderson clan to join their church. "Peggy has said she understands Terry has had a renewing of his faith in the Catholic tradition," Skaggs said. "We've heard stories of his weaving a crucifix out of the mat on his floor."

But Cadiz Baptists also don't need an addition to their church as an excuse to rejoice and strengthen their faith, he added.

"In this season of Advent, we stop to focus on hope," Skaggs said. "Next Sunday (Dec. 8), I plan to preach a sermon on hope, and part of that will be about how our hopes have been fulfilled."

Special CP study group
announced, sets meeting

By Herb Hollinger

NASHVILLE (BP)--Twenty-three leaders from across the Southern Baptist Convention have been named to a special Cooperative Program study group with a Jan. 20-21 meeting planned, according to David E. Hankins, chairman of the SBC Executive Committee.

Hankins, pastor Trinity Baptist Church in Lakes Charles, La. appointed the individuals in response to action of the Executive Committee in September. Hankins said the group will: review the history of the Cooperative Program, analyze the nature of it as it is now being interpreted, and develop proposals for the future enhancement of the CP.

A larger convocation of SBC leadership is anticipated for the future, Hankins said, possibly in the spring. A number of leaders in the denomination have asked for a study of the Cooperative Program in light of decreasing receipts and competition with other programs.

"I anticipate a later meeting ... will be needed to more fully address these important issues," Hankins said.

The study group will meet Jan. 20 at 7 p.m. and adjourn by 9 p.m. Jan. 21, Hankins said. The group will meet at a hotel near the Nashville airport.

The group includes state convention executive directors, SBC agency representatives as well as SBC presidents, past and present.

SBC Executive Committee members included are: Ronnie W. Floyd, Springdale, Ark.; Joe B. Warwick, Knoxville, Tenn.; and Hankins.

In addition to Morris Chapman, current SBC president, Wichita Falls, Texas, former presidents included are: W. Wayne Dehoney, Louisville, Ky; James L. Sullivan, Nashville; Adrian P. Rogers, suburban Memphis, Tenn.; and James T. Draper, Nashville.

State convention executive directors are: James N. Griffith, Georgia; Reginald M. McDonough, Virginia; William M. Pinson, Jr., Texas; Cecil C. Sims, Northwest; Don Moore, Arkansas; John Sullivan, Florida; Roy J. Smith, North Carolina; and William G. Tanner, Oklahoma.

Executive Committee staff members: Harold C. Bennett, president; Ernest E. Mosley, executive vice president; Richard P. Rosenbaum Jr., vice president; and Mark Coppenger, vice president.

Stewardship Commission staff: A.R. Fagan, president, and James L. Powell, vice president for CP promotion.

Former state executive and special Cooperative Program consultant, Cecil Ray, Georgetown, Texas, also was named to the group. He is the retired director of the denomination's Planned Growth in Giving emphasis.

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Sandi Patti, Gaithers
set for Indianapolis

By Herb Hollinger

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12/9/91

INDIANAPOLIS, (BP)--Gospel superstar Sandi Patti and Bill Gaither's vocal band and trio headline an impressive array of music for the 1992 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis' Hoosier Dome, June 9-11.

The Vice President of the United States Dan Quayle, and former SBC president Charles Stanley, pastor of Atlanta's First Baptist Church lead the list of speakers for the annual meeting.

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Quayle, whose home is in Indianapolis, officially has been invited to bring a short message at the start of the meeting Tuesday morning. However, SBC officials said, to date, they have not heard from Quayle. Officials did note that when President George Bush spoke last summer to the SBC in Atlanta, his appearance was not officially announced until shortly before the convention date.

The vice president would welcome Southern Baptists to his home state, with Indiana Baptist Convention Executive Director-Treasurer Charles Sullivan scheduled to bring a response to Quayle's message.

Stanley will bring the final message of the convention Thursday morning. Stanley, through his television program, "In Touch," is probably Southern Baptists' most well-known pastor/preacher. Indiana officials said Stanley, through cable television outlets in the state, is a familiar television personality to most Hoosiers.

The convention's music program includes a number of church choirs including an expected 1,000 voice youth choir on Wednesday evening. Convention music director Jack Price of Garland, Texas, said the Indianapolis meeting would have large choirs of churches from Oklahoma to South Carolina.

Sandi Patti, acknowledged as one of the premier gospel singers in America today, is scheduled for a concert Wednesday night following the Foreign Mission Board's report. Patti will be accompanied by her full contingent, including band and backup singers, said Price.

Bill Gaither will bring his trio and vocal band, Price said, and his appearance will include a concert to start the Tuesday afternoon session.

Theme for the 1992 meeting will be "Bold Believers In A Broken World," according to SBC President Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas. Chapman said the theme is based on Ephesians 4:12.

The SBC Committee on Order of Business met Dec. 2 in Indianapolis to make early preparations for the June meeting.

The committee announced three recommendations to be presented to the Indianapolis June meeting: 1993 convention sermon preacher, Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas; alternate, Robert Mowrey, pastor of Park Avenue Baptist Church, Nashville; and 1993 convention music director, Ragan Vandegriff, III, music minister of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.

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Cooperative Program
has hotline number

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12/9/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Have a question, want some information or would like to express an opinion about the Cooperative Program?

Beginning Jan. 2, the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission will provide a toll-free, Cooperative Program hotline for Southern Baptists. Commission personnel will operate the hotline for three months, according to James L. Powell, executive vice president for Cooperative Program Promotion.

The toll-free number is: 1-800-722-9407.

Powell said the number is reserved for callers who want to order CP promotion materials, to ask questions about the CP, or to express their personal thoughts about the program.

The hotline will operate five days each week, Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (CST).

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Harold Dye, author,
dies in California

CAMPBELL, Calif. (BP)--Harold Dye, California pastor and writer for Open Windows, died Nov. 20 of a ruptured aneurysm. He was 84.

Dye was pastor of four churches in New Mexico and two churches in California prior to his retirement. He was editor of The Baptist New Mexican, journal of the New Mexico Baptist Convention, for two years.

Dye was author of eight books, five home mission study books and a devotional writer for Open Windows, the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board devotional quarterly.

He was born in Tulsa, Indian Territory, and attended Montezuma Baptist College.

Dye is survived by his wife, Ina Pearl, and four children.

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National Fellowship
gets new name

By Steve Barber

Baptist Press
12/9/91

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The initials are the same, but the name has been changed. The National Fellowship of Baptist Men is now the National Fellowship of Baptists in Missions.

"The change of our name has come about to further the involvement of women, although we have included women in our membership since we began," said Bob Salley, director.

The fellowship, part of the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, involves laypersons in missions by using their vocational skills, gifts, interests, and expertise.

More than 59,000 Southern Baptists were involved in missions through the fellowship in 1990.

The 14 fellowships making up the NFBM include groups for those in business, law, communications, transportation, health related professions, criminal justice, education, veterinary medicine, agriculture, sports, performing arts, lay renewal, and lay witness evangelism.

Members are urged to be willing to respond to any Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board or Home Mission Board project for which they are qualified.

"The name change really makes sense for us because many women are already involved in missions through the fellowship, especially the educators group," Salley said. "We also found that the first rule of salesmanship also applied to us, which is, 'Don't start out with a negative.' In this case, it meant having to explain the old name to prospective women members from the very first."

Salley added he expects the NFBM organization to continue and strengthen its longtime inclusive stance regarding men and women.

"I am looking forward to meeting with representatives of Woman's Missionary Union to determine the role that WMU will play in the various fellowships," Salley said. "I hope it will be a significant one."

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**FMB and RTVC join in
Russia call to prayer**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The final hours of 1991 will focus on a call to prayer for evangelism in Russia, as programming on both ACTS and FamilyNet have been preempted for two specials produced by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and one by the Radio and Television Commission, according to Mike Wright, vice president for Network Operations for RTVC.

"A New Prayer, produced by the Foreign Mission Board, looks at the remarkable changes which have occurred in what was the Soviet Union," said David Powers, the board's director of video services. "It explains how Christians must unite in prayer for a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit among the Russian people."

Powers pointed out the 30-minute special, which will be shown at 10 p.m. and 12 midnight EST, was created "to help churches effectively participate in a year-long prayer vigil during 1992, aimed at bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people."

The second FMB special, Enduring Faith, which will air at 10:30 p.m. EST, explores the work of Soviet Baptists in the former Soviet republics of Russia, Ukraine and Georgia.

Winds of Freedom, to be shown at 11 p.m. EST, is a documentary about Christians in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Television personality David Hartman narrated the special, created by the Radio and Television Commission for ABC last December. The special received an Emmy nomination for best documentary.

"What a wonderful way to close out this historic year and begin the year of prayer for Russia," said Wright, who recently returned from a trip to St. Petersburg. "We agree with the church member there, who says in Enduring Faith, 'If Russia repented, the world would turn upside down'."

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**Christmas Eve special ABC
features Fort Lauderdale choir**

**Baptist Press
12/9/91**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"Night of Nights," a one-hour special produced by the First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. in association with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, will air on ABC television Christmas Eve, according to RTVC Vice President Bob Thornton.

ABC, which has scheduled "Night of Nights" for midnight Eastern and Midnight Pacific times, will also provide the program for United States Armed Forces Radio and Television, said Thornton, making this "possibly the largest audience ever to view a Radio and Television Commission program."

More than 130,000 persons have viewed the Fort Lauderdale Christmas pageant in the eight seasons the church has staged it, according to Bob Reeder, minister of music at the church and director of the pageant.

"A dramatic cast of 600 persons will be involved," said Reeder, "including a 300-voice choir and 40-piece orchestra." The setting for the performance is the two-year old 3,500-seat auditorium of First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale, where O.S. Hawkins is pastor.

The telecast is part of a continuing series by ABC in which programs produced by various faith groups are aired in the Christmas, Easter, and High Holy Days seasons.

Local listings should be checked for viewing times in each city.

"Night of Nights" begins with the birth of Jesus and continues through the crucifixion and resurrection, explained Reeder. It returns to Bethlehem for the conclusion.

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Gary Cook accepts call
to Oklahoma church

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE (BP)--Gary W. Cook, vice president for church programs and services at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, has resigned effective Jan. 1 to accept the pastorate of the 6,600-member First Baptist Church of Lawton, Okla.

After hearing Cook preach on Sunday morning, Dec. 8, church members voted Sunday afternoon to call him as pastor. His first Sunday will be Jan. 5.

A 10-year employee of the board, Cook, 49, directed the church and staff support division 1981-87 before becoming vice president for church program organizations. He assumed his present position in 1989.

As vice president for church programs and services, Cook has overseen the Sunday school division and the discipleship training, church music, church administration, special ministries, church media library, church architecture and church recreation departments along with Glorieta (N.M.) and Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist conference centers.

"I leave the Sunday School Board with a deep sense of gratitude for these last 10 years," said Cook. "I am proud of what has been accomplished in church programs at the board. The reception by Southern Baptists of the Breakthrough Sunday school literature, "The Baptist Hymnal" and a revitalized emphasis on church growth is very gratifying. I am very excited to become the pastor of a wonderful church and to become the recipient of great work that is being done by the Sunday School Board."

Sunday School Board President James T. Draper Jr. said: "Gary Cook has served effectively and faithfully for over 10 years here at the board. His heart is in leading churches to grow and develop in every area of Christian mission and ministry. He has creatively guided in our church programs and services area. We shall miss him but rejoice in the God-given opportunity for him to pursue his calling through the great First Baptist Church of Lawton, Okla. We shall lift him up in our prayers."

Before joining the board, Cook was pastor of four Oklahoma churches. He served as a trustee of the board prior to becoming an employee.

An Ardmore, Okla., native, Cook holds the B.A. degree from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and the doctor of ministry degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.